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| **Advancing Indigenous Health Equity Through Youth-Led Inter-Nation Relationship Building** |
| **Setting/problem**Internationally, Indigenous populations are known to experience significant health and social disparities due to the effects of colonization. From an Indigenous perspective, these disparities are inherently tied to environmental degradation. While many Indigenous youth across Turtle Island (North America) experience such disparities, they are also seen by their communities as leaders who will advance the reclamation of well-being.**Intervention**Seven Indigenous youth from various nations across Turtle Island organized a two week community exchange to Aotearoa (New Zealand). Their goal was to learn from the Māori, who they saw as leaders in cultural reclamation and Indigenous governance. Several iwis hosted the youth in maraes throughout Te Ika-a-Māui (the North Island), where they engaged in relationship building and land-based learning. Examples of activities included storytelling, sharing songs and sacred medicines, and spending time on the land, all of which are known to promote health in Indigenous settings.**Outcomes**These activities had a highly positive impact on participants. Youth were able to connect with their spirituality, an important aspect of well-being, through land-based learning. Furthermore, activities revealed strong similarities between principles of environmental stewardship held by the Māori and various nations represented from Turtle Island, which strengthened participants’ commitment to addressing environmental issues through the application of Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being. Participants also established similarities in their experiences of colonization, enabling them to better understand the root causes of inequities experienced by their communities. These realizations contributed to critical consciousness raising amongst the youth, which has been associated with a number of health-related benefits.**Implications**These outcomes support the value of fostering relationship building amongst Indigenous youth from different areas of the world. While activities produced immediate benefits for participants at the individual level, they also contributed to youths’ development as leaders in the fight for health equity and environment justice at the community level. Professionals can support Indigenous youth in the facilitation of similar opportunities to further promote health in an innovative manner aligned with Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being.**Preferred presentation format: Oral** |