

Using the Ottawa Charter for diabetes prevention in Cree communities

**JASP Workshop
October 25, 2006**



**Public Health Department of the Cree Territory of James Bay
Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay
Northern Quebec**

Workshop objectives

- **To understand Cree concepts of health and wellness**
- **To explore historical and cultural influences on Cree health and health-related factors (knowledge & behaviours)**
- **To demonstrate the use of the Ottawa Charter for the prevention of diabetes in Cree communities**
- **To identify opportunities and challenges in using the Ottawa Charter to promote health**

Cette présentation a été effectuée le 25 octobre 2006, au cours du Symposium "La Charte d'Ottawa pour la promotion de la santé est-elle toujours utile pour la pratique de la santé publique d'aujourd'hui ?" dans le cadre des Journées annuelles de santé publique (JASP) 2006. L'ensemble des présentations est disponible sur le site Web des JASP, à l'adresse <http://www.inspq.qc.ca/jasp>.

Workshop schedule

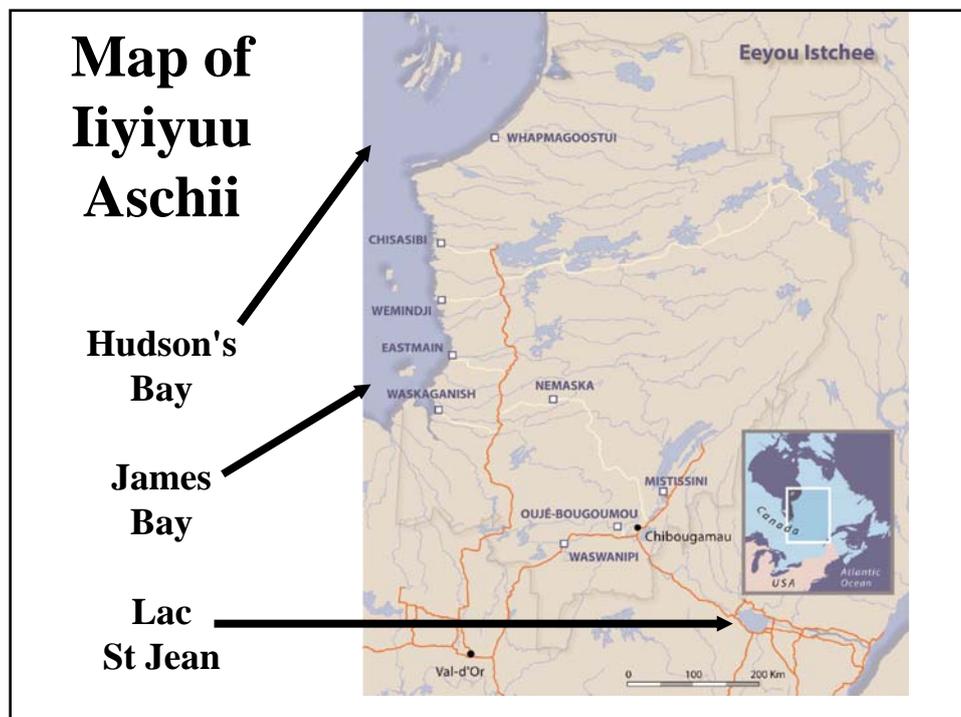
- **2:00 pm - 2:20 pm**
 - **Introductory PowerPoint presentations**
- **2:20 pm - 3:00 pm**
 - **Small group discussions**
- **3:00 pm - 3:30 pm**
 - **Plenary feedback and discussion**

PART 1

**The Cree Nation of James Bay
Northern Quebec**

What is Iiyiyuu Aschii?

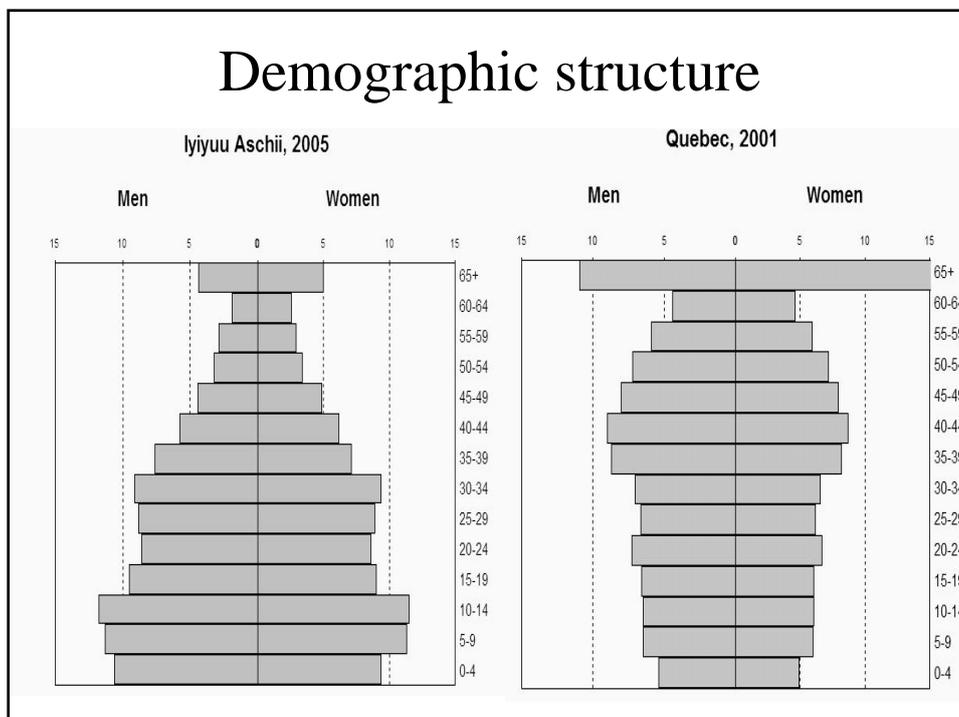
- **Iiyiyuu Aschii is the traditional land and home of the Cree Nation of James Bay in Northern Quebec**
- **Iiyiyuu Aschii literally means « land of the people »**
- **It is 2/3 the surface area of France**
- **Health services are provided through the Cree Board of Health and Social Services which is Region 18 of the MSSS**



Who lives in Iiyiyuu Aschii?

- **Close to 14,000 Cree live in Iiyiyuu Aschii (2006)**
- **There are 9 Cree communities**
 - 5 coastal
 - 4 inland
- **The majority of the population is < 30 years of age**

Demographic structure



Major underlying social problems

- **Addictions**
 - Binge drinking is common (39%)
- **Adults 15 to 74 that had no job during the preceding year (24%)**
- **No high school diploma**
Double the Quebec rate (63% versus 30%)

PART 2

A taste of everyday life in Iiyiyuu Aschii

A brief history of Iiyiyuu Aschii...

- **Previously cycle lifestyle that follows the seasons and wildlife migration patterns**
 - Hunter-gatherer
- **Recently settled in communities from the 1960s**
- **Difficult transition period**
 - Residential school syndrome

The traditional Cree way of life...

- **Language**
 - 97% speak Cree
- **Subsistence activities on the land**
 - 79% engage regularly in
 - Hunting
 - Fishing
 - Trapping

Cree concepts of health:

Miyupimaatisiun = Being Alive Well

- No Cree word corresponds to health as it is defined in western civilizations
- Being alive well is inseparable from :
 - ✓ Land: “If the land is unhealthy, how can we be?”
 - ✓ Immediate life conditions: being able to hunt, to pursue traditional activities, to eat the right foods and to keep warm
 - ✓ Cultural identity: sense of being and belonging, a process of identification

The James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)

- **Signed in 1975**
- **The first modern treaty signed between a government and an Aboriginal group**
 - Negotiated a special relationship between the Grand Council and both levels of senior government
 - Determines land categories and uses
 - Confers administrative powers to the Cree
 - Defines authorized governing institutions

Adapting to life in the modern age

- **Modern technologies**
 - Mobile phones, satellite phones, satellite TV, helicopters, snowmobiles...
- **Western culture**
 - Hip hop, fast food, big cars...
- **High cost of living**
 - Food, transportation, fuel costs...

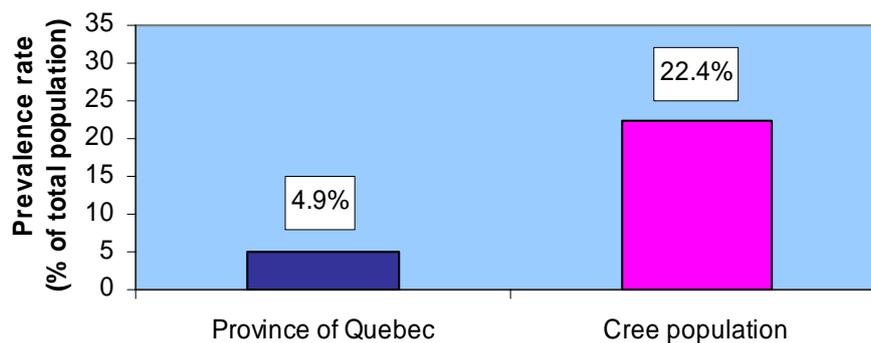
PART 3

Concern over the growing diabetes epidemic

Cree explanation for diabetes

- **No known cases up until the late 1970s**
- **No word in Cree for diabetes “sweet blood”**
- **Diabetes result from rapid changing lifestyle**
- **Reliance on “Store bought food”**
- **Influenced by the James Bay Hydro-electric project, as well as local forestry, and mining industries**

Age-adjusted* diabetes prevalence rates (age 20+)

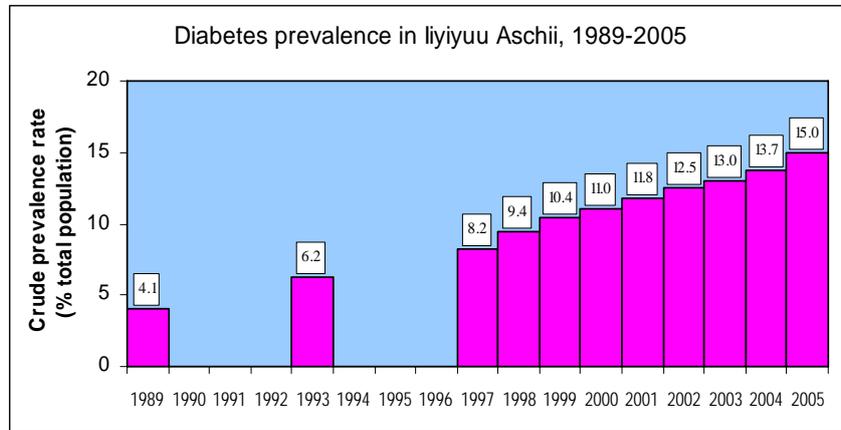


* age standardized to 1996 Quebec population, Cree data 2005

Kuzmina E, Dannenbaum D. *Diabetes in Eeyou Istchee: Annual update*. Chisasibi: Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, 2005.

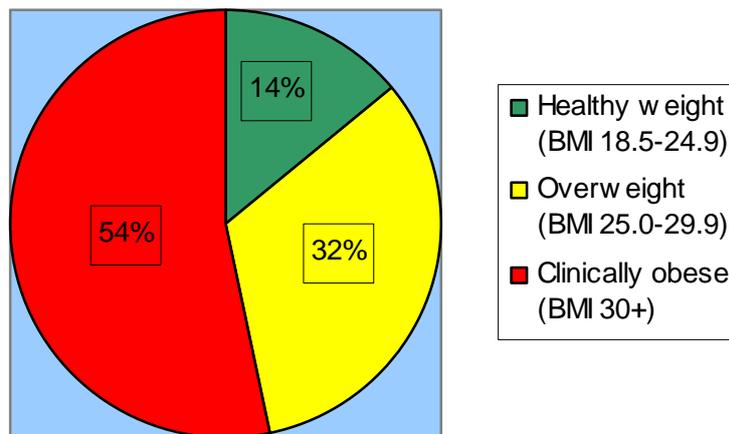
Quebec data from Émond V. 2002. *Prévalence du diabète au Québec et dans ses régions: premières estimations d'après les fichiers administratifs*. Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec.

Rise of diabetes in Iiyiyuu Aschii (population aged 15 years old and over)



Sources: 1989 data from Brassard P, Robinson E, Dumont C. 1993. *Descriptive Epidemiology of non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus in the James Bay Cree Population of Quebec, Canada*. Arct Med Res; 52:47 – 54. 1993 data from Verronneau M, Robinson E. 1993. *Prevalence of diabetes in James Bay Cree Communities*. Internal report, Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay. Remaining data from the CDIS.

Obesity rates in Iiyiyuu Aschii



Source : CCHS 2.1 Highlights

Diabetes Action Plan - 2001

- **Primary prevention**
- **Education and training**
- **Clinical care and support**
- **Surveillance, evaluation and research**

Interventions must be...

- **Culturally sensitive**
- **Empowering to the Cree community**
- **Building on Cree knowledge and expertise**



SMALL GROUPS

Using the Ottawa Charter for diabetes prevention in Iiyiyuu Aschii

4 small groups – 40 minutes

- **Small group themes**
 - Physical activity (2)
 - Nutrition (2)

- **Objectives**
 - Share experiences
 - Give examples of the Ottawa Charter in action
 - Discuss opportunities and challenges

Case study #1

Mary is a 28-year-old mother of three children. She is Cree and has lived in Chisasibi, all her life. When she was young she was very slim, but in her teens she put on weight, and even more so after she got married and started having kids.

Mary now has a body mass index (BMI) of 34, and was recently diagnosed with impaired fasting glucose, a precursor to diabetes....

PLENARY

**Using the Ottawa Charter
for diabetes prevention in Iiyiyuu Aschii**

Feedback and discussion – 30 minutes

- **Examples of using the Ottawa Charter to promote**
 - Physical activity
 - Nutrition
- **Future opportunities for using the Ottawa Charter for diabetes prevention in Iiyiyuu Aschii**
- **Challenges in using the Ottawa Charter**
 - Common to different contexts
 - Specific to Iiyiyuu Aschii

Acknowledgements

- Veronique Laberge-Gaudin
- Solomon Awashish
- Paul Linton
- Wally Rabbitskin
- Elizabeth Robinson
- Anne Andermann

References

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- Torrie, J. *Eeyou Istchee Aboriginal Peoples Survey*. Chisasibi: Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, 2001.
- Young K et al. Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in Canada's First Nations: Status of an epidemic in progress. *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 2000; 163: 561-566.
- Adelson N. "Being alive well": the praxis of Cree Health. *Arctic Medical Research* 1991; suppl 230-232.