Dare to Dream: Promoting Indigenous Children's Interest in Health Professions through Book Collections

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Introduction: Indigenous peoples in Canada experience significant health challenges, but few pursue careers in the health sciences. Two programs by medical librarians designed to encourage children in First Nations communities to dream of careers in the health professions will be presented. Description: An academic library in [Province] developed children's health and science book collections with Indigenous school libraries. Library and information science students, as well as a librarian, participated in health education activities in the recipient schools. This project inspired the community service project of the joint MLA/CHLA-ABSC/ICLC Mosaic|Mosaïque 2016 conference, which focused on placing similar collections in Ontario Indigenous communities. The mechanics, benefits, and challenges of the programs will be discussed including book selection and delivery. Outcomes: Hundreds of books have been delivered and informal qualitative evaluative data from the recipient communities indicates positive outcomes. Some difficulties in providing optimal access to the books were identified due to communication problems or the relative lack of library infrastructure in these communities. Discussion: Reading for pleasure is linked to student's academic success. Access to varied and quality literature is important for school achievement, therefore these collections may potentially impact student's future life chances. While a direct correlation between these collections and student's future career choices cannot be easily measured, it is known that Indigenous high school graduates frequently choose to pursue professions linked to the needs of the community. Therefore any materials drawing attention to potential community health needs may well influence student's choices.
Indigenous children across Australia often make their own toys, and like children everywhere, they are incredibly resourceful. Will you dare to share our dream? Mick Dodson, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Sydney Morning Herald, 25 January, 1997. Cultural heritage. Archaeological work at Jinmium created enormous public interest in 1996 when initial dates suggested stone artefacts (flakes and some tools) were older than 116,000 years and engravings were up to 58,000 years old. More recently developed dating methods challenged the early dates, suggesting the stone artefacts and rock-art may be less than 20,000 years old -- perhaps only 10,000 years of age.