



News Release

For Immediate Release

Research Identifies Inuit Specific Suicide Risk Factors

IQUALUIT, Nunavut (June 5, 2013) – In an attempt to gain more insight into risk factors associated with suicide among Inuit in Nunavut, Dr. Gustavo Turecki, director of McGill Group for Suicide Studies, Douglas Mental Health University Institute, conducted a follow-back study – *Qaujivallianiq Inuusirijauvalauqtunik* (Learning from lives that have been lived) – that was released today.

The goal of the study was to capture the social meanings, activities and detailed life information of 120 Nunavut Inuit who died by suicide in the four-year period of 2003 to 2006.

“This is the first study of its kind where research has examined in-depth patterns and risk factors associated with Inuit and suicides,” said the Honourable Keith Peterson, Minister of Health. “Through this work and the continued implementation of the Suicide Prevention Strategy, we are gaining valuable insight into factors associated with suicide, which enables us to better tailor our collaborative approach to preventing suicide.”

The study cites conclusions that are parallel to information in the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy, such as the rapid increase in suicidal behaviour over recent decades, especially among young people, as a probable result of a change in the intensity of what Inuit are faced with socially. The study also refers to factors such as inter-generational trauma and increased rates of emotional, physical and sexual abuse, violence, substance abuse, and the association of difficult life experiences in conjunction with the onset of mental disorders.

“The findings from this comprehensive study help us understand more about the painful question of why people choose to take their own lives in Nunavut. NTI wishes to thank each and every person who gave their time and perspective to this study, and we pledge that the findings from this study will inform the work we do in implementing the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy,” said Jack Anawak, vice-president of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

“The Embrace Life Council is grateful for the contributions that Nunavummiut have made to this study and we are using the findings to better inform our work. We have been, and continue to be, committed to the implementation of the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy and have directed all of our efforts towards implementation,” said Yvonne Niego, vice-president of the Embrace Life Council board of directors.

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