



Aboriginal Populations and HPV Initiatives

Enhancing HPV Prevention among Indigenous Populations: International Perspectives on Health and Well-Being

Introduction

ICID coordinated and hosted this symposium in partnership with the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the National Aboriginal Health Organization. This symposium was held in Montreal, Canada on July 5, 2010 as a component of the International HPV Conference (IPV2010). Five presentations from distinguished HPV and public health specialists were provided on the topic of the burden of HPV disease among Indigenous populations, and on the topic of promising interventions and wise practices for the prevention of HPV disease and related cancers. Key messages from the presentations and follow-up activities from the symposium are described in the report.

Synopsis

Available studies indicate that Indigenous peoples are disproportionately affected by HPV infections, are at a greater risk for HPV-related genital cancers, are more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage in the disease process, and remain less likely to survive a diagnosis than non-Indigenous peoples. A global literature review/annotated bibliography is available on the ICID website.

The objectives of this unique Symposium were to share current information on the burden of HPV-related diseases and to identify promising interventions and wise practices among Indigenous populations internationally.

Opening remarks by Dr. Paulette Tremblay (Canada) along with presenters from the first panel, Professor Suzanne Garland (Australia), and Dr. Isaac Sobol (Canada), described the significant burden of HPV (and other STIs) among female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia and among First Nation, Inuit, and Métis women in Canada. Speakers highlighted that, in order to support policy and programming, continued efforts are needed to address information gaps and collect pertinent and specific information from those populations most affected.

The second panel shared promising interventions and wise practices on the primary and secondary prevention of HPV diseases, cervical and other cancers. Dr. Eileen Dunne (USA) and Ms. Telphia Joseph (Australia) presented overviews of promising programs for Alaska Natives and American Indians as well as for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian females that addressed issues surrounding access to services, specifically HPV immunization and the potential role of cervical self-sampling.

The panelists were joined by Dr. Paul Brassard (Canada) to answer questions and discuss innovative approaches to enhancing HPV prevention. The Symposium speakers and participants indicated their interest for continued dialogue and a potential network to address HPV issues among Indigenous peoples internationally.