

RESEARCH WITH ARCTIC PEOPLES: UNIQUE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES IN HEART, LUNG, BLOOD AND SLEEP DISORDERS

Working group summary and recommendations

H. Sally Smith ¹, Peter Bjerregaard ², Hing Man Chan ³, André Corriveau ⁴, Sven O. E. Ebbesson ⁵, Ruth A. Etzel ⁶, Richard R. Fabsitz ⁷, Hakon Hakonarson ⁸, Carl Hild ⁹, Elizabeth D. Nobmann ¹⁰, Jeff Reading ¹¹, Larissa Tereshchenko ¹², T. Kue Young ¹³, Barbara V. Howard ¹⁴

¹ National Indian Health Board, Washington DC and Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation, Dillingham, Alaska, USA,

² National Institute of Public Health, Copenhagen, Denmark, ³ Centre for Indigenous People Nutrition and Environment (CINE), McGill University, Quebec, Canada, ⁴ Department of Health and Social Services, Yellowknife Northwest Territories, Canada,

⁵ University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, USA, ⁶ Southcentral Foundation, Anchorage, Alaska, USA, ⁷ National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, Bethesda, Maryland, USA, ⁸ deCode Genetics, Reykjavic, Iceland, ⁹ Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies, University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, Alaska, USA, ¹⁰ EDN Nutrition Consulting, IDM Consulting, Anchorage, Alaska, USA, ¹¹ Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health, Victoria, BC, Canada,

¹² Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, USA, ¹³ University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada,

¹⁴ MedStar Research Institute, Washington D. C., USA

Received 11 May 2005; Accepted 12 September 2005

ABSTRACT

Arctic peoples are spread over eight countries and comprise 3.74 million residents, of whom 9% are indigenous. The Arctic countries include Canada, Finland, Greenland (Denmark), Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States. Although Arctic peoples are very diverse, there are a variety of environmental and health issues that are unique to the Arctic regions, and research exploring these issues offers significant opportunities, as well as challenges. On July 28-29, 2004, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research co-sponsored a working group entitled "Research with Arctic Peoples: Unique Research Opportunities in Heart, Lung, Blood and Sleep Disorders". The meeting was international in scope with investigators from Greenland, Iceland and Russia, as well as Canada and the United States. Multiple health agencies from Canada and the United States sent representatives. Also attending were representatives from the International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH) and the National Indian Health Board. The working group developed a set of ten recommendations related to research opportunities in heart, lung, blood and sleep disorders; obstacles and solutions to research implementation; and ways to facilitate international comparisons. These recommendations are expected to serve as an agenda for future research.

(*Int J Circumpolar Health* 2006;65(1):79-90.)

Keywords: Arctic Peoples, Indigenous, research, heart disease, international collaboration