Welcome to the First Edition from Waakebusiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health

The Waakebusiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health (WBIIH) is thrilled to produce its first volume of the International Journal of Indigenous Health (IJIH). At the WBIIH, work in research, training, and policy development is grounded in Indigenous knowledges and community partnerships. Indigenous knowledges have been used globally since time immemorial. These knowledge systems evolve and adapt over generations, yet remain consistent in that they view animals, plants, water, air, humans, and all creation as equal within the cosmos; throughout this volume, the reclaiming and proclaiming of Indigenous knowledges is a thematic basis for improved health and well-being of Indigenous peoples.

Theories and programs for Indigenous health from around the world continue to populate the literature and identify “best practices,” yet there is little discussion of the measure by which these practices are drawn. Specifically, many of these practices and models are made to fit within non-Indigenous biomedical and clinical settings. What is Indigenous health from Indigenous perspectives and how can biomedical health care systems and researchers make room for it? The onus of understanding and working with issues of Indigenous health and research rests with all peoples, particularly non-Indigenous peoples, as all people reside on traditional Indigenous lands and within the context of current and historical treaties and agreements with First Peoples worldwide. Statistical data amply supports the “failures” of Indigenous people’s health yet little data enlightens with solutions and successes based on Indigenous knowledges and healings practices.

This volume of the IJIH fills this knowledge gap by identifying the strengths and solutions of Indigenous knowledges in biomedical and service health systems. There are nine articles in this issue that cover numerous topics in Indigenous health. Yet one theme that emerges across articles is the revitalization and inclusion of Indigenous knowledges, specifically in areas of healing, medicines, and integration of Indigenous ways of knowing in biomedical health care. Through a critical interrogation of the dominant discursive regimes of both Indigenous and biomedical health care theories in various clinical discourses, this volume explores the nature of

research, theory, and practice in relation to patients or data, focusing particularly on how individuals and groups construct illness perceptions and the kinds of treatments they expect will solve health problems. In this respect, this volume can also contribute to wider debates about minority health, health care, and research. Contributors are leading researchers within the multidisciplinary field of Indigenous health, representing health disciplines of psychology, psychiatry, nursing, and social work. These contributors submitted empirical research papers on topics related to Indigenous healers, cultural healing practices, the integration of Indigenous and Western healthcare practices, the healing encounter, professional training and education, Indigenous research methodology, and ethical considerations for conducting research.

All articles in this volume share themes related to traditional Indigenous knowledges, cultural identity, racism and oppression, healing, intergenerational trauma, mentoring, and modeling. Implications related to health care workers, administrators, educators, and policy makers illuminate the context of the articles, including the importance of community collaboration, changing policy and protocols, and negotiating tensions between Western and Indigenous theories and practices. Ultimately, attending to Indigenous issues and incorporating cultural practices in health can serve to enhance and improve Indigenous peoples' needs, but these can also benefit non-Indigenous people's experiences and outcomes in health care, many of whom are also failed by the current Eurocentric, colonial system of health.

The Editors encourage scholars in Indigenous health research from around the world to submit articles to the IJIH for upcoming issues. It is important to hear about Indigenous health and well-being from different countries to make systemic and institutional changes for Indigenous peoples.

Miigwetch / mahsi cho
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Recommended Citation:

Stewart, S., Mashford-Pringle, A. (2018). Welcome to the First Edition from Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health. *IJIH*, 13(1), 3 – 4. <https://doi.org/10.32799/ijih.v13i1.30318>