Preventing Head Injuries in Eeyou Istchee

Ideas for community organisations

September 2015

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About Head Injuries

- Like many northern regions, Eeyou Istchee has high rates of head injury.
- Each year, about 17 Eeyouch have head injuries serious enough to put them in hospital.
- What are these injuries? Things like:
  - Concussions
  - Skull fractures
  - Haemorrhage (bleeding inside the brain) caused by a blow to the head.
In Eeyou Istchee, most of these injuries are caused by assaults, falls, and crashes with cars, snowmobiles or ATVs.

This is very different from the rest of Quebec, where over half the head injuries are due to falls.
Most of the serious head injuries happen to teenagers and younger adults (15–44 yrs)

At this age, the main causes are assault and vehicle crashes

Almost half the adult patients were drunk at the time of the incident

Only ¼ of the people who could have been wearing seatbelts or helmets were doing so. These people had slightly less severe injuries
Preventing head injuries is a team effort!

Many organisations can play a part in lowering the injury rate.
Some ways to reduce head injuries from violence (1)

Schools
- Offer mentoring and other incentives to stay in school
- Incorporate prevention of head trauma into school safety programs
- Offer bullying-prevention programs

Chief & Council
- Reduce availability of alcohol
- Offer recreation programs for youth & adults
- Provide immediate shelters for victims of violence
- Job creation

NNADAP and Mental Health Services
- Address substance abuse in victims and perpetrators of violence
Some ways to reduce head injuries from violence (2)

Police and the justice system
- Encourage people to report violence at each time
- Assist in developing prevention programs
- Assist in developing programs to identify victims of violence
- Land-based programs for perpetrators and persons with violent behaviours, with assistance from Health Services

Health services
- Improve access to rehab, and make sure it is offered based on need
- Provide psychological support for victims of violence
Some ways to reduce head injuries from crashes (1)

Parents/Grandparents:
- Need to learn to say “NO” about lending ATVS, snowmobiles, etc to children
- Need to obey and support local by-laws

Local Safety Department:
- Initiate driving and safety courses for ATVs, snowmobiles, boating, etc.
Some ways to reduce head injuries from crashes (2)

Road Maintenance depts
- Develop trails for snowmobiles and ATVs
- Install guard rails near ditches and ravines

Recreation depts and event organizers
- Promote use of safety equipment (ensure helmets and other safety equipment and wear for snowmobile races)

Police
- Enforce laws on speeding, seatbelts, impaired driving, and helmet use
Some ways to reduce head injuries from crashes (3)

Health services
- Ensure rehab is available, and make sure it is offered based on need (not just SAAQ funding)
- Develop partnerships with specialized trauma centres

Ambulance/First Responders
- Make sure the community has equipment to extract crash victims from vehicles, and staff know how to use it
Thank you