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*Project: Improving Indigenous Peoples' access to health care services and experiences of care through digital health technologies*



### **Background**

Little is known about the impacts of digital health technologies on the care experiences of Indigenous People and their health care providers. Shedding light on these experiences will help determine what care gaps exist and potential areas for improvement. A preliminary search in one database (MEDLINE) revealed no published reviews or reviews currently in progress specific to Indigenous Peoples and the use of digital health technologies to enhance care experiences and access to health services.

Research Question: What are the experiences of Indigenous People receiving care, and health professionals providing care, using digital health technologies?

Objectives: 1) To synthesize knowledge on the role of digital health technologies in enhancing access to health services and communication with care providers, and 2) To understand Indigenous Peoples and care providers' experiences in rural and remote communities with this method of care.

Methodology: Critical Social Theory and Indigenous Research Methodologies will frame the research project and processes. A mixed methods approach consisting of two stages will be used.

In stage 1, from Fall 2022 – Winter 2023, a scoping review based on the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) methodology will be conducted following steps one through five. A review protocol will be developed and published to enhance rigor. Descriptive statistics and thematic content analysis will be applied, and results will be reported in narrative and tabular format, in line with the PRISMA-ScR reporting guidelines. A systematic review will inform stage two of research which will occur Winter 2023. Patients and care providers will be recruited through information sessions with community representatives and distributed posters within the communities.

In stage two, from Fall 2023 - Summer 2024, semi-structured interviews will be conducted, and data will be used to inform the digital storytelling process. Digital storytelling will capture the lived experiences of the participants offering a different mode for self-expression. A series of videos, 2-3 minutes each, will be co-created with participants using pictures, footage, quotes, etc. This method is culturally relevant to Indigenous People as it aligns with traditional methods of knowledge sharing and capturing of oral wisdoms. Thematic content analysis will also be applied.

Outcomes: The project will provide a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of both Indigenous patients and care providers and will help identify potential gaps in care. The knowledge gained will be instrumental in directing future research for enhancing experiences of care, improving Indigenous health outcomes, and health equity. Findings will also serve to inform nursing education and practice by guiding health care curriculum, training modules and videos, and increasing the knowledge base of health care professionals working with Indigenous People. As well, this research will augment established Indigenous and health research, influencing paradigm shifts, policy change, and health system transformation relevant to Indigenous Peoples' health in Canada.