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ABSTRACT: Wisdom Seeking and Perspectives on Liver Wellness

Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus infecting the liver and causing damaged tissue, cirrhosis, or liver cancer, resulting in greater life years lost than any other infectious disease in Canada. Indigenous communities face higher incidence as well as lower treatment uptake, although a medication treatment is available which offers high rates of cure. But this Western Science cure approach is not achieving exceptional results. In response, and with the intent of supporting wellbeing, wellness and wholistic approaches as well as potential for improved access to Hepatitis C cure, formative research has been initiated asking for guidance from Indigenous healthcare colleagues in directing a respectful approach. This Wisdom Seeking work hopes to incorporate Indigenous perspectives on liver wellness into the pathway for Hepatitis C care. Proposed Wisdom Seeking work among 6-10 community Knowledge Holders across Treaty areas in Alberta working within Indigenous Wholistic Methodologies through qualitative methods while respecting protocol will spend time fostering relationship facilitating listening to perspectives, story, and open-ended interview conversations regarding traditional health and wellness approaches. Resulting knowledge will be respectfully and reflectively co-analyzed with participant partners for themes and consistent message. These will be shared back to community reflecting culturally relevant messaging and language translations through visual medias while honoring participant's perspectives. This work has potential to influence creation of culturally relevant resources and treatment pathways impacting provincial policy while incorporating wholistic and traditional wellness approaches to Hepatitis C and liver health.