

Community knowledge of *Helicobacter pylori* infection in northern Canada. A Wynne, J Geary, KJ Goodman, CANHelp Working Group (University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, T6G2E1)

H. pylori infection and related diseases occur with increased frequency in Arctic Aboriginal populations. Public awareness has created concerns in some northern Canadian communities about stomach cancer risks from this infection. The Aklavik *H. pylori* Project links community leaders, health authorities and scientists in an effort to address these concerns. This report describes participants' knowledge of and concerns about *H. pylori*. From 2007-10, 344 residents of Aklavik, Northwest Territories (population=590, ~90% Aboriginal) responded to a survey asking if they had heard of *H. pylori* infection, and if so, if they knew what problems it caused or how people got it. Respondents were asked if they thought *H. pylori* was a community concern, and if so, why. Response frequencies (95% confidence interval) are presented for 299 respondents aged ≥ 12 years. 56% (50-62) indicated they had heard of *H. pylori*; however, the related illnesses of cancer, stomach problems, and ulcers were each mentioned by <20%. 77% (71-81) agreed that *H. pylori* was a community concern. Reasons for concern were cancer (15% (11-19)), many people having it (14% (11-19)), and that it causes illness (10% (7-14)). Reported modes of transmission were water-related (17% (13-22)), personal contact/hygiene (7% (5-11)) and germs/infectious agent (4% (2-6)). Of those who reported a family history of *H. pylori* infection or stomach cancer, more had heard of *H. pylori* (72% (63-79) vs 45% (37-52)), believed it is transmitted via water (25% (18-34) vs 11% (7-17)), or believed it is a community concern (85% (77-90) vs 71% (64-78)). Although general awareness and concern about *H. pylori* infection were common, few respondents articulated specific knowledge or reasons for concern.