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# The Manitoba Network Environment for Aboriginal Health Research (NEAHR) program: Building research capacity in indigenous health

Article in *International journal of circumpolar health* · January 2013

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bottleneck effect. This effect, according to phylogeny of specific Yakut Y-chromosomal lineages, is dated back to 11th – 12th centuries. Haplotype analysis of CUL7 gene in 3M syndrome, NAG gene in SCOP syndrome and PABPN1 gene in OPMD suggested that the accumulation of the disorders in Yakuts was driven by two major events: (1) a bottleneck about 1000 years ago, associated with the initial migration of ancestors of modern Yakuts from south to north; and (2) population expansion approximately 350 years ago when Yakuts extended from the central part into the territory of their modern settlement. Population screening and DNA diagnostics algorithms of Yakut-specific disease is currently under development. We suggest that research of Mendelian and common diseases in isolated Siberian populations may provide a new source of understanding of disease genetics, as well as improving the quality of health care to indigenous peoples.

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### **THE MANITOBA NETWORK ENVIRONMENT FOR ABORIGINAL HEALTH RESEARCH (NEAHR) PROGRAM: BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY IN INDIGENOUS HEALTH**

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This session will describe the evolution of a research capacity development model for the Manitoba Network Environment for Aboriginal Health Research (NEAHR) program at the University of Manitoba. The program was originally established as the Aboriginal Capacity and Developmental Environments (ACADRE) program in 2001, and in 2008 evolved into the next phase under the NEAHR initiative of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). Prior to the establishment of the ACADRE program in Canada, few First Nations, Inuit and Metis students pursued a career in health research and there was limited supports for those who entered the field. The ACADRE/NEAHR programs have been instrumental, through a network of programs across Canada, in fostering a cohort of health researchers that are emerging as role models and mentors. Building on the foundation of health researchers mentored through ACADRE, the NEAHR expands the horizons for indigenous health researchers to include national and

international research relationships. Students entering this field often find they are faced with the challenge of walking in two worlds: the Western scientific environment and the paradigm of Indigenous knowledge. Learning about research at this intersection necessitates an approach that helps prepare emerging researchers to not only thrive in both environments but also to empower them to break new ground and discover new approaches to conducting research. The Manitoba NEAHR, through focused academic mentorship supports and relevant cultural supports and cultural mentorship supports, assists undergraduate and graduate students to not only succeed academically but also to engage in respectful research partnerships with communities to address the health priorities of Manitoba's First Nations and Metis peoples.

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### **POLICY DEVELOPMENT AS A REFERENCE TOOL FOR PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

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The Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research (AICBR) conducted a review of the policy implications for a community-based health research organization when establishing collaborations with various institutions or organizations. A scan of reports and existing resources was conducted and synthesized into a Policy Framework that brings together information, resource links, checklists and templates that are relevant to northern community based organizations. Conducting community-based health research in the North offers unique circumstances where funds and partners from multiple sources and often across considerable distances collaborate to address complex issues that go beyond health specifically. Within this context, policy development can serve as both a reference tool for partnership development as well as a means for clarifying common ground between community-based health research organizations and other organizations. The policy framework that was developed by AICBR provides a critical analysis of the policy implications for entering into partnership with another institution or organization. The outcomes have been synthesized into a guide for Northern community-based health research organizations as they consider various partnership opportunities. Results: – A sample policy framework to support policy decision-making in community-based health research organizations and strengthen partnership development. – A critical analysis of the