



In Motion

Highlighting Articles Advancing Pain Research in Canada and the World

Featured article:

Latimer, M., Rudderham, S., Lethbridge, L., MacLeod, E., Harman, K., Sylliboy, J. R., Filiaggi, C., & Finley, G. A. (2018). **Occurrence of and referral to specialists for pain-related diagnoses in First Nations and non-First Nations children and youth.** *CMAJ*, 190(49), E1434-1440.

<https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.180198>

Key insights from the study:

- **Higher Pain Rates in First Nations Children:** First Nations children have more pain-related diagnoses compared to non-First Nations children but are less likely to be referred to specialists for these conditions.
- **Barriers to Care:** The study highlights the challenges faced by First Nations children in accessing necessary specialist care for common pain conditions, contributing to ongoing health disparities.
- **Need for Better Access:** Findings underscore the urgent need for improved healthcare access and support for First Nations children to address pain and its impact on overall well-being.

What happened?

Researchers used health records from Atlantic Canada to compare pain-related diagnoses and access to specialists between First Nations and non-First Nations children and youth. The study analyzed data from 2,631 First Nations and 2,631 non-First Nations children, matched by age and sex. The researchers looked at how often these children received diagnoses for pain conditions like ear infections, dental issues, and headaches, and whether they saw specialists for these conditions.

Why is it important?

The study found that First Nations children experience more pain-related health issues than their non-First Nations peers but are less likely to see specialists for their conditions. For example, while First Nations children had higher rates of ear and throat conditions, they were less often referred to relevant specialists. This gap in care can lead to untreated pain, affecting children's development, mental health, and overall quality of life. By highlighting these disparities, the study calls attention to the need for policies and healthcare practices that ensure equitable care access for First Nations children.

What now?

The study suggests that to improve the health outcomes of First Nations children, healthcare systems must address the barriers preventing access to specialist care. There is a need for community-based approaches that consider the unique needs and experiences of First Nations families. Future efforts should focus on creating more inclusive healthcare pathways in [culturally safe spaces](#) that provide timely and effective pain management and support the mental and physical health of First Nations youth.