The Cedar Project: Experiences of interpersonal racism among young Indigenous people who have used drugs in Prince George and Vancouver, BC

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For the Cedar Project Partnership

Public Health May 2, 2019

Acknowledgements

Traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation

Traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Səl̓ilwətaʔɬ, and Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Nations

The young people who continue to share their stories with us, and those who have passed away.
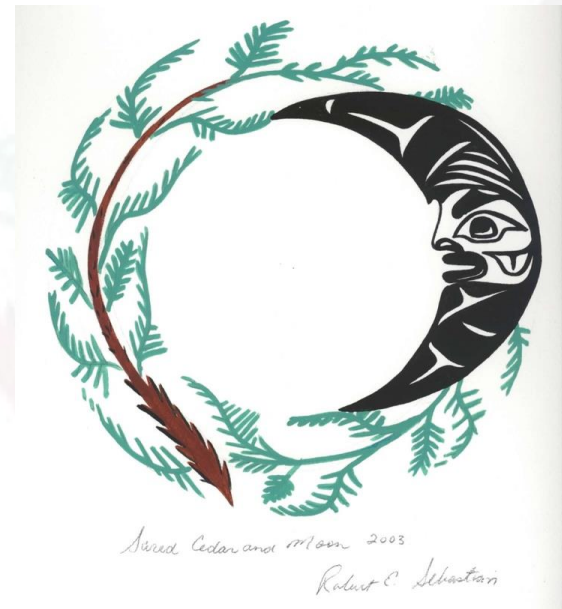
The Elders who govern and guide our study.

Our interviewers and staff

In memory and honour of our Cedar partner,
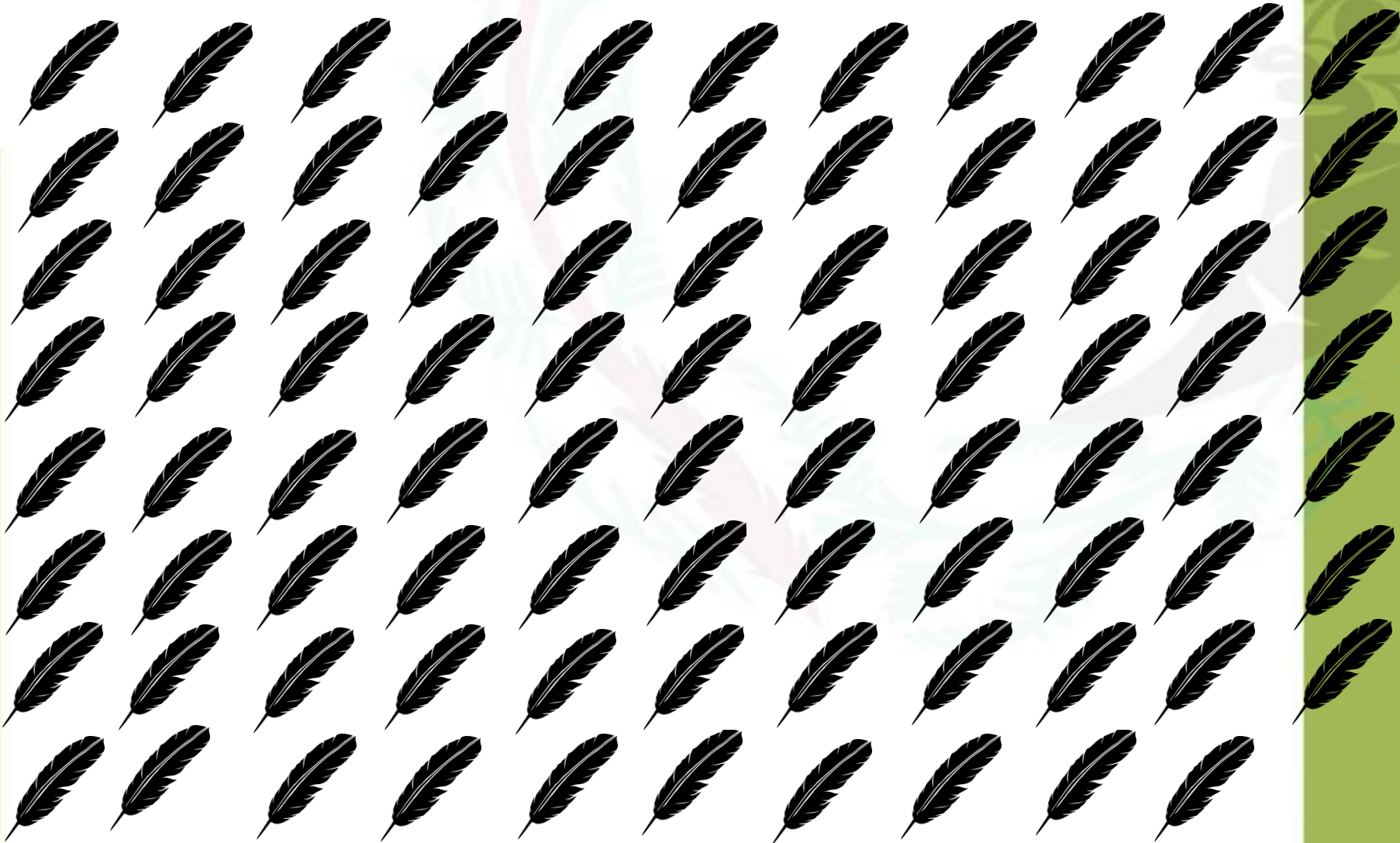*Preston Guno*
Feb 23, 1969 – Apr 12, 2018
Rest in peace

Sacred Cedar and Moon 2003
Robert C. Sebastian

Honouring participants who have passed away

"These deaths are not statistics; they are our relations."

- Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, Co-Principal Investigator, The Cedar Project

Disclosure Statement

- I have no affiliation (financial or otherwise) with a pharmaceutical, medical device or communications organization.

Who are we?

Community-governed cohort study of 800 Indigenous young people (aged 14-30 at baseline) who have used illicit injection and non-injection drugs in Prince George and Vancouver, BC

Enrollment 2003-2005; and again in 2011
Ongoing follow-up interviews every 6 month

Who governs us?
Cedar Project Partnership

Elder Violet Bozoki (Lheidli T'enneh)   Elder Earl Henderson (Cree, Métis)
Lou Demerais   Splatsin-Secwepemc Nation
Katarina Patterson   All Nations Hope
Positive Living North   Prince George Native Friendship Centre
Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network   Vancouver Native Health Society
Carrier Sekani Child and Family Services

What have we learned so far - Systems of Oppression

Colonization

Terra Nullius
The Indian Act
Residential schools
60's and millennial scoop

Institutional Risk

Intergenerational poverty
Child Welfare system
Criminal Justice system
Health Care Systems

Environment of Risk

Disinvestment in food, education, employment and housing
Child apprehension
Criminalization by police
Inequitable access to health care system
White supremacy

Self – Disconnection

Disconnection from family,
land, community and culture
Substance use for stress-coping
Post-traumatic stress

Why are we doing this?

"Study Upstream" - Examine the role of racism in people's interactions with these systems

How much racism?

Learn about what factors are associated with experiences of interpersonal racism

How did we do this?

Participant Eligibility

- Returned for a follow-up visit between 2015-2016
- Completed Measure of Indigenous Racism Experiences scale (MIRE)

Analysis

- Cross sectional analysis
- Bivariate comparisons using Chi-square and Fisher's test
- Multinomial Logistic Regression Models

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Who did we learn from?

321 participants

Median age 33 years old

58% women

57% from Prince George

38% had a traditional language spoken at home while growing up

30% said their family lived by traditional culture

47% had a parent who attended residential school

75% were removed from their biological parents

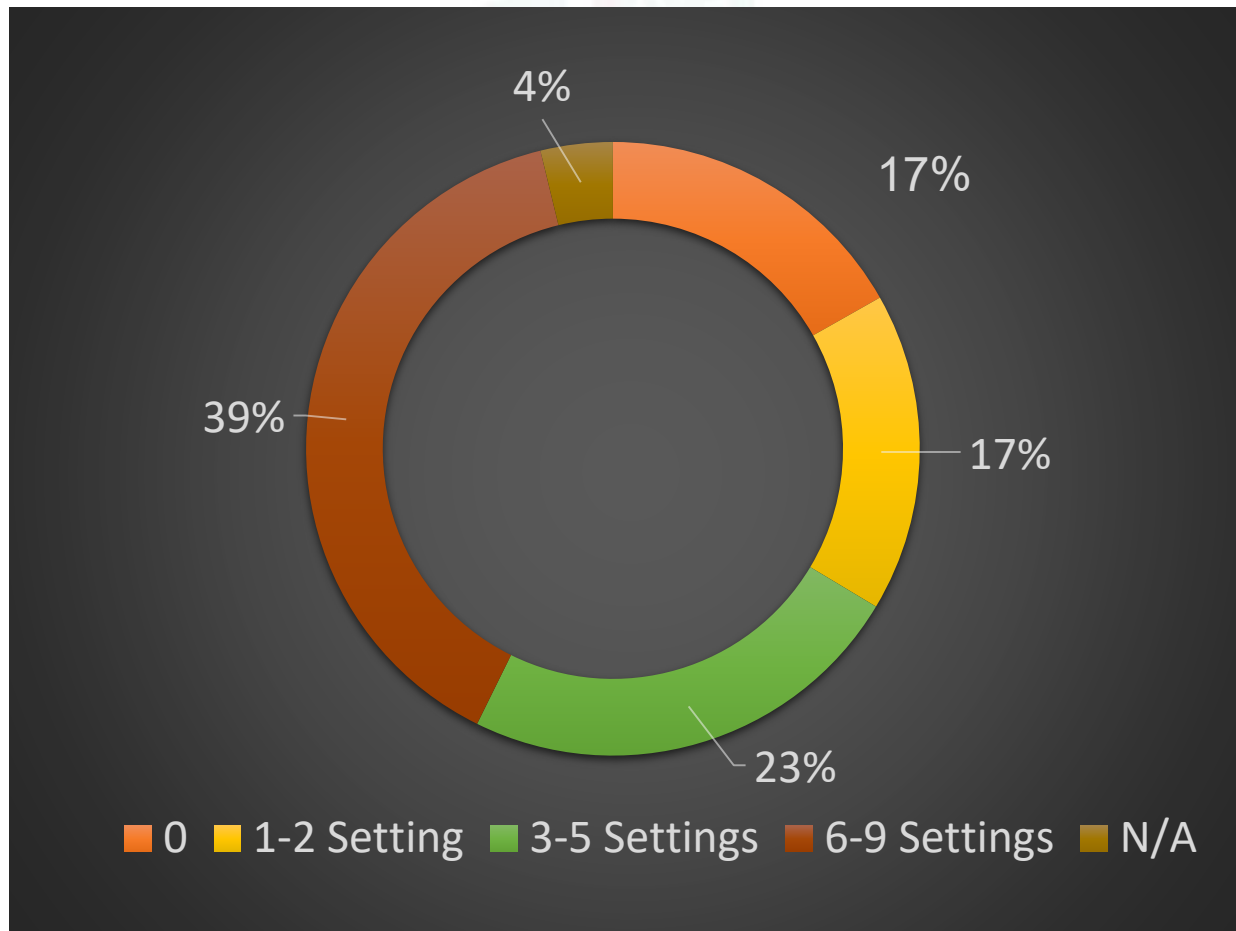49% had their own children be apprehended

What did we measure: Interpersonal Racism

Measure of Indigenous Racism Experiences (MIRE)

- Developed and validated for use among Indigenous people in Australia (Yin Paradies & Joan Cunningham, 2008)

- Interpersonal scale: Participants asked about their experiences of "being treated unfairly because they are Indigenous" across nine settings on a 5-point-likert scale:
  Never, Hardly Ever, Sometimes, Often, Very Often

- Experiences of interpersonal racism collapsed into:
  - None (reference category)
  - Low: average response of 'hardly ever'
  - High: average response of 'sometimes', 'often', or 'very often'

How much racism?

- 79% (n=255) reported experiencing racism in at least 1 of the 9 settings in the MIRE interpersonal scale
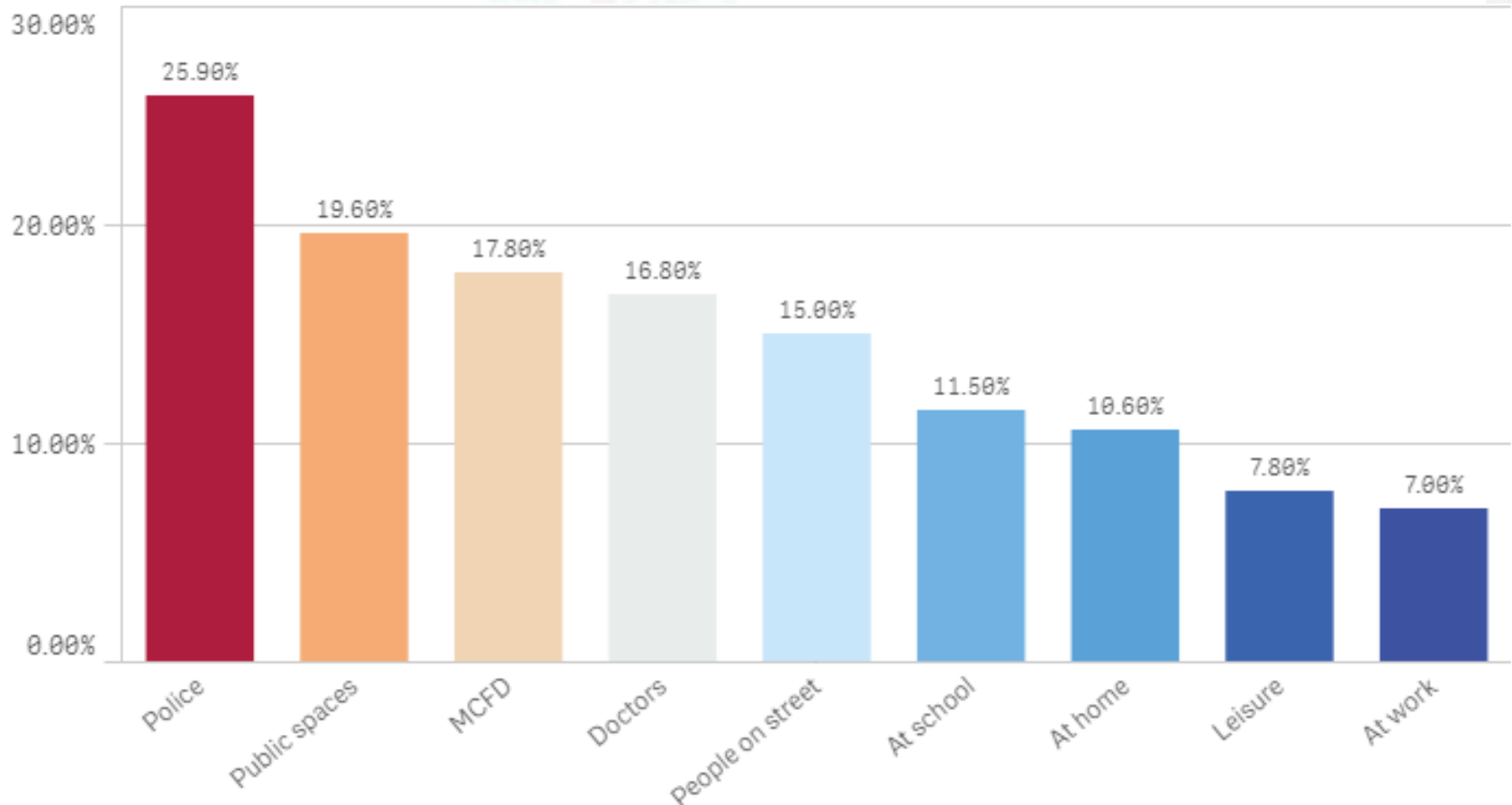
9 settings

- Work
- Home
- School
- Leisure
- Police
- Doctors
- MCFD
- Public spaces
- On the street

4%

17%

39%

17%

23%

■ 0 ■ 1-2 Setting ■ 3-5 Settings ■ 6-9 Settings ■ N/A

Where did people report the most frequent racism?

- Treated unfairly because you are Indigenous Often or Very Often

Factors associated with high levels of racism in unadjusted (UOR) and adjusted analyses (AOR)

Variables	UOR (95% CI)	AOR (95% CI)
Socio-demographic		
Gender - Female	2.68 (1.33-5.41)	
Location – Prince George	3.30 (1.63-6.71)	
Cultural Connections		
Traditional language was always/often spoken at home	2.67 (1.23-5.80)	**2.85 (1.17-6.95)**
Historical and ongoing trauma		
Childhood sexual abuse	2.45 (1.21-4.96)	
Child apprehended	2.83 (1.38-5.78)	**2.79 (1.15-6.79)**
Ever sexually assaulted	2.39 (1.18-4.81)	
Access to services and treatment		
Ever been denied any services	2.15 (1.08-4.31)	
Ever left ER without receiving treatment	4.81 (2.12-10.93)	**3.15 (1.25-7.98)**
Substance use		
Ever tried to quit alcohol and drugs	4.24 (1.62-11.09)	**3.64 (1.02-12.99)**
Physical and mental health		
Ever attempted suicide	2.69 (1.27-5.71)	
Probable post-traumatic stress	4.45 (2.11-9.42)	**3.41 (1.36-8.56)**

Cedar project participants face discrimination, especially from staff across key government bodies and the public in general.

Specifically, Cedar project participants who have probable post-traumatic stress, who interact with the child welfare system, the health care system and are culturally connected experience high levels of racism.

How do we address this - Systems of Wellness

Self-Determination

Implement the 94 TRC Call to Actions
UNDRIP
Indigenous legislative jurisdiction over children and land

Institutional Wellness

Institutions accountable
Investment in food and housing security, education, employment
Language revitalization
Public Education

Environment of Support

Name the problem - racism
Culturally safe, rights & wellness based, harm-reduction programs
Anti-racism training as a starting point
Educate ourselves

Self - Belonging

Connection with family, culture and land

From the voice of Cedar Participants

OUR MESSAGE OF HOPE:

- We have shown you that if we have access to culture and traditions that we will. This helps us on our healing journey.

- We have shown you that if we are given the opportunity to parent our children with community support that we can and we do a good job.

- We have shown you that if we are given the opportunity to work or go to school that we can and we do a good job. We are smart.

Our message to you:
PLEASE REMEMBER TO BE PATIENT. IT TAKES TIME FOR US TO FEEL SAFE.

NEVER GIVE UP ON US, WE HAVEN'T.

Thank you