

Cancer rates in Aklavik?

Friends, I just wanted to make a few comments about the recent story about the possible cause for cancer in Aklavik, and how the medical profession often plays havoc with the health in our smaller communities.

In this case I question the researchers explanations for the abnormally high rates of the H. pylori infection, which may explain the high rates of stomach cancer in the Delta

community of Aklavik.

From what I am given to understand these findings have been made as a result of taking breath samples and that these same medical professionals are also wanting us to seriously believe that the locals of Aklavik are contracting this infection from contact with fecal matter.

At the very outside could it not be present in a swimming pool or in other such water?

Let me just put it this way, would these same professionals expect a community with a non-Native majority to believe these same findings, and if so, would it still be let out as public information?

If I were in a position of authority I would think twice about what the people who actually live in the communities, like Chief Charlie Furlong, have said all along, that these infections could be

happening as a result of the poor drinking water.

In places like Behchoko/ Fort Rae, for instance, the water is so bad from Marion Lake that many people only use the water they go and get from Yellowknife, 95-kilometres away.

But I am glad to know that at least someone is looking for the cause of this problem anyway.

In places like Deline it took a concerted effort from the locals, like Cindy Gilday, George Blondin and Gina Dolphus before we were made aware that the reason for the high rates of cancer was from a uranium mine that was there many years before.

Of course it will take some time, as these medical people say, to find out exactly why there is so much cancer in places like Aklavik. As with the HIV virus that causes AIDS, the cancer can lay dormant for quite awhile after

A MOUNTAIN

View



Antoine Mountain is a Dene artist and writer originally from Radlilh Koe/Fort Good Hope. He can be reached at www.amountainarts.com.

infection to do its destructive work. In the meantime, I would not be so quick to insinuate that the people there

are handling too much feces on a daily basis, or sharing too much saliva! Get real, folks!