

Critical Appraisal Form

Date: June 19, 2019

Members in Discussion: Jennifer Furey, Karen Richard, Shari Shabits, Wini Murphy, Alyssa Dixon

Article: Exploring Socially Responsible Approaches to Children’s Rehabilitation with Indigenous Communities, Families and Children (Gerlach, A. 2018)

Participants: SLPs (n=5), OTs (n=5), PTs (n=2). Most identified as Euro-French Canadian with one self-identifying as Indigenous. Therapists had a 1.5-20 years of experience working in diverse rural and urban communities.

Control or Comparison Group/s: N/A

Methods: The author prepared this paper to provide Indigenous communities, funding agencies, rehabilitation stakeholders and community organizations with evidence-based information about how to best support the health and well-being of Indigenous communities and families. Semi-structured interviews were completed with a small number of rehabilitation therapists.

Outcomes: The author concludes that there needs to be a “radical shift” in how services are offered to Indigenous children, families and communities. In particular, the author recommends that there needs to be a focus on Indigenous self-determination that builds on fostering relationships with families and communities, being inclusive of language and knowledge as well as being flexible in providing services that are relevant and unique to individual communities.

Strengths of Research: This author highlighted key areas of practice that are keenly relevant to health professionals in BC. The use of informal interviews added context to the research that is currently available in this area of practice. The clinical focus of this paper further provided direction to therapists in how to proceed with offering services to Indigenous children, families and communities.

	Compelling	Suggestive	Equivocal/Uncertain
Validity		☆	
Clinical importance	☆		

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Clinical Implications & Discussion Summary:

- The traditional biomedical model of service is often insufficient and inappropriate for Indigenous families and communities. We need to be working from and within a social and family based model.
- There is a need to advocate within our own agencies to provide services that are responsive to Indigenous communities' need. This may need to look quite different than the current service delivery model.
- Building relationships needs to not only include relationships with children and families but the broader community. Taking the necessary time to spend time in the community meeting Elders, attending community events, learning about the community etc. is essential when offering any health service in an Indigenous community.
- Currently, there is a significant lack of population data available regarding children with disabilities and health conditions for Indigenous children. This creates significant challenges when it comes to creating policies and supporting new funding opportunities.
- Standardized speech and language assessments need to be used with caution. Firstly, these assessments are not based on normative data that represent Indigenous children in Canada. As well, these assessments may not be helpful or valuable to the families or communities that focus on a child's strengths and gifts.
- As a profession and provincial organization we need to support continuing education and clinical best practice for SLPs and Audiologists working with Indigenous children, families and communities across the province.