Community-driven research in northern Canada: local visual representations of a health research project on Helicobacter pylori


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Background
- Helicobacter pylori is a bacterium known to cause gastritis, peptic ulcers, and stomach cancer.
- Northern Aboriginal populations have a disproportionately high frequency of H. pylori infection and associated diseases.
- The Canadian North Helicobacter pylori (CANHelp) Working Group, links community representatives, researchers, and health care providers to conduct research to address community concerns about health risks.
- Research aims include describing disease burden and risk factors associated with H. pylori infection, and identifying effective public health and knowledge translation strategies for infection control.

Methods
- Research implementation occurs through guidance from community-specific planning committees comprising various local representatives and research staff.
- Teams work together to achieve community-specific goals and to uphold the integrity of the research.
- In three participating communities, community members developed a visual symbol, or logo, representing the community and its health objectives.
- In each case, through community guidance, contests were held for ‘the best’ H. pylori project logo.

Results
- This initiative opened discussions about the project, the bacterium and its health effects, and resulted in dozens of submissions from various members of each community.
- The ‘winning’ design was selected through a process chosen by community representatives: the successful artist won a prize, and a graphically designed version of the drawing was created.
- Each of the three graphically designed images is now used to represent the respective community project.

Conclusions
- These images capture the imagination and innovation of community members, visually conceptualizing the community-based research and the bacterium from their perspectives.
- While each image is unique, the logos also incorporate common themes amongst communities involved: ties to the Land and to rich Indigenous cultures.
- These figures also promote and represent a strong community-based partnership where questions are posed and solutions to health problems are discovered together.

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