

Editorial: Special Issue on Aging in Indigenous Populations

This Special Issue represents a unique coming together to address diverse and pressing research questions around aging in Indigenous communities and populations. The contributing scholars come from a variety of perspectives, including Indigenous researchers from community-based and university-based settings; both established and emerging Indigenous researchers; and allied researchers who are working with Indigenous communities. This compilation of innovative work with older Indigenous people centres the importance of cultural identity in aging through enduring connections to land, language, and knowledge that have been disrupted through historic and ongoing colonial practices. The strength and resilience of older Indigenous people in maintaining these connections is integral to health and to aging in positive ways. In keeping with respect for Indigenous languages and the deep connections among language, culture, and wellness, the Special Issue incorporates the opportunity for authors to present their abstracts in an Indigenous language. I am truly uplifted to see that 8 of the 15 articles were able to appropriately include abstracts in the language of the communities represented in these works.

The uniquely de-colonizing and Indigenous approaches to research throughout these articles illustrate the richness of meaningful collaboration among researchers, community members, community leadership, health and social care systems, and Indigenous knowledge keepers. This richness facilitates the integration of Indigenous understandings of relationality among people, creation, and generations to frame research approaches and interpretation of findings. The diversity of Indigenous experiences with aging is represented by the diversity of the research articles, with settings ranging from urban to remote, and community-led research from Inuit, Métis, and First Nation perspectives. In this issue, Indigenous communities explore experiences with dementia, falls, frailty, caregiving, physical activity, and HIV in older Indigenous people. The articles presented here add vital insight to policy discussions regarding the complex challenges connected to supporting older Indigenous people as they age.

Jennifer Walker
Guest Editor