Community-based understanding of links between IPV and alcohol use for American Indian Women

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Purpose

Develop Community Ties
- Build working relationships of trust and collaboration within Rosebud Sioux Reservation Community
- Create a community advisory board with diverse representation from multiple communities and AEP system parameters

Understand Community Issues
- Learn community-based perceptions of AEP, alcohol use, and IPV, and their interactions
- Develop protocols for research-intervention plans that account for historical, sociopolitical, and economic perspectives

Background

- 10% of women drink during pregnancy
- Rates of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders are approximately 0.1% - 10% of population
- Potential syndemic association between alcohol misuse, intimate partner violence (IPV), lack of contraception, and unintended pregnancy (Fig 1)
- Northern Plains American Indian (AI) populations have a disproportionately higher risk for AEP, alcohol use, and IPV, and their interactions
- Unique and intersecting community contexts are required to better frame a syndemic system of AEP
- Interventions for AEP taking this syndemic system into account are lacking
- Longstanding historical trauma, violence, and poverty provide unique underlying mechanisms
- Epidemiology of AEP may not be reflected in current literature
- Current AEP in the literature: older, educated, male
- Younger (e.g., teenage, young adult) AI have disproportionately higher rates of most AEP predictors: unintended pregnancies, repeat births, substance use, IPV
- Unique and intersecting community contexts are required to better frame a syndemic system of AEP
- Complex problems require complex and comprehensive understanding
- Examining a “system” of AEP involves understanding all of the parts that make up something greater than their sum
- Community problems require community knowledge and buy-in
- Community-based approaches are particularly important for research partnerships with tribal communities
- Better informed, higher buy-in

Aims

Aim 1
- Cultivate working relationships with individuals representing multiple aspects of the IPV-Alcohol-AEP system
- (e.g., legal, nonprofit, social service, clinical, cultural, and citizen layman)

Aim 2
- In-depth 1 – on – 1 to develop community-based, operational definitions, formative values for these health issues, as well as current implementation strategies / gaps in implementation for intervention, policy, and prevention

Aim 3
- Develop community-focused research framework to investigate these issues from a systems perspective that values native narratives and knowledge, and will incorporate ethical sensitivity to reduce re-traumatization, privacy, and agency

Approach

The Partners:
Rosebud Sioux Tribe (RST), located in Southern South Dakota, encompasses 20 unique and distinct communities spread out on almost 2000 square miles of plains, with a population of 9,050. RST has an unemployment rate of approximately 80-85%. Todd County, located within the reservation, is the second poorest county in the US.

RST also is a leader in the development and sustainability of a multi-organization collaborative body (Society of Care), which focuses on integrative health and wellbeing, ensuring communication and non-duplication of services.

White Buffalo Calf Woman Society Inc, is the first reservation-based woman’s shelter in the United States. Since 1980, White Buffalo Calf Inc has provided shelter, services, resources, and education for victims of IPV, advocacy for reforming IPV-related legal policy, and intervention development for both boys and girls who have experienced sexual violence.

The Plan:
Questions To Ask
Our initial plan was to use a Community Readiness Assessment to assess how ready RST was to jointly address IPV and substance use as a dual issue. However, after discussing things further with White Buffalo Calf staff, and understanding more about the Society of Care and the culture of collaboration within RST, we decided to develop a different interview that focuses on 3 main questions:

1) What are the operational definitions for “community”, “domestic violence”, and “substance misuse”, and what are the individual or community perceptions about how these two issues associate with each other?

2) Who shares the primary burden of responsibility towards continuing to address IPV and substance misuse?

3) What are the current known resources for reducing IPV and substance use within the community? Could these resources be strengthened, or could other resources be added?

People With Answers
As part of the mission to have information that is inclusive for all unique RST communities, and representative of the diversity of values, ideas, and experiences within RST, our strategy for questionnaire refinement and recruitment involves:

Elder and Community Tribal Board Representative input: We will work first with elders and representatives from the individual RST communities to refine questions, and to develop strategies for recruiting participants (e.g., amount of compensation, getting the word out, appropriate interviewers, locations for interviews).

White Buffalo Calf Inc and therapy/clinical aftercare plan: Working off of previous approaches for minimizing re-traumatization in research within RST, we will come up with a plan to provide immediate aftercare resources for those who experience psychological and emotional distress due to sensitive and possibly triggering questions.

Gaging interest and future working partnerships: To develop a community advisory board that will work together with us to utilizing this information for an appropriate, larger-scale research project that explores a broad community-based system understanding of IPV, substance use, and AEP, the interview will also allow us to understand the most appropriate people to invite. This can include interview participants themselves, or connections through recommendations on behalf of participants.

Future/Deliverables
Overall goals of this project are intended to provide a community and informational foundation for extensions to current, ongoing community based system dynamics research project located in Rapid City, to gain understanding of AEP (and other substances) as a symptom of the discussed AEP syndemic system.

Within community-based system dynamics (in which a group of individuals come together to build the system themselves) may not be feasible areas like RST, which have higher levels of mistrust, fear of privacy violations by outsiders, and higher likelihood of triggered psychological distress while discussing these personally relevant topics.

Therefore, the current end goals will facilitate future research endeavors via:

An already developed community advisory board that can facilitate broader buy-in of more complex RST wide research projects and guidance for research-informed program development

Development of a group model building (systems models) protocol tailored for 1) RST communities, 2) vulnerable populations, 3) maximizing representative- ness and buy-in for participation

Understanding best practices to approach both research project and subject matter based on operational definitions and community attitudes towards research partnerships with outsiders

Acknowledgements
The project described was supported by the National Institute Of General Medical Sciences, U54GM115458. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the NIH.

This project also is supported by generous time and effort provided by White Buffalo Calf Women’s Society Incorporated and the Rosebud Sioux community.