




Exploring Social Support, Sport Participation, and Rural Women's Health Using Photovoice

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Funded by Sport Canada



Background

- More than 1 million Canadians curl every year (CCA, 2011)
- Curling is central to many rural communities
 - more than 28% of Canadian curlers live in communities with fewer than 10,000 people (CCA, 2008)
- Few health, recreation, or other resources exist in rural communities
- Rural people are less healthy and have shorter life expectancies compared to urban residents (CIHI, 2006; Romanow, 2004)



Why Rural Women?

- Rural communities are feminized aging communities
- Rural communities tend to favour men and boys in sports, and hockey, to the exclusion or minimizing of women and girls
- And yet, curling clubs are important places for women and girls



Purpose of the Study

- To explore the roles that sport and recreation clubs play as community, social, and health places for rural women
- To understand how sport activities and meanings differ for women across diverse rural communities
- To utilize photovoice with rural women and document their perspectives about health within the context of curling



The Research

- A national 3 year study in Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia, and the Northwest Territories
- Feminist and social capital theoretical approaches (Seippel, 2006)
- Photovoice - developed for research with rural women; founded on feminist, critical consciousness, and PAR philosophies; facilitates inclusivity and empowerment (Wang & Burris, 1997)
- Rural definition: Populations living outside the commuting zone of urban centres with more than 10,000 inhabitants (du Plessis et al., 2002)

Participants

- 52 women and 3 girls, aged 12 to 75 years, from seven rural communities in Ontario, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and the Northwest Territories
- Location: 24 lived on a farm/acreage (5 to 30 km from town) and 28 lived in a town (300 to 5000 people)
- Education: Grade 7-8 (2 children, 1 adult), Grade 9-13 (1 adolescent, 19 adults), Post-secondary education (30)
- Curling experience: less than two years (10), 3-5 years (10), 6-10 years (6), 11-15 years (7), 16 or more years (18)

Method

- Camera orientation session, then 2 weeks for picture taking and log book recording, then focus groups or in-depth interviews to discuss photos
- Participants participated in analysis
- Several strategies used for analysis of photo, log book, and focus group data (Leipert & Smith, 2008; Oliffe et al., 2008; Wang & Burris, 1997)
- 955 photos taken; NVIVO used for data management

