Using Statistics Canada Data to Support Evidence-Based Decision Making

Examples from the Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities program

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6th International Meeting on Indigenous Child Health
Ottawa, March 21, 2015
Presenter Disclosure
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Clément Chabot does not intend to discuss an unapproved/investigative use of a commercial product/device in this presentation.
Outline

1. Overview of the Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) program
2. Demographic information of Aboriginal peoples living off-reserve, in urban and northern communities
3. Examples of how Statistics Canada data is used to support evidence-based decision making for policy and program management purposes
4. Concluding remarks
The Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) Program

Description
• Early intervention program intended for Aboriginal children 3-5 years of age and their families living off-reserve, in urban and northern communities
• Delivered by community-based Aboriginal organizations
• Culturally appropriate programming intended to:
  » Improve school readiness and academic achievement and nurture a positive sense of self for Aboriginal children
  » Improve cultural awareness and use of Aboriginal languages
  » Address health and social factors affecting the well-being of Aboriginal children and their families

Quick Facts
• Launched in 1995
• Funding (Grants and Contributions): $29.1M annually
• 133 projects provide early-intervention programming in 117 communities for 4,600 Aboriginal children each year

Program Components
• Education
• Culture and language
• Health promotion
• Parental involvement
• Social support
• Nutrition
133 AHSUNC sites in 2015

Program Delivery Sites, 2012
Sites de mise en oeuvre des programmes, 2012

- AHSUNC / PAPACUN (n=131)

* 133 AHSUNC sites in 2015
Canada’s Aboriginal Population
Demographic information from the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS)

- 1,400,685 people self-identified as Aboriginal in 2011
  - 61% First Nations
  - 32% Métis
  - 4% Inuit

- In 2011, Aboriginal peoples represented 4.3% of the total Canadian population

- The Aboriginal population increased by 20% between 2006 and 2011, compared with 5% for the non-Aboriginal population

- Approximately three-quarters of the Aboriginal population live off-reserve

- In 2011, there were 120,000 Aboriginal children aged 0-6 living off-reserve; 47,500 of those were 3-5 years of age
Understanding the Health and Wellbeing of Aboriginal Children and their Families

The Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) program uses various types of research and analytics to ensure an accurate understanding of the population it serves.

- **Health and wellbeing status** of Aboriginal children and their families living off-reserve (physical and mental health)
  - Analytical papers derived from the 2006 Aboriginal Children Survey (ACS)
  - 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS)

- **Social determinants of health** (employment, education, living arrangements, housing conditions, use of Aboriginal languages, participation in cultural activities, etc.)
  - 2011 National Household Survey (NHS)
  - 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS)
Understanding National and Local Demographic Trends

- The program is also using publicly available resources as well as custom analytical products to:
  - Better understand national and community level demographic trends
  - Validate ongoing alignment between program delivery and local needs

- **Local demographic trends and program delivery**
  - Community level ‘critical mass’ concept at the Census Sub-Division (CSD) level (close to 4500 in them in Canada), 4% of those CSDs (off-reserve) have a ‘critical mass’ of Aboriginal children
  - Local demographic shifts and enrolment levels

- **Socio-economic disparities**
  - Work using the Community Well-Being (CWB) Index has started
  - Aboriginal vs non-Aboriginal Community Well-Being, as an indicator of community level socio-economic disparities
Intervention Research / Performance Measurement

How the 2012 *Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS)* is used to examine the association between Aboriginal Early Childhood Development (ECD) program participation and long-term educational outcomes

The APS* includes many important education-related outcomes for AHSUNC:

- Exposure to Aboriginal ECD programs during pre-school years (not AHSUNC specific)
- School perseverance (not dropping out of school)
- School performance (grades in school)
- Children’s attitudes toward school (enjoying and feeling positive about education and school)
- Family involvement with homework (parent empowerment as children’s primary teacher)
- Need for additional educational supports

* All survey participants live off-reserve

**Special Study with StatCan’s Health Analysis Division**

- Special study (correlational design) will look at the relationship between participation in Aboriginal ECD programs and educational outcomes until age 17 (retrospective analysis)
- Past participants in Aboriginal ECD programs will be compared to non participants
- Analytical work has just started
Concluding Remarks

- Statistics Canada’s data and analytical products on Aboriginal peoples and children has been an integral part of the evidence used by the AHSUNC program over its 20-year history.
- The program’s use of information on Aboriginal children and their health has evolved over time.
- Recent increased collaboration with Statistics Canada’s Health Analysis Division has been valuable.
- Pivotal work is underway. We are looking forward to learning more.

Thank you!

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