

Prevalence and Behavioural Correlates of Obesity Among Indigenous Youth in Northern Manitoba

Thompson, M.,¹ Carter, E.,² & Lee, K.³

Abstract

Rising rates of youth obesity present a significant public health concern in northern regions of Canada. This study examines the prevalence and correlates of obesity among Indigenous youth living in a remote community in Northern Manitoba. Using a cross-sectional design, the authors collected quantitative data from 214 participants aged 10–17 through school-based surveys and physical measurements. Body mass index (BMI) was calculated and analyzed alongside self-reported data on physical activity, dietary habits, and screen time. Descriptive statistics and multivariate regression analyses were used to identify associations between obesity and selected behavioral and environmental factors.

Results indicate that a substantial proportion of participants fall within the overweight or obese BMI categories. Lower levels of physical activity, higher consumption of processed foods, and increased sedentary behaviour were significantly associated with higher BMI scores. Household income and parental education were also found to be significant predictors of obesity risk. These findings suggest that youth in this community experience elevated vulnerability to obesity-related health outcomes compared to national averages.

The study concludes that targeted interventions are needed to address unhealthy behaviours and improve lifestyle choices among Indigenous youth in Northern Manitoba. Policy implications include the development of school-based nutrition education programs, increased opportunities for physical activity, and community-level initiatives aimed at promoting healthier individual choices. Continued monitoring and evaluation are recommended to track progress and inform future public health strategies.

¹ Dr. Michael Thompson is a settler scholar in health geography at a southern Canadian university, researching spatial patterns of youth health disparities using quantitative methods.

² Dr. Emily Carter is a white public health researcher whose work focuses on statistical analysis of nutrition and physical activity among marginalized populations in Canada.

³ Keun Lee is a visiting research fellow from Seoul National University and a post-graduate student in human geography. Trained in epidemiological methods, Lee contributes quantitative data analysis to community-based health studies led by academic researchers.