

This issue begins the third volume of *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*. The range of topics covered by the articles presented herein reflects the growing interest in Indian/Native mental health and new areas that are being opened to investigation. The first contribution, "Utility of a Psychiatric Screen Among the Navajo of Chinle: A Fourth Year Clerkship Experience", by Goldwasser and Badger, represents an attempt to screen for psychiatric disorders among Indian patients seen in a medical clinic. Several not so surprising difficulties were encountered: specifically, process issues, low English literacy, and uncertain follow through by physicians. Nonetheless, Goldwasser and Badger were able to demonstrate that such screening is feasible for a significant portion of the patient population and that a substantial number of those completing the screener, in this case, the General Health Questionnaire, reported symptomatology that warranted further inquiry by a health professional. Evidence is mounting that large percentages of medical patients suffer from mental health problems that are often undetected by providers. Consequently, the management of psychiatric illness in primary care settings has captured the attention of the broader scientific community. Witness, for example, the recent National Institute of Mental Health "Depression Awareness, Recognition, and Treatment" (DART) initiative. Given the stigma that continues to plague Indian/Native mental health programs, efforts to detect serious psychological dysfunction among Indian and Native medical patients and to treat them appropriately in the clinics where they are first seen hold considerable promise for success.

In one sense, Plaisier's article, "Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Prevention in American Indian Communities of Michigan's Upper Peninsula", provides us with a glimpse of the possibilities implied in the first article, albeit with respect to another, quite different mental health concern. The National Indian Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Program is analogous to the NIMH DART program. The former trained local personnel from virtually every Indian Health Service unit in FAS surveillance, education, and prevention. Plaisier's article may be the first to chronicle how this training was actually implemented by health workers and the manner as well as extent to which high-risk women in their service areas received the ensuing intervention. A series of practical recommendations emerged from this study that can help to tailor such prevention and education activities to local circumstance.

A previous issue (Volume 1, Issue 3) of this journal was dedicated to examining suicide among American Indians and Alaska Natives; particular emphasis was placed upon programmatic responses at the individual as well as community levels. Tower's article, "A Suicide Epidemic in an American Indian Community", follows in the latter tradition and details the Wind River Reservation's struggle to contain a widely publicized suicide epidemic. This article presents new, important insights into the onset and

course of that epidemic. It also summarizes a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention that proceeds in several phases and that may be adapted to other community settings.

The fourth and last article in this issue, "An Investigation of Health Decision-Making Skills Among American Indian Adolescents", by Okwumabua, Okwumabua, and Duryea, speaks to a very specific and poorly understood mechanism that underpins many of the preventive interventions being promoted for Indian/Native adolescents at high risk of alcohol, drug abuse, or mental health problems. Working with a small sample of seventh graders, the authors examined their decision-making skills in regard to a series of health and social matters. The students proved to be equally efficacious in their ability to make decisions across both types of situations. However, some intriguing differences arose in the nature of the decision-making errors committed, largely with respect to the steps taken in analyzing and implementing responses to problematic social situations. Further work along these lines may prove useful in adapting various intervention strategies to this special population.

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