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Session: **KP2**: Saturday May 2 – 11:00:12:30 – Indigenous Communities

Track: Social Sciences
Subject: Indigenous Health
Presentation Type: Oral
Title of Abstract: **Culturally Specific and Gender Based STBBI Interventions Designed by and for Incarcerated Indigenous Women**
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Abstract

Summary: Through engagement sessions with incarcerated Indigenous women, we heard that they face barriers accessing health services and supports, including education, within prisons and upon release. These barriers may increase their risk of sexually transmitted blood borne infections (STBBIs) and may contribute to a deterioration of HIV/HCV infections. The aim of this project was to develop an evidence-based, culturally relevant STBBI intervention, designed by and for incarcerated Indigenous women, to increase their knowledge, awareness and self-efficacy towards STBBIs.

Background: Data indicates that prevalence rates of HCV and HIV are highest among incarcerated Indigenous women compared to any other population group. They experience gaps in accessing health and support services, including education, in prisons and upon release. The intervention intends to increase knowledge, reduce stigma and increase awareness of STBBIs. In doing so, it will inform participants' future choices, improve health outcomes and prevent further transmission of STBBIs while increasing awareness of services available to them within federal correctional institutions, and upon release.

Processes: The project team completed an environmental scan on STBBI resources for incarcerated Indigenous women and held sharing circles with women at three federal correctional institutions and a Section 81. The aim of the sharing circles was to assess participants' knowledge of STBBIs and evaluate their needs concerning STBBI education. This information is being used to inform the development of an evidence-based, culturally relevant STBBI intervention, designed by and for incarcerated Indigenous women.

Learnings: Results from the sharing circles showed an overall moderate to low level of knowledge of HIV, HCV, and other STBBIs and an overall high willingness to increase knowledge and awareness towards STBBIs.

Conclusion: The project provided insights on incarcerated Indigenous women's drive to obtain knowledge surrounding STBBIs. It also highlighted the importance of having culturally safe, gender specific educational resources, services and supports.