



Inuit Experiences & Expertise on the TB epidemic in Nunavik

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Tuberculosis (TB) is a growing problem in Nunavik and Inuit want to see real change now. In this endeavour, we wanted to learn from Nunavimmiut how TB impacts their lives and how they want TB services improved.

Our team of Inuit and First Nations researchers visited 5 communities between 2022 and 2023. We spoke to 156 Nunavimmiut who expressed that they want better health and better protection against TB. Inuit outlined their hardships around having TB and sleeping TB. They also shared clear ideas on improving TB care. These ideas became the 7 Calls to Action for TB by Nunavimmiut.

What was the big picture? Right now, TB care is provided based on what services and resources are available. Clinics and hospitals in Nunavik frequently don't have enough tools, materials, and staff which makes it hard for patients and communities. Instead, Inuit expressed that clinics should focus more on meeting the needs of Inuit community members.

For example, when there is no x-ray in community, people are flown out to another village for a simple 5-minute test. Another example, parents with kids at home, or others with no means of transportation, may find it difficult to get to the clinic every day to take TB pills. Some Inuit asked why every person in their community was not being checked for TB (Screening). Others said that they felt blamed for having TB (Stigma). Many of the Inuit we spoke to had lots of questions about TB. They explained that if there was more Inuktitut being used at the clinic, they would understand TB better.

To give better support for community members with TB, to lift up their well-being and above all, to get rid of TB from Nunavik, here are the 7 Calls to Action determined by Nunavimmiut:

- 1) Increasing Inuit control over TB care & information: Nunavimmiut wanted to have more say in making decisions about TB in their community. They wanted to know numbers to help decide.

- 2) Meeting the patient's needs: Nunavimmiut believe in helping those in need. They called for the clinic to help make people's lives easier when they have TB or sleeping TB. Help with food. Help get to clinic. Help parents take care of their kids. Figuring out how to help people so they want to keep taking treatment instead of being forced.
- 3) Localize TB Care: Inuit said if more tests and treatments and support was available in their home community, they would feel safer. It would be less hard when they have to deal with TB.
- 4) Do community-wide screening: Inuit asked for regular checks of everyone (screening). Inuit want to have control over when and how it is done. It should be done the way the community wants.
- 5) More Inuit health care workers
- 6) TB shouldn't be shameful: Inuit said there is no reason to feel ashamed about TB. They wanted to educate each other, so people stop blaming others for TB.
- 7) Improving respectful-care training for qallunaat workers: Inuit called for always being respected at the Clinic. They said qallunat need to know more about Inuit from Inuit, so they understand how to respect and care for Inuit better.

This work was undertaken by the Puvallunirmut tukisigiavik team (based at Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre) and the Nunavik Regional Board of Health & Social Services.



Increasing Inuit control over TB care & information



Meeting the patient's needs



Localize TB care



Do community-wide screening



More inuit health care workers



TB shouldn't be shameful



Improving respectful-care training for qallunaat workers

Illustration of 7 calls to action by Pasa Mangiok with support of Anna Dunn-Suen.

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