

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' HEALTH



## HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

There are over 370 million indigenous people living around the world, from the Northern Arctic to the South Pacific. They represent a rich diversity of cultures, religions, traditions, languages and histories.



In both poor and industrialized countries, the health status of indigenous peoples is invariably lower than that of the overall population.

**MANDATE:** Through a number of World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions, the World Health Organization is mandated to devote special attention to the issue of indigenous peoples' health. These resolutions set out areas of focus for WHO's work in protecting and promoting the right of indigenous peoples to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. These resolutions include:

- WHA 54.16, 53.10, 51.24, 50.31, 49.26, 48.24 and 47.27, all of which are specific to the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

**TAKING ACTION:** WHO's Health and Human Rights Team acts as focal point for indigenous health and works to support implementation of the WHA resolutions that touch on indigenous peoples' health. It is actively seeking resources to supplement these efforts. Activities are conducted in close partnership with relevant stakeholders such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the International Labour Organization.

## WORKPLAN

Raise awareness of the key health challenges faced by indigenous peoples, e.g. by completing a publication on indigenous health and human rights.

Build capacity of public health professionals to identify and act upon the specific health needs of indigenous peoples through conducting educational workshops and trainings.

Expose health disparities by analysing data through the lens of ethnicity and other variables relevant to indigenous peoples (geographical area, tribal affiliation, gender, language, etc).

Issue guidelines for health policy makers to integrate indigenous peoples' health needs and perspectives into National and International Health Development Frameworks, such as national health sector plans, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and poverty reduction strategies.

Convene partners and catalyse action to improve indigenous peoples' health and human rights.



"Actions taken to reach the MDG health goals cannot be measured solely in terms of improving average health outcomes. They must also be evaluated in terms of their consistency with a human rights based approach which emphasizes participatory, non-discriminatory and accountable actions to improve the health of indigenous peoples."

- Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

## Relevant WHO publications



"The Health of Indigenous Peoples" factsheet, produced by WHO and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.  
*Available in English, French and Spanish.*



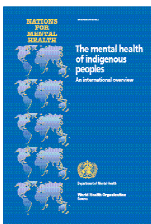
"Indigenous Peoples & Participatory Health Research: Planning & Management / Preparing Research Agreements", produced by WHO and the Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE), emphasizes that health research involving indigenous peoples needs to be organized, designed and carried out in a manner that accounts for cultural differences, is based on mutual respect, and is beneficial and acceptable to all parties involved (WHO, CINE, 2003).  
*Available in English (hard copy and online) and Spanish (online only).*



"WHO's Contribution to the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance: Health and Freedom from Discrimination" produced as a part of the Health and Human Rights Publication Series (Issue No. 2), considers the linkages between racial discrimination and health (WHO, 2001).  
*Available in English, French and Spanish.*



"Global Compendium of Indigenous Health Research Institutions" provides a comprehensive list of the major academic and government institutions worldwide engaged in research on the health and well-being of indigenous peoples, or in the provision of information which supports health research (WHO, 2001).  
*Available in English.*



"The Mental Health of Indigenous Peoples: An International Overview" produced by the WHO's Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, offers an overview of the sociocultural and socioeconomic worlds in which indigenous peoples live, provides epidemiological information about mental health problems among indigenous peoples and outlines recommendations on ways to support efforts by indigenous peoples worldwide to address mental health problems (WHO, 1999).  
*Available in English.*

For more information and links to the various publications listed above,

visit our website at:

<http://www.who.int/hhr/activities/indigenous/en/>

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