

Lead Exposure Reduction Communications/Outreach Program: Introduction and Discussion

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Background- Our Understanding of Study Findings

- Measured blood lead levels in Flin Flon area children do not indicate immediate health concerns
- Results comparable with / slightly lower than other Canadian smelter communities
- Blood lead levels in Canada have declined significantly over time
- Latest studies indicate possibility of slight developmental /cardiovascular effects at low levels
- Lead exposure in Flin Flon slightly higher than population data but well below current Health Canada action levels for medical intervention
- Few children (about 2%) had levels above current intervention level
- As a precaution, about 13% of the children tested were referred to a physician for follow-up

Study Recommendation: because of uncertainties related to safe level for lead, risk management activities, including educational outreach program, recommended

Study Findings: lead sources in Flin Flon

- Many factors associated with the blood lead levels including:
 - Gender
 - Area of residence
 - Year house was constructed
- No one specific source of lead exposure identified
- Many possible sources:
 - Soil
 - Household Dust (from lead paint, etc.)
 - Air
 - Drinking Water
 - Food

Basic messages (from Health Canada 2008 and other sources):

- ✓ Remove outdoor shoes
- ✓ Wash hands and faces of children after playing outside and before eating
- ✓ Clean your home with a damp mop or cloth regularly
- ✓ Brush your pets often, outside
- ✓ Wash vegetables thoroughly
- ✓ Run cold water tap first thing in the morning; don't use hot water for cooking
- ✓ Be aware of consumer alerts re: toys
- ✓ Don't let kids eat paint chips
- ✓ Use non-lead shot for hunting game birds
- ✓ Discard tissue around wound channel from game harvested with lead shot

Traditional ways to spread the message

- Develop comprehensive brochure on all aspects of lead exposure
 - Myriad examples exist – could either use existing or “Flin-Flonify”
- Develop fact sheets about reducing childhood exposure - targeted at parents and caregivers
 - Myriad examples exist – could either use existing or “Flin-Flonify”
- Distribute print information widely
 - Stores, health care centres, etc.
- Advertise on the radio
 - CFAR morning show, CBC North Country
- Hold community presentations
- *We can do all of these things, but...*

Developing an educational outreach program

- Ultimate Program Goal: Reduce blood lead levels in children in Flin Flon area
- What the literature tells us about education campaigns:
 - Numerous international studies of programs designed to reduce blood lead levels in at risk children concluded that educational programs and dust control measures alone failed to prevent levels greater than 10ug/dL, even 20ug/dL – Flin Flon Soils Study, p. 46
- *But* education still considered an important component of an overall lead reduction strategy...so...

Developing an educational outreach program

- Opportunity to go beyond traditional education campaign to target specific behaviours
- Need to carefully tailor program to fit Flin Flon area and be delivered locally to have most effect
- Challenges:
 - Because no one source identified, choosing a specific effective exposure reduction strategy difficult
 - Public not particularly concerned with outcome of study; unlikely to pay much attention
 - Blood lead levels won't be retested until 2012, so program evaluation difficult
 - Need to find local organizations to partner with

Which behaviour(s) do we target?

- Home cleaning?
- Dirt and paint eating?
- Drinking water from lead water pipes?
- Eating lead shot in wild game?
- Hand washing?
- Renovation of older homes (lead paint, etc.)?

Chosen behaviours/activities:

- Hand washing
 - Target group: toddlers to age six
 - And all caregivers for above
- Renovation of older homes with lead hazards
 - Target group: professional contractors and do-it-yourselfers
 - Spouses of target group (!)

Rationale for Hand washing

- ✓ Hand washing always on the list of lead reduction strategies
- ✓ Benefits extend beyond lead reduction to general preventative health care – biggest “bang for your buck”
- ✓ Can piggyback on and enhance existing programs and extend their reach and impact
- ✓ Can examine current strategy (germ kits) and explore possibilities for using targeted behaviour change tools, such as prompts, norms and incentives

Preliminary List of Ideas for Handwashing Program

- Enhance current kit used by NRHA – maybe supply more kits
- Prompt: sticker for bathroom mirror
- Norm: sticker/button to wear when you've completed the "training"
- Incentive: gold star chart to fill out, send in for something cool
- Colouring book from Trail, B.C., as a take-home
- *Begin with literature review of successful campaigns run elsewhere and a focus group of local caregivers/parents/etc.*
- *Run a pilot to test materials with children and caregivers*

Community Connections/Potential Partnerships for Hand Washing Program Delivery

- NRHA
- Community Day Cares
- Licensed Day Homes
- Aboriginal Head Start Program
- Primary Schools
- Parent Associations
- Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency
- Church Programs

Rationale for Home Renovations

- ✓ Dust from home renovations is a known risk factor for increased blood lead levels
- ✓ Assumed that all homes built prior to 1978 have a lead hazard present or contain lead-based paint
- ✓ Lead-safe work practices for everything from major renovations to minor repairs recommended
- ✓ Existing older housing stock in Flin Flon

Preliminary List of Ideas for Home Renos Program

- Presentation on lead reduction strategies with hands-on tools and techniques
- Potential to add this to presentation about other aspects of renovation interesting to this crowd – counters, cabinets, etc.
- How-to guide for safe home renos to hand out
- Newspaper ads – “does your contractor know how to handle...?”
- Grant money for renos to older homes would come with lead reduction training; provide extra grant money if lead reduction is reason for renos?
- Specific reno equipment available to borrow for jobs – with training
- Offering courses to become certified lead removal experts

Community Connections/Potential Partnerships for Home Reno Program Delivery

- Hardware stores – distribution of pamphlets, identification of contractors
- Flin Flon Neighbourhood Revitalization Corporation
- Service Clubs
- Healthy Flin Flon
- HBMS
 - Health and Safety meetings
 - Potential for borrowing/being trained to use equipment
 - Potential certification training for contractors working in older homes
- Métis council meetings
- Hunting license offices
- Real Estate Offices

Next Steps

- Establish community partnerships and clarify roles
- Establish timelines for program design and delivery
- Research similar programs/ conduct focus groups in Flin Flon
- Refine program details
 - What are we designing?
 - Print brochures
 - Stickers, buttons, etc.
 - Presentations
 - What resources do we need?
 - Program supplies
 - Delivery capacity
 - To whom will it be delivered?
- Determine role of CAC

Thank You

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Discussion

Discussion points

- Does the CAC endorse program approach?
- Partnership possibilities?
- More people to talk to?
- Ideas for linking with current programs?