

A young child with purple hair, wearing a striped shirt and dark pants, stands in profile on a grassy hill, looking towards a hazy industrial landscape with several tall smokestacks emitting white smoke. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**Capacity Building
and
Community Engagement**

by

Roy E. Kwiatkowski

Environmental Health Research Division

April 2009

Chiang Mai

Thailand

Aboriginal Health Fact Sheet

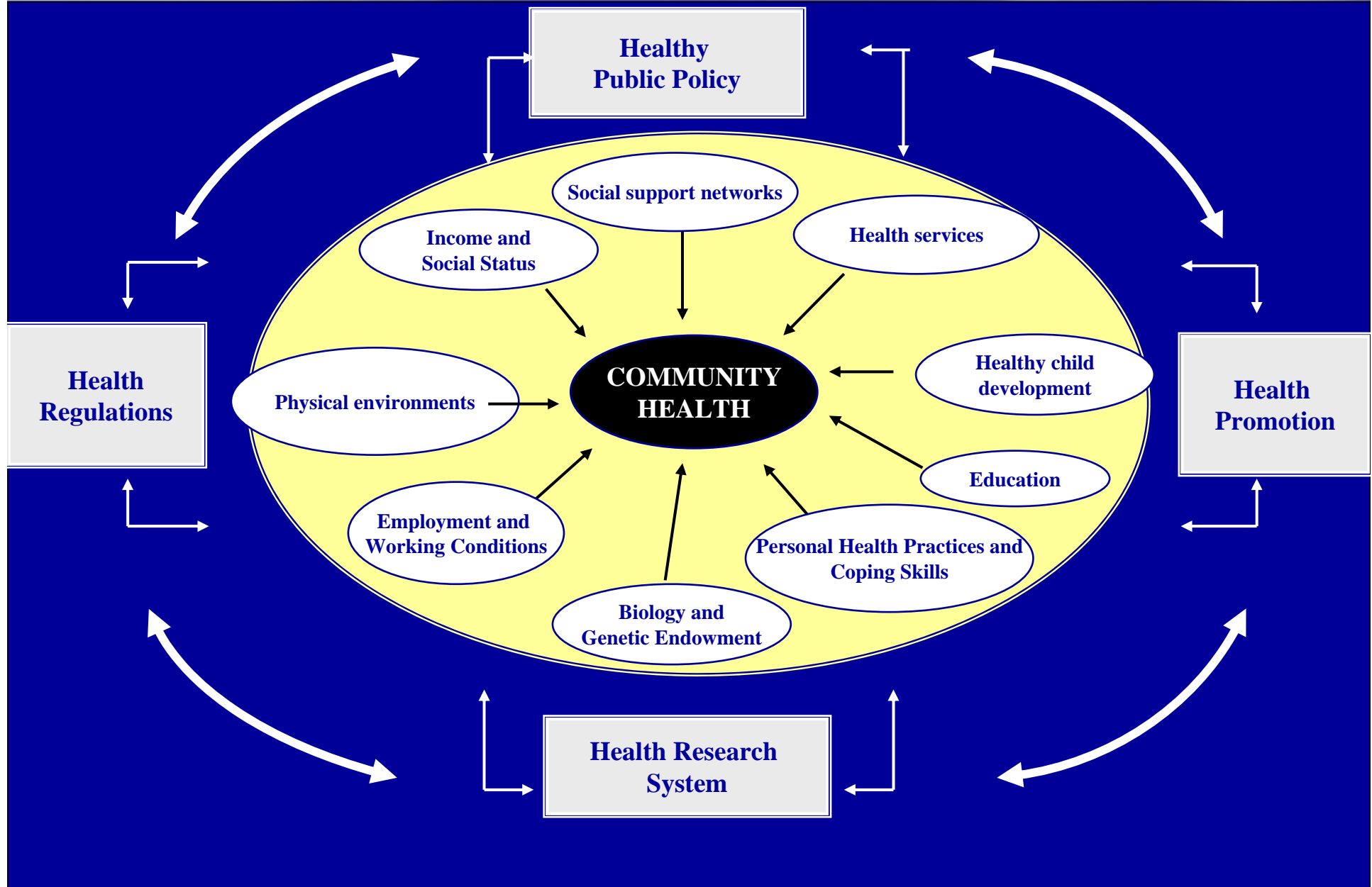
- Population – Canada 32M; FN 800K; Inuit 50K
- Communities – FN 606; Inuit 53
- Smoking rates – FN 3.1x; Inuit 2.5x
- Diabetes – FN 3.8x; Inuit 0.5x
- Youth Suicide – FN 4.3x; Inuit 8.3x
- Life Expectancy (yrs)
 - Males Canada 77; FN 70; Inuit 64
 - Females Canada 81; FN 76; Inuit 70

EIA/HIA Aboriginal Context

- Small/isolated communities
- Young population
- Limited western education
- Significant health problems
- Significant social problems
- High unemployment
- Lower life expectancy
- Mis-Trust of Government/Industry



DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH



Aboriginal Observations Regarding Government Research

- Does not shed light on the forces that drive health determinants
- Has a top-down emphasis on expert knowledge
- Does not meet the immediate health and social information needs of indigenous peoples
- Does not respect Traditional Knowledge
- What's Needed – Inclusive Research not Exclusive Research

Indigenous HIA Capacity Building: Issues

- Effective Public Participation in any process depends on the participants being able to exercise power in decision making - Whitmore and Kerans, 1988
- Participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless - Arnstein, 1971

Indigenous HIA

- Health impact assessment methods and approaches identified by indigenous communities.
- Indigenous HIA is based on three concepts:
 - indigenous communities rely heavily on traditional knowledge;
 - health impact assessment is very closely linked to environmental impact assessment; and
 - health impact assessment as a process depends on measurement and evaluation of health indicators.
- Indigenous communities themselves must develop their own specific community health indicators.

Indigenous HIA Capacity Building: Activities

- Research
 - National First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program
 - Climate Change and Health Adaptation
- Workshops/Conferences
 - Traditional Foods Workshops
 - North American TriNational Indigenous Environmental Conference
- Training
 - WHO/PAHO web-based training courses
 - First Nations University of Canada

Indigenous HIA Capacity Building: Objectives

- Inclusion of Indigenous Values and Traditional Knowledge into HIA
- Advance Indigenous Environmental Health Research
- Transfer of Indigenous Environmental Health Knowledge into Policy and Practice
- Indigenous Driven Development Planning

Parting Messages

- Integration not fragmentation: Better integration with EIA, Industry, determinants of health and Traditional Knowledge
- Governance: include health professionals and Elders on your Team
- Human impacts may be dynamic, multi-variate, variable within a population and sometimes unpredictable, so HIA is rarely straightforward
- The practice of HIA is still evolving
- Communities differ
- There is no single best way to do an HIA

Aboriginal Proverb

Treat the earth well; it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children.

We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors; we borrow It from our Children."



Thank You

