

Amber Ruben - University of Alberta

Project: Alexander First Nation members' views of their relationships with community pharmacists: a conversation and interpretive description study



Background

Community pharmacists within Alberta are well positioned to provide primary care with their medication knowledge, accessibility, and prescribing authority. Research has explored patient perceptions of trust, communication styles, and patient experiences with community pharmacists, but these studies have never focused on an Indigenous perspective. Considering health disparities, distrust of healthcare systems, and recommendations by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to increase Indigenous wellness, trusting relationships must be built between pharmacists and Indigenous

Peoples. The objective of this research is to explore First Nation members' views of their relationships with community pharmacists. Areas such as trust, expectations of pharmacists, and their willingness to discuss traditional medicines with pharmacists will be explored. It is important to gain Indigenous patient perspective as pharmacy is built upon a patient focused pharmaceutical care framework, and

because relationality is integral to Indigenous worldview. The research proposal was collaboratively developed over multiple meetings with the First Nation research committee and researchers. Framework, methodology, recruitment, data collection and analysis were co-developed. Indigenous conversation methodology will be integrated with interpretive descriptive thematic analysis. Indigenous research is built on respect, relevance, reciprocity, and conversation as a part of a long history of oral tradition. A student research assistant from the Nation will also code the interviews to integrate a First Nation's lens. Themes will be developed and described with the First Nation partners. Results will be delivered to the First Nation Health Director and members in plain language and will be tailored based on research findings and in a manner to build upon strengths. Findings will be submitted to a peer reviewed journal, scientific conferences and to different pharmacy organizations. The goal of the project is to increase cultural safety and trauma informed care provided by community pharmacists by informing them of First Nation perspectives of their care.

Amber Ruben is a pharmacist at the Misericordia Community hospital and has practiced in medicine, geriatrics, and ICU over her 17 years at Covenant Health. Amber is Inuvialuk (Inuit from the northwestern Canadian Arctic region) and was born and raised in Ft. Smith, NT. To pursue undergraduate studies, she moved to Lethbridge and obtained a BSc in Neuroscience, however decided not to continue a career in research at the time and completed a BSc Pharmacy at the University of Alberta. Over the past few years, Amber has become involved in educating pharmacy students and health care professionals on the history of Indigenous Peoples within Canada and the link between colonization and current health issues. Amber is also a member of the Indigenous Advisory Body within Covenant Health. In the fall of 2021, Amber resumed her studies and started a Master of Science degree in Pharmacy with a focus on Indigenous health. Most recently, Amber has joined the inaugural Board of Directors for the Indigenous Pharmacy Professionals of Canada. Outside of school and work, Amber has three Métis/Inuvialuit children who keep her busy with their activities including soccer, hockey, cheer, water polo, piano and taekwondo. Amber and family also enjoy connecting with the land on summer camping trips and annual trips home to spend time at the lake on the family trapline.