

**Preventing Cardiovascular Disease in Native Communities:
The Traditional Living Challenge [Abstract]**

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Many of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity in American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) are preventable, which indicates that lifestyle is a key risk factor. Behavioral change interventions attempted with AI/ANs that focus on lifestyle have begun to incorporate Native cultural traditions, or cultural capital. This article discusses one such Native-based intervention conducted on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana, which used cultural capital as the foundation for an intervention to address risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Called the Traditional Living Challenge, the specific purpose of the intervention was to revitalize community initiatives toward wellness through a cultural immersion experience, which replicated a former healthier lifestyle and diet. The long-term goal was for the cultural immersion intervention to foster personal and group motivation toward a commitment to wellness.

To implement the project, the researchers developed collaborations among the tribal health department, cultural leaders, the tribal council, and various relevant tribal units. The researchers identified participants across various age ranges by involving whole families in the intervention. They also identified a broad range of community-based resources and opportunities to support ongoing lifestyle changes and developed a number of cardiovascular disease risk outcome measures that would be appropriate for use in this community.

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