

Social Environment and First Nations Health in British Columbia: A Rural-Urban Dichotomy

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Abstract

The disparities in First Nation health status are largely attributed to poor social environment. The study of infant mortality rates provides a foundation for exploring the cultural and social discriminations that may be affecting health outcomes for British Columbia's Aboriginal population. This paper provides an analysis of the social environments to which Aboriginal infants are exposed. Indicators of social environment are compared on the regional level for BC's 15 Health Service Delivery Areas, to determine which variables are affecting infant health the most. Especially relevant to the analysis of infant death is timing; a death in the post neonatal stage of infancy is more indicators of environmental conditions. The research also considers the difference in health outcome between urban and rural areas and whether urban locations have worse social environment than rural regions. The urban-rural dichotomy is highlighted in order to demonstrate how changes in environmental circumstance affect Aboriginal health, particularly in relation to sudden infant death syndrome or SIDS, which is the leading cause of deaths during the post neonatal stage of infancy in British Columbia.

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