



4th Annual McGill Global Health Conference

Dr. Victoria Edge

Senior Epidemiologist, Public Health Agency of Canada and Adjunct Professor, Department of Population Medicine, University of Guelph

Ms. Sherilee Harper

PhD Candidate, Department of Population Medicine, Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph

Title of Talk:

“My Word”: Storytelling and Digital Media for Health Promotion and Research in Rigolet, Nunatsiavut

Abstract:

In 2009, the Rigolet Inuit Community Government in Nunatsiavut was granted funding from the First Nations Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada to carry out a community-driven, participatory, storytelling project which examined the impacts of climate change on human health (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) and adaptation strategies. The community of Rigolet worked with researchers, epidemiologists, and a not-for-profit organization to use digital media to gather stories and data about climate change in the region, the climate-health relationship, and current and possible adaptation strategies. The ‘digital dialogues’ gathered created an innovative and powerful platform for health media campaigns and also for analyzing the impacts of climate change on health in Inuit communities. While past research has indicated that health communication and education can positively influence behaviour concerning actions, management, and adaptation, many public health initiatives in Inuit communities have often been unable to provide this information in culturally-relevant or locally-appropriate formats. Examples of the digital health media created through this project will be screened, as well as a discussion of how this process has impacted the community, their future plans and then, in general, speak to the issue of culturally-relevant health media. Finally, this presentation will discuss broader benefits, concerns and potential for utilizing digital media to document and share stories based on the results to date from this Inuit community, and the potential for more global applications.