

Allyship

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This edition's theme came together somewhat organically over the summer as we transitioned away from a flurry of updates on the editorial side. The last item on this year's list was our PubMed application, a project we have been planning since 2021 and which our publisher submitted in mid-July. While there is a multi-step and multi-month process of assessment still to come, the fact that we were ready to make this application is a big milestone for *CANDJ* and our small but dedicated editorial team.

As we were finalizing contents, it seemed that each article focused on a different aspect of listening to the lived experience of people who have been or may be treated poorly in conventional care, and who look to naturopathic doctors to provide a more knowledgeable and empathetic clinical experience—to be, in other words, better patient allies.

Doing some background research for this letter, I thought back to a conversation I had at the Saskatchewan Association's Healing Skies conference in late May with Jenny Gardipy, a Senior Policy Analyst at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and PhD student in Indigenous Studies at the University of Saskatchewan who joined us at the CAND table. I was listening to her discuss her ongoing PhD research studying the experiences of Indigenous people with disabilities in the Canadian healthcare system. Some of the stories were heartbreaking, and we reflected on the fact that people in the non-Indigenous community need to hear these stories and understand them so that we can learn from past mistakes and form better therapeutic alliances with the people we are looking to serve.

For many members of underserved groups, or people with complex disabilities or healthcare conditions, these negative and often traumatizing experiences can lead them to become distrustful of medicine in general. The result is that, often, we miss the opportunity to help them manage their healthcare needs before they become catastrophic. This is one of the areas where naturopathic care could provide a unique benefit to many people who have felt unheard, disenfranchised, ignored—or worse. But we must go in armed with knowledge of these patients' specific lived experiences, knowledge we can use to become more effective healthcare allies.

Our review article for the edition, discussing integrative naturopathic perinatal care for individuals with obesity, exemplifies this

argument. As Priolo and colleagues describe, current perinatal care in Canada is fragmented and focused specifically on the perinatal, labour and delivery period, leaving important windows for intervention neglected in the pre-conception and postpartum timeframes. They also discuss how guideline-driven management tends to leave patients feeling stigmatized and judged, when a more empathetic and motivational approach could produce better outcomes for both subsequent pregnancies and long-term metabolic disease prevention.

Our first commentary from Lindsay takes up this theme of empathetic listening in practice, particularly as more patients present to ND offices with complex and challenging health concerns. Additionally, we have two commentaries from Inghram and Martineau, who discuss overlapping challenges faced by 2SLGBTQIA+ patients in accessing affirming, non-stigmatizing care, and the negative outcomes that result when patients can't access preventive medicines such as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention. Both authors ask us to think about where gaps in knowledge about the lived experience of these populations due to a variety of factors (including the current polarized political climate) may also deprive these patients of responsive, culturally informed care.

We hope these submissions will encourage other colleagues to think about contributing to *CANDJ*; we know that there are many areas of naturopathic practice that need to be highlighted in our publication and look forward to meeting more of our readers at local fall and winter conferences this year. As always, we welcome commentaries and letters to the editor through our portal at candjournal.ca and ideas for upcoming submissions to my inbox at editor@cand.ca

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