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**Article title:** Exploring paramedic care for First Nations in Alberta: a qualitative study

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Peer review comments

Reviewer: 1

Dr. Udoka Okpalauwaekwe, University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine

It was a pleasure reading and learning about your work. I believe this is a much need endeavour to move Indigenous communities to wellness promotion while ensuring their agency is not suppressed. I applaud the initiative to pursue these questions considering the landscape of Indigenous health in the country and the need for more collaborative efforts that are community driven and meaningful for these communities.

**Thank you for your endorsement of our work and providing comments to help us improve our manuscript.**

However, I have some concerns described below.

1. I will recommend using a reporting guideline per author guidelines. Eg. COREQ (<https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/coreq/>) or SRQR (<https://www.equatornetwork.org/reporting-guidelines/srqr/>) will go a long way in enhancing the readability of your work. [Ed note: We note that you have used the COREQ checklist. Please reference this at the end of the design subsection of the Methods]

**We did use the COREQ guideline and included it with our submission. We now reference COREQ in the design section.**

2. “The definition of paramedicine is evolving 8 and paramedicine and paramedic services are undergoing extensive change” Provide a working definition for paramedicine for your work to provide situational context.

**We now provide a working definition of paramedicine in Canada.**

3. Your introduction needs more work. It is rather descriptive than engaging the problem statement, gaps in the literature and the study rationale. I don't understand your reporting style and how you include the justification for the study under methods.

**The introduction has been revised to improve interpretation by defining the study objective and providing justification for the study in the background.**

4. Your language matters in reporting indigenous research. Using action and strength-based words tell your readers how you authentically engaged the community per CPBR tenets and TCPS2 chapter 9. For example, “Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to recruit First Nations community representatives...” recruited by who? The community or the non-Indigenous researchers?

**Thank you for identifying this, the authors have updated the manuscript to use active voice and clarify that community partners recruited participants.**

5. Provide a section describing the researcher roles and reflexivity of all authors. This position biases in data interpretation and respect for the gift of collaboration accorded by the community.

**Authors’ backgrounds, roles and contributions were provided on our first submission. They are found on pages 8-9 in the current tracked changes version. Additional information was and is given in the Authors’ contributions and Authors’ Information sections.**

6. Provide a paragraph describing how relationships were built and nurtured with the Indigenous community leadership, in keeping with TCPS2 chapter 9, UNDRIP, TRC in ensuring research questions were community-driven, data collection was carried out with community and data returned to the community per OCAPTM.

**We now specify under study design that this study was led by the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre which is accountable to all First Nations in Alberta. Data never had to be “returned” to the community because AFNIGC is mandated by the Treaty Chiefs of Alberta to hold data as a custodian for First Nations communities. The data was thus always in the custody of the First Nations community in Alberta throughout this study.**

7. Just describing broad statements like The Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre (AFNIGC) ensured adherence...” doesn’t cut it. How was engagement ensured authentic and not tokenistic? How did the community lead and drive every aspect of the research? These details matter and promote cultural safety as part of reconciliatory efforts in research/academia.

**The full sentence quoted identified the role of AFNIGC: “The Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre (AFNIGC) ensured adherence to the principles of First Nations Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP®) of health data by securing qualitative and survey data on AFNIGC servers, and performing all analyses in partnership with Western research team members”**  
**We would also note that AFNIGC is a First Nations organization and was the lead organization for this research.**

8. Per CBPR and TCPS2/OCAP I don't see any mention of data return to the community for interpretation and member checking, I see no mention of data storage nor appraisals for rigour, trustworthiness, credibility and reliability of findings.

**Data was member-checked through engaging the Elders, ensuring the trustworthiness and credibility of our findings. Reliability is not a criterion of qualitative research. Data storage is described in the sentence the reviewer partially quoted in the comment above.**

9. What lens of interpretation (i.e indigenous methodology as mentioned) was used to interpret findings in the context and customs specific to the community and their onto-epistemologies?

**As identified in the text, the study used conversational methods, which is an Indigenous method. We now describe in text that our work was oriented to Indigenous ways of knowing insofar as we produced knowledge through a process of ethical relationship between the team member and, as previously specified, through creating ethical space (Ermine 2007) with participants.**

10. How were the themes/subthemes realized?

**As described in text, this study was co-created with Indigenous partners and adopted a conversational method where thematic analysis was performed to interpret participant data. Themes were validated by Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers following the presentation of the results.**

11. Were the recommendations co-designed or implied from the findings? These tiny details are important to show how self-determination was enhanced.

**Recommendations are implied from the interpretation of the findings, they were then created with Indigenous co-authors and validated with Elders.**

Reviewer: 2

Dr. Gary Groot, University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine

This manuscript addresses an important topic that has had limited associated research. I have a couple of very minor suggestions for your consideration and one larger concern that I believe needs to be addressed. You use provider and paramedic interchangeably in the abstract and it is unclear initially whether you are talking about the same construct or if the provider is intended to mean all health care providers.

**Thank you, this has been updated in the attached manuscript introduction to note provider as a broader term.**

1. You emphasize the use of sharing circles most of the time but then use focus groups in the graphic....can you clarify which it was?

**The term 'sharing circles' is preferred as it is a distinct approach, as now described in text, although there are similarities with focus group methods. As focus group is a commonly used term, it was used in the figure when engaging participants. As the figure reflects what was used in practice, we do not feel we should modify the wording on it now.**

2. On page 4 you say that there are 5 FN-operated ambulance services and then mention privately contracted services....are these one and the same or separate things. Please clarify.

**Thank you for this question, we now clarify in text that there are private services and FN-operated services.**

3. My biggest concern that I think needs to be addressed is the conclusion and discussion section that reads as if the research is comprehensive enough to be translated into policy change without having had the relevant policy players involved and without important considerations such as an economic evaluation of the recommendations. The insights and perspectives are very valuable but, by themselves, are unlikely to result in policy change without further work. I would recommend revising the discussion and conclusions accordingly.

**Thank you for this comment, the authors agree that further work is required. The revised manuscript**

**now specifies that future work could entail economic analysis and engaging policy makers to identify and evaluate specific actions to implement recommendations. We also note in text that our recommendations are deliberately broad, to allow adaptation to local settings respecting First Nations sovereignty.**