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3 Exploring Métis health, spirituality, and wellbeing: A patient-oriented community-based pilot
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6 study with the Métis Nation of Alberta – Region 3
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21
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23

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29

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Lay summary

Historically, Métis people were of North American Indian and European ancestry, and travellers who formed distinct communities. Due to ongoing effects of colonization, including questioning of Indigenous identity, changes to traditional ways of life, and a lack of legal rights, Métis people in Canada have experienced multiple inequities and intergenerational trauma, affecting individual, family, and community health and wellbeing. There is much information about colonization, loss, and marginalization for Métis people. However, more Métis-guided community-based research is needed about building community, developing social support, and practices for healing and health. The purpose of this study was to explore links between health, spirituality, and wellbeing within the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)-Region 3. We met with elected MNA – Region 3 leaders to discuss potential study topics and discussed ways to go about the study. With community members, informal and elected leaders, and an Elder from the MNA-Region 3, we co-developed a survey and distributed it face-to face with MNA – Region 3 members in Calgary, AB. We held a working group to analyse survey results together, developing themes and recommendations, which were shared and confirmed by the community. The top three priorities were: (1) passing on Métis traditions and culture to younger generation; (2) blending different cultural and spiritual practices; and (3) cultural immersion/traditional knowledge/learning in community. Community pilgrimages to sacred sites and regular community gatherings with spiritual, cultural, and educational focus provide potential to enhance health, spirituality, and wellbeing. Similar research across the remaining 5 regions in the MNA is recommended.

Exploring Métis health, spirituality, and wellbeing: A patient-oriented community-based pilot study with the Métis Nation of Alberta – Region 3

Introduction

The Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Commission of Canada Calls to Action (1) indicate research arising from within First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) communities can promote equity and justice. Historically, Métis people were of North American Indian and European ancestry, founders of the fur trade, and travellers who formed distinct communities, keeping close ties with families and kin who lived across a vast region.(2, 3) Métis leader Louis Riel (1844-1885), negotiated Manitoba's entrance into Canadian confederation, and was subsequently forced into exile.(3) Riel, a devout Catholic, celebrated his Indigenous ancestry:

Indian Blood throbs in me:
And I praise my ancestors
Who in the sweetest tone
Taught me the Huron Carol (4, p. 13)

Riel was requested by Métis people in Saskatchewan to obtain titles for their land, and together with Gabriel Dumont, Riel waged a resistance against the Canadian government.(3) This resistance peaked in 1885 at Batoche, SK, where 5,000 Canadian soldiers fought 400 Métis and Cree; Métis families were scattered and forced into hiding.(2) Riel gave himself up for trial, was executed, and many Métis leaders were jailed. Additional intergenerational trauma (caused by physical, social, and cultural violence), occurred with the advent of residential schools and the Sixties Scoop.(2, 5) Approximately 9% of children taken to residential schools were Métis.(6) During the Sixties Scoop thousands of FNMI children were placed in foster care, and adopted by mostly non-Indigenous families throughout Canada and the United States.(5, 7) First Nations and Métis children in foster care are among

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3 the most vulnerable children in Canada.(8) Currently, 7% of children in Canada are FNMI,
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5 yet they comprise 52% of children < age 14 in care.(9)
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8 Métis people have experienced marginalization and decreased wellbeing for varying
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10 reasons: (1) scepticism of their identity as Indigenous people; (2) classification as Halfbreeds;
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12 (3) government acquisition of land; (4) questioning and regulation of traditional ways of life;
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14 and (5) encroachment on socio-economic and legal rights.(10) Much research regarding
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16 detrimental effects of colonialism exists, but there is a lack of Métis-guided decolonizing,
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18 participatory research contributing to understanding of individual, family, and community
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20 wellbeing.(11) In addition, there is an urgent need for research contributing to development
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22 of policies increasing health equity for FNMI people.(12) Alberta has the highest Métis
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24 population in Canada, where over 114,375 people live within six regions, and the only
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26 designated Métis land bases in Canada, comprising over 1.25 million acres of land.(13) This
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28 community-based pilot study took place in the MNA-Region 3 (the southernmost part of the
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30 MNA), within the city of Calgary, AB (a large urban centre > 1.3 million people). The
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32 purpose of this community-based participatory pilot study was to explore links between
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34 health, spirituality, and wellbeing within the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)-Region 3.
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40 **Methods**

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42 Three theoretical frameworks grounded our research: (1) Ways of knowing, a belief in the
43
44 connectedness of all things (14, 15); (2) Participatory action research (PAR), influenced by
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46 Lewin (1890-1947) who questioned societal change without community involvement, and
47
48 emphasized colonization's harmful effects (16), and founded by Freire (1921-1997) who
49
50 placed participants at the centre of the research processes (17, 18), and Borda (1925-2008),
51
52 incorporating local knowledge into power for change(18); and (3) the International
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54 Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum, used in the first
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56 author's previous patient-oriented research.(19) As individuals move toward the right of the
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3 spectrum (from being informed to consulted, from involved to collaborating), they become
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5 the final decision-makers. See Figure 1.
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7 **Patient-Oriented Research**

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10 All but the first author of this manuscript are members of the MNA – Region 3. The first 2
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12 authors met with local MNA-3 elected leaders, discussed potential research topics, and how
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14 to conduct the research. Community members, informal and elected leaders, and an Elder
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16 from the MNA-Region 3 were invited to participate in focus groups at an MNA-Region 3
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18 mixer (a large monthly social event) in October 2018; focus groups occurred in November
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20 2018 and January 2019. Each focus group lasted approximately 2 hours, informed consent
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22 was obtained, food was provided, and each participant received a \$50.00 gift certificate as a
23
24 thank-you. During focus groups, a community member and research team member took
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26 notes, which were referred to throughout survey development. During the first focus group,
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28 participants ($n = 7$) discussed areas of interest in relation to health, spirituality, and wellbeing,
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30 and identified meaningful survey questions. At the second focus group ($n = 6$), two
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32 participants from the first focus group were absent, but two new participants attended, further
33
34 discussion ensued, and a draft survey was developed. A qualitative structured survey was
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36 approved by the leadership of the MNA-Region 3 in early February 2019. See Figure 2. Data
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38 collection occurred face-to-face at two MNA-Region 3 mixers in February and March 2019.
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44 **Data analysis**

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46 Surveys ($N = 29$) were de-identified, scanned, and transcribed into word documents. In April
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48 2019, we engaged with a working group of community members, informal and elected
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50 leaders, and an Elder ($n = 7$) in participatory coding and theme development.(20, 21) Survey
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52 data were laid out on a large table on separate pieces of paper, where participants picked up
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54 those that held the most meaning to them, discussed why, and placed them in piles,
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3 developing themes. During this focus group, Doreen Dumont/Vaness Bergum, MNA-Region
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5 3's Elder spoke.

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8 I come to you today to share the spirit, wisdom, and culture of our Métis heritage...In
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10 the 1940's and the 50's it was against the law to speak our Michif language, against
11
12 the law to gather as a family or have community dances. Every summer in July, my
13
14 parents would place willows and a canvas over the box of the truck and load their
15
16 family of ten. Clothing, bedding, food, cooking supplies, and we headed off to Lac St
17
18 Anne Pilgrimage...We were taught to pray through the love of our parents. This was
19
20 also a time for friends and relatives to visit and share their language, fish, dried meat,
21
22 bannock, and stew. Loving times with people of Métis gathered...They would walk
23
24 for miles to be with their own people...I have memories and visions of my parents
25
26 walking in the healing waters of Lac St Anne. The spirit of Lac St Anne will remain
27
28 in my heart forever. No one can take the spirit of God from us. I have shared Lac St
29
30 Anne with my children and my grandchildren. (Doreen Dumont/Vaness Bergum)

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35 The place of the healing waters at Lac St Anne in community wellbeing was confirmed, as
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37 was the importance of meeting together regularly to participate in activities meaningful to the
38
39 community including spiritual, cultural, educational aspects of health and wellbeing. This
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41 data analysis process and initial results were shared, discussed, and affirmed with enthusiasm
42
43 at an MNA-Region 3 mixer in May 2019.

44 45 46 47 **Ethics approval**

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49 We developed a research proposal with local MNA-3 elected leaders, a formal research
50
51 agreement was signed, and CHREB ethical approval was obtained (REB18-0433).

52 53 54 **Results**

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56 Surveys were completed by 29 participants, members of the MNA – Region 3, ranging in age
57
58 from 28 to 80 years. The top 3 areas of interest were: (1) passing on Métis traditions and
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3 culture to younger generation (76%); (2) blending different cultural and spiritual practices
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5 (72%); and (3) cultural immersion/traditional knowledge/learning in community (66%).
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7
8 During co-analysis of survey data, an overarching theme of Connection and 4 corresponding
9
10 themes (to Métis ancestry, to community, to land, and to spirituality), were identified. See
11
12 Table 1.
13

14 15 **Connection**

16
17 Participants described health, spirituality, and wellbeing as “very much connected, more than
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19 we accept” (C – 024); “spirituality is the nucleus or focus which keeps all others in balance
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21 and sync” (C-004). Maintaining balance was central to wellbeing, “I find if you are not of a
22
23 sound mind then your body will never ‘fully’ be healthy. Our health starts internally and
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25 mentally” (C-023). Connection between addiction and spirituality was noted, “Most people
26
27 that have addictions are hurting inside and they are trying to fix it.” (C-008). Health,
28
29 spirituality, and wellbeing, “totally connected, the difficulty is western culture asks us to
30
31 work and live leaving emotions and spirituality out of the picture, then we suffer
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33 consequences of mental health issues.” (C - 002)
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37 38 **Connection to Métis ancestry**

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40 Tension between choosing to hide or disclose Métis ancestry was identified: “If I hide my
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42 Métis identity my spirit and my health suffer. If I share my Métis identity with mainstream
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44 society, I suffer racism” (C-002); “They tell me to say I am French as the Métis are
45
46 sometimes looked down on but I am who I am” (C-001). Some experienced early awareness
47
48 of Métis identity, “Grounded! Always have known who I was and my family and Métis
49
50 culture” (C-022), while others did not. Experiencing racism occurred in conjunction with
51
52 experiences of belonging, “The more I share my identity, the more others are accepting of
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54 me. The more I hide my identity, the more untrusting (confused) people can be of me” (C-
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56 014). One noted “If the medical community is aware that I am Aboriginal there is obvious
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3 discrimination” (C-021), while another described “protecting yourself from racist people.
4
5 You put up a shield of armour to protect your senses hearing, sight and heart” (C-003).
6
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8 **Connection to community**

9
10 Health, spirituality, and wellbeing “they’re all connected through my community” (C-021);
11
12 “once I knew I was Métis and met more Métis I felt like I had come home” (C-008); “I am
13
14 very new to the community, so being part of this community really brings me joy-which
15
16 helps with my wellbeing” (C-016). Effects of trauma on individual and community healing
17
18 and wholeness were identified, “I am highly interested in how past trauma can be passed
19
20 down to younger generations and how we can break the cycle of addiction/abuse” (C-023).
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23 **Connection to land**

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25 For many, connection to land and community contributed to health and wellbeing, but had
26
27 been interrupted, “want to see the harvesting rights given to the Métis the same as the First
28
29 Nations. Grandmother was robbed of her land by the government” (C-030). Connection to
30
31 land included passing on historical knowledge and traditions in a community context.
32
33 Connecting with the land involved historical understanding and current adaptation of
34
35 sustainability such as harvesting fish with nets, “how much more beneficial is it with
36
37 sustainable harvesting to use rod and line? My ancestors were scouts and interpreters- I am
38
39 honoured with the example they have left for me to follow” (C-004).
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44 **Connection to tradition**

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46 Connection to Indigenous and Roman Catholic traditions of wellness and healing included
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48 actions, practices, and rituals: “became a eucharistic minister in my church and Lac St. Anne
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50 pilgrimage” (C-003); “becoming a pipe healer/storyteller” (C-024); and blending “traditional
51
52 and non-traditional healing and health care” (C-022). “When I feel spiritually connected, I
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54 feel better, physically look better and feel grounded” (C-014).
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58 Our Creator, Great Spirit & Lord is viewed, pondered, worshipped by all.
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3 Where for art Thou? everywhere, in everything.
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5 Tho Far beyond words I have another name for the way in which, we are never alone.
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7 Thee Orchestrator of Infinity rhymes with Divinity, while embracing every heartbeat
8

9 of every creature, Poetry in motion, Loves our devotion. (Travis Ronald)
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12 **Interpretation**

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14 In this community-based participatory pilot study we co-developed and distributed a
15 qualitative structured survey to explore health, spirituality, and wellbeing within the MNA-
16 Region 3. An overarching theme of connection emerged, to Métis ancestry, to community, to
17 land, and to tradition. The place of community pilgrimages to sacred sites and cultural tours
18 to historical sites were confirmed as contributing to individual, family, and community
19 wellbeing and healing. Meeting together regularly to participate in meaningful community
20 activities including spiritual, cultural, and educational aspects of health and wellbeing was
21 also recommended.
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33 Some participants always knew they were Métis, while others discovered it later in
34 life. There existed tension regarding choosing to reveal identity; passing as “white” had been
35 used as a survival tactic in the past, which could contribute to decreased connection with
36 spirituality.(22) At a two-day 2018 federal government emergency meeting regarding the
37 high number of FNMI children in care, key causes of Métis children in care included
38 ignorance among child welfare authorities about who Métis people are.(9) Participants
39 described health, spirituality, and wellbeing occurring in community, and although individual
40 and community wholeness and healing were described, so were effects of trauma, and the
41 need to break intergenerational cycles of addiction/abuse. Participants talked about the
42 importance of telling their stories. Managing intergenerational trauma, resultant health
43 disparities, and ongoing structural violence requires protective buffers: (1) decolonizing
44 strategies such as self-determination and self-governance; (2) identity formation such as
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3 cultural engagement, healing practices, and spiritual ceremonies; and (3) culturally-adapted
4 interventions such as incorporating information on acculturation, colonization, and historical
5 trauma.(23) On June 27, 2019, the MNA signed the first self-government agreement between
6 a Métis nation and the Government of Canada, with a clearly-defined process to implement
7 Métis jurisdiction in core areas of self-government.(24)

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15 Participants described wanting to reconnect with land and seeking reparation for
16 wrongs done in their families and communities. The Canadian government issued Métis scrip
17 (Halfbreed scrip), providing the appearance of Métis land entitlement, but instead facilitating
18 wealth accumulation and western settlement (Tough and McGregor 2011). The Canadian
19 government has moved slowly regarding land claims and reconciliation with FNMI people,
20 and specifically for Métis title claims, which are justified and strong, there has been little
21 action.(25) Métis people have faced discrimination due to their mixed heritage, each
22 generation has experienced challenges, with resultant resilience, determination, and
23 independence, and a strong, adaptable work ethic; current challenges include reconnecting
24 with Métis identity, culture, and tradition.(26) For Métis people, moving forward toward
25 healing and wellbeing includes recognition of the intergenerational effects of trauma, and the
26 essential place of family and community.

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Limitations of our pilot study were the small sample size in one geographical area therefore, findings may not be generalizable to the entire MNA-Region 3. There is much diversity throughout Métis communities, and priorities contributing to wellbeing may differ in unique ways, therefore we recommend further face-to-face survey distribution in collaboration with community members, informal and elected leaders, and Elders throughout the remaining communities in the MNA-Region 3. Hierarchical development and transfer of knowledge is not ethical or advantageous, however, community-based participatory research can promote equity and justice and increase wellbeing.(27, 28) FNMI people are strong and

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2
3 resilient, with a holistic world view that has potential to contribute to the overall health and
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5 wellbeing of all Canadians.(29)
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8 Lessons learned in our patient-oriented community-based pilot study included the
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10 following. Participants in our pilot study described the importance of telling their stories, of
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12 sharing who they are, and persisting in pursuing wellbeing for themselves and their
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14 communities. Engaging the MNA – Region 3 community in co-developing, distributing, and
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16 analysing a qualitative structured survey presented opportunity for: (1) Increased individual
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18 and community knowledge Métis identity/ancestry and health, spirituality, and wellbeing; (2)
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20 increased research capacity within the MNA – Region 3; (3) increased collaboration in
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22 community-led identification of priorities for community-initiated funding and policy
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24 development; and (4) contributing to increased individual, family, and community wellbeing
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26 within the MNA – Region 3 and beyond. We recommend engaging in Métis-guided
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28 community-based research across the remaining 5 regions in the MNA.
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Table 1: Quotes supporting primary themes	
Theme; subthemes	Representative quotes
Connection	<p>When my spirit loses a sense of purpose, lack of love, too much stress, life distractions then my health starts to decline and my whole sense of well-being suffers adversely. We must feed all: mind, body, soul, spirit, and love! (C-013)</p> <p>Take medicine and food that you grow. Be happy and don't dwell on negative people. Walk away lonely to people that will hurt you. (C-001)</p> <p>I learned of the medicine circle many years ago. It is an Aboriginal approach to the way that there are four directions in life, North, South, East & West. There are also four major categories for humans to consider & prioritize. Mental, Emotional, Spiritual, & Physical. I have been told and consider it to be a very valuable way of looking at things... Balance all four of these areas equally. If you are too emotional, or too spiritual, your other areas will be less fulfilled causing you to be unbalanced. Just as the wind is under both wings of every bird, there is a natural balance to admire, and to strive to achieve in your own ingredients of life. (C – 020)</p> <p>Addiction and spirituality, both are very deep in nature and effect. One is dangerous and the other is strengthening. In other word opposites yet competing. Spirituality and cultural history as a tool for healing. One needs something to believe in. To rely on both on an ongoing nature. Something that should deepen over the years as one grows older and more dependent on beliefs as their physical activity decreases and needs something to replace it. (C-015)</p> <p>A need for continued support for recovering alcoholism and drug abuse. Need place to go for support groups. List of people to call when think I am going to relapse. (C-030)</p> <p>When I am not in touch with my spirit, I feel unwell. (C-012)</p> <p>When you are healthy spiritually you are usually healthy. (C-011)</p>
1. Connection to Métis Ancestry	<p>My grandfather hid from our family that we were Métis because of the prejudice that existed against Métis back in the 1920's when he started his family near Winnipeg, MB. I didn't find out that I was Métis until I did some research into my family tree in 2003. It took me over a year on my own to put together the genealogy but the family history and stories I found to be amazing and explained a lot to me of who I was and why I am the way I am. (C-010)</p>


	<p>Once we learnt about our Métis status we have been learning, trying to understand why my parents never talked about it. My mom who is now nearly 90 years old has started to tell us a bit more. (C-006)</p> <p>Though some would say that Métis people can usually hide their identity, this hiding does nothing to promote health, spirituality, and wellbeing. Being Métis lots of people tend to believe that I am not a productive worthwhile human being. Sometimes it is easier to fall into the trap of what people expect instead of standing up for what I truly believe and what I really am! (C-030)</p>
<p>2. Connection to Community</p>	<p>I believe that addressing the wholeness of a person and of a community is the only way that we can address root causes of the intergenerational and direct trauma that cause indigenous people to remain on the margins of society. These traumas, combined with systemic racism trap us in lifestyles where our choices become very limited and the cycles of hopelessness are perpetuated. Our culture and language are who we are and who we always have been. They are our spirituality, our religion and our governance. They are integral to our ability to heal because without them neither the individual nor the community can reclaim our wholeness. Until we are whole we cannot see other than what we have already seen. (C-017)</p> <p>The Métis culture is very hard working and they are very productive in the community. Lots of the Métis people start companies and contribute to society. (C – 030)</p>
<p>3. Connection to Land</p>	<p>Can we teach cultural history and practices to foster spirituality in a way “providing soul food” for one’s spirit. If we have gaps in our cultural history and identity can we for spiritually whole and fulfilled? Passing on Métis traditions and culture to younger generations- Feel this is important to foster a younger healthy thriving Métis generation. This can take through numerous modalities: music, art, song, games, etc. representing of traditional cultures. Would be amazing to have cultural “tours” to key Métis historical sites via community bus. Guided informative and a journey of healing, understanding and cultural immersion ... “retreats”- spiritual, cultural, educational that can be informative, experiential and healing as a collective. (C-013)</p> <p>I have strong feelings that we as a nation of Métis people need to reconnect with the land to be self-sufficient and live off the land to find better health nutritionally but also mentally and the work to do so creates physical health. Land claims- I hope that as a nation we can get our land back so we can continue to become more self-sufficient and provide healthy food for ourselves. (C-019)</p>

	<p>We belong to the land and without our connection to the land and nature we suffer. We are community spirited and without our kinship we are lost. Strong culture = strong spirit. (C-002)</p> <p>Body movement, breath work, connection to land, prayer, smudge, healthy food, and being connected to heart is and has played a major key in my current health. (C-031)</p> <p>I go to church most weeks and I believe this helps keep a person happier through the good times and the bad times that this life can dish out. My Catholic religion helps me with spirituality and my Métis background helps me to find this spirituality in the great outdoors out in the environment and wilderness. (C-010)</p>
<p>4. Connection to Tradition</p>	<p>I believe having a connection with a higher power gives people a reason to live and a sense of moral responsibility. Our general wellbeing is constantly affected by our daily decision making and our daily decision making can be directly linked to our spirituality or lack thereof. (C-019)</p> <p>I walk with the lord...coming to know Jesus as my Lord and allowing him to be part of my life- He healed my mind body and soul. (C-008)</p> <p>My Catholic religion provides me with my God and my God is the Creator. (C-010)</p> <p>How best can blending different cultures and spiritual practices be bridged to honour and respect both? (C-013)</p> <p>Smudging is good and helps me feel good. Also sweats, praying and keeping in touch with my spirituality helps me maintain a good perspective on life. (C-011)</p> <p>I pray to many gods: JC, Creator, Quan Yin, Buddha, Angel Spirits, Animal Totems. Gives greater sense of totality and connectedness to all having something to offer. I pray, drum, smudge, practice yoga, read about angels after life, traditional practices and rather choose what works. (C-013)</p> <p>I attend Christian church and blend my spiritual knowledge and thoughts with the moral ideals and teachings at the church. If there were a Métis church that imparted traditional teachings, I would attend that. (C-019)</p>

IAP2'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM



The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Figure 1: International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum.

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Study ID _____ Date of Birth: _____

Members, leaders, and Elders of the MNA – Region 3 have met together to develop these questions/questionnaire/survey.

Please check off areas of interest to you:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Prison ministries
<input type="checkbox"/>	Addiction and spirituality
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blending different cultural and spiritual practices
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural immersion/traditional knowledge/learning in community
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spirituality and cultural history as a tool for healing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elder’s role in healing (physical and spiritual)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reconciliation and forgiveness (government and church)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Passing on Métis traditions and culture to younger generation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nutrition and mental/physical wellness (for example Diabetes/Mental health)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Land claims and harvesting rights
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning and preserving language
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pilgrimages to sacred sites

Please use the next few pages to write about any of the topics you checked off above.

Additional Questions:

- (1) Are there ways that you see your health, spirituality, and wellbeing as connected?
- (2) What are the most important things you have done in your lifetime that have impacted your health?
- (3) Are there ways that your Métis identity affects your health, spirituality, or wellbeing?
- (4) How do you blend different religious or spiritual practices to maintain your health, spirituality, or wellbeing?
- (5) Are there any other areas you want to write about related to health, spirituality, and wellbeing?

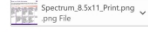
Figure 2: Qualitative structured survey.

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Ellen Ernst - IAP2 <operations@iap2.org>
To: Carla Ginn

Reply Reply All Forward ...
Mon 16/12/2019 12:49

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We wish you success in your endeavours. Let me know if you need anything else.

Regards,
Ellen

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GRIPP2 Short Form

Section and Topic	Item	Page No.
1. Aim	The purpose of this community-based participatory pilot study was to explore links between health, spirituality, and wellbeing within the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)-Region 3.	2
2. Methods	<p>Patient-Oriented Research</p> <p>All but the first author of this manuscript are members of the MNA – Region 3. The first 2 authors met with local MNA-3 elected leaders, discussed potential research topics, and how to conduct the research. Community members, informal and elected leaders, and an Elder from the MNA-Region 3 were invited to participate in focus groups at an MNA-Region 3 mixer (a large monthly social event) in October 2018; focus groups occurred in November 2018 and January 2019. Each focus group lasted approximately 2 hours, informed consent was obtained, food was provided, and each participant received a \$50.00 gift certificate as a thank-you. During focus groups, a community member and research team member took notes, which were referred to throughout survey development. During the first focus group, participants ($n = 7$) discussed areas of interest in relation to health, spirituality, and wellbeing, and identified meaningful survey questions. At the second focus group ($n = 6$), two participants from the first focus group were absent, but two new participants attended, further discussion ensued, and a draft survey was developed. A qualitative structured survey was approved by the leadership of the MNA-Region 3 in early February 2019. See Figure 2. Data collection occurred face-to-face at two MNA-Region 3 mixers in February and March 2019.</p>	3
3. Study results	Surveys were completed by 29 participants, members of the MNA – Region 3, ranging in age from 28 to 80 years. The top 3 areas of interest were: (1) passing on Métis traditions and culture to younger generation (76%); (2) blending different cultural and spiritual practices (72%); and (3) cultural immersion/traditional knowledge/learning in community (66%). During co-analysis of survey data, an overarching theme of Connection and 4 corresponding themes (to Métis ancestry, to	4

	community, to land, and to spirituality), were identified. See Table 1.	
4. Discussion and conclusions	<p>Some participants always knew they were Métis, while others discovered it later in life. There existed tension regarding choosing to reveal identity; passing as “white” had been used as a survival tactic in the past, which could contribute to decreased connection with spirituality.(22) At a two-day 2018 federal government emergency meeting regarding the high number of FNMI children in care, key causes of Métis children in care included ignorance among child welfare authorities about who Métis people are.(9) Participants described health, spirituality, and wellbeing occurring in community, and although individual and community wholeness and healing were described, so were effects of trauma, and the need to break intergenerational cycles of addiction/abuse. Participants talked about the importance of telling their stories. Managing intergenerational trauma, resultant health disparities, and ongoing structural violence requires protective buffers: (1) decolonizing strategies such as self-determination and self-governance; (2) identity formation such as cultural engagement, healing practices, and spiritual ceremonies; and (3) culturally-adapted interventions such as incorporating information on acculturation, colonization, and historical trauma.(23) On June 27, 2019, the MNA signed the first self-government agreement between a Métis nation and the Government of Canada, with a clearly-defined process to implement Métis jurisdiction in core areas of self-government.(24)</p> <p>Participants described wanting to reconnect with land and seeking reparation for wrongs done in their families and communities. The Canadian government issued Métis scrip (Halfbreed scrip), providing the appearance of Métis land entitlement, but instead facilitating wealth accumulation and western settlement (Tough and McGregor 2011). The Canadian government has moved slowly regarding land claims and reconciliation with FNMI people, and specifically for Métis title claims, which are justified and strong, there has been little action.(25) Métis people have faced discrimination due to their mixed heritage, each generation has experienced challenges, with resultant resilience, determination, and independence, and a strong, adaptable work ethic; current challenges include</p>	7,8

	reconnecting with Métis identity, culture, and tradition.(26) For Métis people, moving forward toward healing and wellbeing includes recognition of the intergenerational effects of trauma, and the essential place of family and community.	
5. Reflections/critical perspective	Lessons learned in our patient-oriented community-based pilot study included the following. Participants in our pilot study described the importance of telling their stories, of sharing who they are, and persisting in pursuing wellbeing for themselves and their communities. Engaging the MNA – Region 3 community in co-developing, distributing, and analysing a qualitative structured survey presented opportunity for: (1) Increased individual and community knowledge Métis identity/ancestry and health, spirituality, and wellbeing; (2) increased research capacity within the MNA – Region 3; (3) increased collaboration in community-led identification of priorities for community-initiated funding and policy development; and (4) contributing to increased individual, family, and community wellbeing within the MNA – Region 3 and beyond. We recommend engaging in Métis-guided community-based research across the remaining 5 regions in the MNA.	9