

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

ARTICLE DETAILS

Title (Provisional)

How do health, spirituality, and wellbeing intersect in the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Region 3? A Métis-guided, community-based, participatory study

Authors

Ginn, Carla; Ginn, Craig W. C.; Barnabe, Cheryl; Dumont/Vaness Bergum, Doreen; Gentes, Judy; Tatrallyay, Priscilla

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

Reviewer	1
Name	Isaacson, Mary
Affiliation	South Dakota State University
Date	11-Aug-2024
COI	No competing interests

Thank you for the opportunity to review this very interesting and highly enlightening manuscript. Overall it is well written, highly informative, and will add greatly to the body of literature; however, there are many mechanistic issues (i.e., very long sentences).

Abstract:

Page 2, lines 24-28: Please make this into 2 sentences: Métis people are affected by historical and contemporary impacts of colonization, including the residential school experience, impacting how Métis people relate to themselves, to others, and to their culture. (Place a period after **colonization. This includes the residential**...)

Page 2, lines 33-38: Please revise the “participants” section. (Again, make 2 sentences.)

Pages 2-3, entire results section: I would encourage you to list only the main theme, as I assume the ones in parentheses are subthemes? **This way you can add a method or design section, which is missing.**

Page 3: Conclusion—remove the first sentence, not needed. Perhaps start with: Our results indicate that the impacts of colonization with the Métis are poorly understood. More research is needed to... **Please also make the second sentence into at least 2 sentences if not 3. When the sentences are so long, the reader loses the meaning behind the sentence.**

Strengths and limitations:

Page 3, line 25: Remove “necessarily”

Introduction:

This introduction is well written and full of many details. It would be very helpful to have more headings and align with past and present, along with what is being discussed: spirituality, boarding schools, etc.

Page 3, line 40: Please place a period after societies and begin a new sentence with "In Canada..."

Page 4, lines 33-40: Please make this into at least 2 sentences: Fiolas notes Métis people adhering to Indigenous Spiritualism, Catholicism, Anglicanism, Methodism, or Presbyterianism, with Michif-speaking Catholics viewing Indigenous Spiritualism most favorably due to parallels between folk Catholicism of voyageur fathers and mothers' Ojibwa and Cree traditions.

Page 5, lines 22-26: Please make this 2 sentences. Place a period after complicated and begin new sentence with "many."

Page 5, lines 47-52: "By the early 1800's, Métis people were a strong political and economic force in the Red River area, and had integrated ceremonies and other elements of Indigenous spirituality." In this sentence you identify political and economic force, which does not fit with what is being discussed: religion/spirituality. Would recommend deleting "were a strong political and economic force in the Red River area, and"

Page 6: First paragraph, use "impact or impacting" often. Suggest using another word.

Page 6: This sentence is confusing as you begin with what the purpose was and then finish with what has been the effect. Please revise: "Between 1883 and 1996, more than 150,000 Indigenous children were placed in residential schools, which were set up to displace parental and community involvement in children's lives, with ongoing adverse effects for surviving families and communities, affecting individual and collective health."¹⁷

Page 6, lines 20-31: Please add a transition after families and before "ongoing" as you are discussing the past and what is current (This includes your quote that follows, as it then goes back to the past, please try to keep the present and past separate so as to not confuse the reader).

Page 7: Please make into 2 sentences: The colonial experience resulted in Indigenous people disassociating from their culture and assimilating into the dominant culture; however, understanding how people conceive of themselves and how they relate to the world around them, is fundamental to health and wellbeing.⁴

Page 7: Following this sentence above you know go back into what is important now, when I thought we were discussing past boarding school. The next sentences go back to religion and spirituality. Again, this is confusing and doesn't flow well but is critical for the reader to grasp the importance of the research.

Methods:

Page 8: First sentence, please make into 2.

Page 8: Please define what your team means by a patient-oriented community-based study

Page 8, line 17: So the priorities identified came from your earlier work where you developed the survey?.

Page 8, Line 22: sentence beginning with connection is a fragment. Please ensure that it flows well from the previous sentence.

Page 8, line 24: sentences starting with "we used" doesn't flow well. Would recommend holding until you talk about your data collection.

Page 8, second paragraph: recommend moving this excellent information to the first paragraph and shifting the from the first paragraph to the second paragraph. Please also divide this sentence into at least 2 sentences. Please provide more information about "Indigenous ways of knowing."

Page 8-9: Information about the population should be under "participants" for a heading.

Page 9: Please describe for readers unfamiliar what you mean by a sharing circle. What did the survey consist of? Open-ended questions, Likert-style questions? Was demographic information collected? Please provide more information.

Page 9: you talk about "survey data". Again, was this narrative data? It is difficult to understand what your participants in the listening circles were reviewing. So were they analyzing the data as well as part of another data collection process? Please be clear.

Page 10: So in the sharing circles, you also then collected data (i.e., the notes taken) to use in the development of themes? Please revise this section to be clear. Need to add a heading about data analysis. What training did the researchers have in this method? What thematic analysis method did you use?

Page 10: These 2 sentences are more applicable to your discussion: "Many research studies occur with agendas set outside the community rather than with Indigenous people.⁴⁰ Our research originated with community leaders identifying a topic of importance, co-developing a qualitative structured survey with community leaders, an Elder, and community members, and working closely to centre their priorities and perspectives throughout the research process.

Page 10-11: The section on ethics is well done, but should be added earlier and under its own heading.

Results:

In this first paragraph, please first list your overarching theme. For example: (1) searching; subthemes: (a) searching for connection, (b) educating ourselves; (2) interconnectedness; subthemes: (a) interconnectedness and holistic health, (b)...

Either list it that way or just list the overarching themes and use your table. As you have it, the table is duplicative.

Page 13: in the searching paragraph please revise the second sentence like this:

Desired outcomes of searching included connecting: (a) to Indigenous ways of being; (b) to learning opportunities; (c) to culture...

Page 13, line 42: "connection included educating". Educating for what?

Page 14, lines 15-22: please place all the information about education from Elders together and then follow with higher education.

Page 22, lines 36-40: duplication of a quote "there is not one way or dogma."

Discussion:

Page 25: Please divide this into 2 sentences: "Words are not the only significant part of apology, it also includes the spirit behind them; the emphasis of colonization as a common enemy implied responsibility outside the church, and the church should not determine acceptance of an apology but should demonstrate deep sorrow and amendment for wrongs. 62"

Page 25: Please divide this into 2 sentences: "On Pope Francis' return to Rome he described affirming local Canadian Catholic communities to engage with Indigenous

culture, languages, and worldviews, and the pain he felt when the elderly in Iqaluit described losing their children, however, each survivor will need to make their own decision about accepting the apology – concrete action is still required."

Page 25: Please also review the sentence that follows the above—too long and must be divided into 2 to 3 sentences.

Page 26, lines 22-26: This citation is not talking about land, so do not feel that it relates to what is being discussed. Please revise.

Page 26, line 29: Please add "limitations" as a heading.

Missing a conclusion.

Reviewer	2
Name	Weitkamp, Katharina
Affiliation	University of Zurich
Date	15-Oct-2024
COI	I have no competing interests

Abstract

1. Data analysis method should be mentioned in the abstract already.

Introduction

2. Direct quotes need a page number with the reference.
3. In line with APA 7th guidelines a single sentence cannot make up a paragraph.
4. In my opinion, the introduction on Métis culture could be shortened.
5. At the end of the introduction a research question should be explicitly formulated. Without this the findings are just hanging in mid-air and as a reader I am not sure whether these findings are about enhancing the health system or understanding Métis identity.
6. It would be interesting to hear more about the health and well-being of the Métis to set the ground for the current study, also the difficulties with using the medical system.

Methods

7. It would be helpful to mention the study design at the beginning of the methods section, on p. 8 "the survey" is mentioned for the first time and it is a bit confusing.
8. How many people participated in the zoom meetings and how long did they take?
9. Did participants get any kind of compensation for their study participation?
10. An additional positionality statement of the researchers would be helpful beyond the mere information on Métis background.
11. Since the data analyses method is quite special it would be helpful to have an example, how a topic came up in the zoom meetings and was formulated into a theme later.
12. What were the survey questions about? How long did it take to fill in the survey?
13. Sample description is missing.
14. Some of the quotes sound very sophisticated, what about the educational background of study participants and is this reflecting the whole community?

Results

15. Phrasing is misleading: "six themes emerged" omits the active process of engaging with and analyzing the data to formulate these themes.
16. Tab. 1 is not in line with APA 7th guidelines.
17. Tab. 1 it would be interesting to see the frequency or prevalence of data points for each of the sub-/themes.
18. I would suggest to separate the results presentation from the discussion, p. 12 l. 19f.
19. The results section needs more direct quotes to illustrate the authors' summaries. For instance paragraph starting on p. 12, l. 24f
20. P. 14, l. 25. "sweats" might need some explanation in the text for the wider non-Métis readership.
21. It would be informative to see the participants gender next to the quotes.
22. At times quotes are just followed by quote. I would prefer the author's to summarize and nuance the divergences followed by a single quote and if more quotes are needed guide the reader between quotes.
23. Repetition of quote on p. 22, l. 36.
24. Also, p. 22, l. 3 – quote was already used before?

Discussion

25. According to APA 7th, the discussion should start with a sentence on the study goal and main findings.
26. P. 24: it is not clear how children's bodies buried on residential school grounds is related to the findings. Maybe focus more on what is stated in the results section? Also, the visit of the Pope seems a bit out of place here (even though the lost children are of course a highly important topic). In my opinion, the whole text on p. 24 is not directly related to the findings and could be deleted and voiced elsewhere in a more fitting outlet.
27. The authors mention implications without explicating these, this could take up a much greater part in the discussion.
28. At the moment the discussion still seems a bit weak. However, without a clear research question, I am unable to make suggestions for improvement.
29. More research is needed: this could also be more detailed and specific.
30. Even though, Fig. 1 looks very appealing. If the picture is thought to foster health, spirituality, and wellbeing, I would suggest to formulate the themes in a positive way, instead of "colonization and systems".

VERSION 1 - AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer: 1

Dr. Mary Isaacson, South Dakota State University

Comments to the Author:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this very interesting and highly enlightening manuscript. Overall it is well written, highly informative, and will add greatly to the body of literature; however, there are many mechanistic issues (i.e., very long sentences). See attached.

Thank you for your kind words and thorough review – we have responded to your suggestions below, and feel that the manuscript is now much clearer.

Abstract:

Page 2, lines 24-28: Please make this into 2 sentences: Métis people are affected by historical and contemporary impacts of colonization, including the residential school experience, impacting how Métis people relate to themselves, to others, and to their culture. (Place a period after colonization. This includes the residential...)

Page 2, lines 33-38: Please revise the “participants” section. (Again, make 2 sentences.) Pages 2-3, entire results section: I would encourage you to list only the main theme, as I assume the ones in parentheses are subthemes? This way you can add a method or design section, which is missing.

Page 3: Conclusion—remove the first sentence, not needed. Perhaps start with: Our results indicate that the impacts of colonization with the Métis are poorly understood. More research is needed to... Please also make the second sentence into at least 2 sentences if not 3. When the sentences are so long, the reader loses the meaning behind the sentence.

Thank you - we have edited the abstract.

Strengths and limitations:

Page 3, line 25: Remove “necessarily”

We were unable to find the word “necessarily.”

Introduction: This introduction is well written and full of many details. It would be very helpful to have more headings and align with past and present, along with what is being discussed: spirituality, boarding schools, etc.

Page 3, line 40: Please place a period after societies and begin a new sentence with “In Canada...”

Page 4, lines 33-40: Please make this into at least 2 sentences: Fiola5 notes Métis people adhering to Indigenous Spiritualism, Catholicism, Anglicanism,

Methodism, or Presbyterianism, with Michif-speaking Catholics viewing Indigenous Spiritualism most favorably due to parallels between folk Catholicism of voyageur fathers and mothers’ Ojibwa and Cree traditions.

Page 5, lines 22-26: Please make this 2 sentences. Place a period after complicated and begin new sentence with “many.”

Page 5, lines 47-52: “By the early 1800’s, Métis people were a strong political and economic force in the Red River area, and had integrated ceremonies and other elements of Indigenous spirituality.” In

this sentence you identify political and economic force, which does not fit with what is being discussed: religion/spirituality. Would recommend deleting “were a strong political and economic force in the Red River area, and”

Page 6: First paragraph, use “impact or impacting” often. Suggest using another word.

Page 6: This sentence is confusing as you begin with what the purpose was and then finish with what has been the effect. Please revise: “Between 1883 and 1996, more than 150,000 Indigenous children were placed in residential schools, which were set up to displace parental and community involvement in children’s lives, with ongoing adverse effects for surviving families and communities, affecting individual and collective health.”¹⁷

Page 6, lines 20-31: Please add a transition after families and before “ongoing” as you are discussing the past and what is current (This includes your quote that follows, as it then goes back to the past, please try to keep the present and past separate so as to not confuse the reader).

Page 7: Please make into 2 sentences: The colonial experience resulted in Indigenous people disassociating from their culture and assimilating into the dominant culture; however, understanding how people conceive of themselves and how they relate to the world around them, is fundamental to health and wellbeing.⁴

Page 7: Following this sentence above you know go back into what is important now, when I thought we were discussing past boarding school. The next sentences go back to religion and spirituality. Again, this is confusing and doesn’t flow well but is critical for the reader to grasp the importance of the research.

Thank you - we have edited the introduction and think it is clearer now.

Methods:

Page 8: First sentence, please make into 2.

Page 8: Please define what your team means by a patient-oriented community-based study

Page 8, line 17: So the priorities identified came from your earlier work where you developed the survey?.

Page 8, Line 22: sentence beginning with connection is a fragment. Please ensure that it flows well from the previous sentence.

Page 8, line 24: sentences starting with “we used” doesn’t flow well. Would recommend holding until you talk about your data collection.

Page 8, second paragraph: recommend moving this excellent information to the first paragraph and shifting the from the first paragraph to the second paragraph. Please also divide this sentence into at least 2 sentences. Please provide more information about “Indigenous ways of knowing.”

Page 8-9: Information about the population should be under “participants” for a heading. Thank you - we have completed these suggested edits in the methods section and think it is much clearer now.

Page 9: Please describe for readers unfamiliar what you mean by a sharing circle. What did the survey consist of? Open-ended questions, Likert-style questions? Was demographic information collected? Please provide more information.

Page 9: you talk about “survey data”. Again, was this narrative data? It is difficult to understand what your participants in the listening circles were reviewing. So were they analyzing the data as well as part of another data collection process? Please be clear.

Page 10: So in the sharing circles, you also then collected data (i.e., the notes taken) to use in the development of themes? Please revise this section to be clear. Need to add a heading about data analysis. What training did the researchers have in this method? What thematic analysis method did you use?

Page 10: These 2 sentences are more applicable to your discussion: “Many research studies occur with agendas set outside the community rather than with Indigenous people.⁴⁰ Our research originated with community leaders identifying a topic of importance, co-developing a qualitative structured survey with community leaders, an Elder, and community members, and working closely to centre their priorities and perspectives throughout the research process.

Thank you - we have completed this section with more detail.

Page 10-11: The section on ethics is well done, but should be added earlier and under its own heading.

Thank you - we have moved this section up in the manuscript and added a heading.

Results: In this first paragraph, please first list your overarching theme. For example: (1) searching; subthemes: (a) searching for connection, (b) educating ourselves; (2) interconnectedness; subthemes: (a) interconnectedness and holistic health, (b)...

Either list it that way or just list the overarching themes and use your table. As you have it, the table is duplicative.

We have deleted the table and kept the lengthier theme descriptions in the body of the manuscript.

Page 13: in the searching paragraph please revise the second sentence like this:

3

Desired outcomes of searching included connecting: (a) to Indigenous ways of being; (b) to learning opportunities; (c) to culture...

Page 13, line 42: “connection included educating”. Educating for what?

Page 14, lines 15-22: please place all the information about education from Elders together and then follow with higher education.

Page 22, lines 36-40: duplication of a quote “there is not one way or dogma.”

Thank you - we have completed the suggested edits in the methods section.

Results:

In this first paragraph, please first list your overarching theme. For example: (1) searching; subthemes: (a) searching for connection, (b) educating ourselves; (2) interconnectedness; subthemes: (a) interconnectedness and holistic health, (b)...

Either list it that way or just list the overarching themes and use your table. As you have it, the table is duplicative.

Page 13: in the searching paragraph please revise the second sentence like this:

3

Desired outcomes of searching included connecting: (a) to Indigenous ways of being; (b) to learning opportunities; (c) to culture...

Page 13, line 42: "connection included educating". Educating for what?

Page 14, lines 15-22: please place all the information about education from Elders together and

then follow with higher education.

Page 22, lines 36-40: duplication of a quote "there is not one way or dogma."

We have completed these suggested edits in the results section.

Discussion:

Page 25: Please divide this into 2 sentences: "Words are not the only significant part of apology,

it also includes the spirit behind them; the emphasis of colonization as a common enemy implied responsibility outside the church, and the church should not determine acceptance of an

apology but should demonstrate deep sorrow and amendment for wrongs. 62"

Page 25: Please divide this into 2 sentences: "On Pope Francis' return to

Rome he described affirming local Canadian Catholic communities to engage with Indigenous

culture, languages, and worldviews, and the pain he felt when the elderly in Iqaluit described losing their children, however, each survivor will need to make their own decision about accepting the apology – concrete action is still required."

Page 25: Please also review the sentence that follows the above—too long and must be divided

into 2 to 3 sentences.

Page 26, lines 22-26: This citation is not talking about land, so do not feel that it relates to what

is being discussed. Please revise.

Page 26, line 29: Please add "limitations" as a heading.

Missing a conclusion.

Thank you – we have made these changes to our discussion, added a heading for limitations, and written a conclusion.

Reviewer: 2

Dr. Katharina Weitkamp, University of Zurich

Comments to the Author:

Thank you for your thorough review – we have responded to your suggestions below, and feel that the manuscript is now much clearer.

Abstract

1. Data analysis method should be mentioned in the abstract already.

We have included our data analysis method in the abstract.

Introduction

2. Direct quotes need a page number with the reference.

We have added page numbers.

3. In line with APA 7th guidelines a single sentence cannot make up a paragraph.

We have shortened sentences throughout and increased paragraph length.

4. In my opinion, the introduction on Métis culture could be shortened.

We have attempted to shorten the introduction, however, in Canada, who Métis people are is not well-known.

5. At the end of the introduction a research question should be explicitly formulated. Without this the findings are just hanging in mid-air and as a reader I am not sure whether these findings are about enhancing the health system or understanding Métis identity.

We have clarified the research question.

6. It would be interesting to hear more about the health and well-being of the Métis to set the ground for the current study, also the difficulties with using the medical system.

We have tried to emphasize that colonization has affected the health and well-being of Métis people – we have not found any literature specifically identifying Métis people having difficulties accessing medical care (however, there is more about Indigenous people in general having difficulties accessing the medical system).

Methods

7. It would be helpful to mention the study design at the beginning of the methods section, on p. 8 "the survey" is mentioned for the first time and it is a bit confusing.

8. How many people participated in the zoom meetings and how long did they take?

9. Did participants get any kind of compensation for their study participation?

10. An additional positionality statement of the researchers would be helpful beyond the mere information on Métis background.

Thank you, we have added these details to the methods section and think it is much clearer now.

11. Since the data analyses method is quite special it would be helpful to have an example, how a topic came up in the zoom meetings and was formulated into a theme later.

Thank you for this suggestion – we have provided more detail and appended our white board themes and research sharing circle notes.

12. What were the survey questions about? How long did it take to fill in the survey?

We have appended the survey – when completing the paper (in-person) survey during our pilot study mixers, some of the participants took up to 3 hours writing answers – some also took it home to complete as they didn't want to rush, and returned it at the next mixer a month later. This electronic survey could have taken less time for some and more for others.

13. Sample description is missing.

We did not collect any demographics except date of birth, which we have now included in our sample description.

14. Some of the quotes sound very sophisticated, what about the educational background of study participants and is this reflecting the whole community?

We did not ask the educational background of study participants; however, we know that within the local MNA Region 3 community there are people with a variety of educational backgrounds. We plan to apply for more funding to visit more remote communities in person across the MNA so that we can reach a broader section of the community.

Results

15. Phrasing is misleading: "six themes emerged" omits the active process of engaging with and analyzing the data to formulate these themes.

We have provided more detail about how we engaged with participants during the research circle sharing groups (data analysis groups).

16. Tab. 1 is not in line with APA 7th guidelines.

We removed the table as per reviewer 1's suggestion, and put more narrative detail in.

17. Tab. 1 it would be interesting to see the frequency or prevalence of data points for each of the sub-/themes.

For our method and design, quantification of qualitative data would not have fit – however, this is a good suggestion for further research with a larger sample across the MNA.

18. I would suggest to separate the results presentation from the discussion, p. 12 l. 19f.

19. The results section needs more direct quotes to illustrate the authors' summaries. For instance paragraph starting on p. 12, l. 24f

20. P. 14, l. 25. "sweats" might need some explanation in the text for the wider non-Métis readership.

Thank you - we have made some changes as suggested above.

21. It would be informative to see the participants gender next to the quotes.

We did not collect any demographic information except date of birth – this is a good suggestion for our next research survey.

22. At times quotes are just followed by quote. I would prefer the author's to summarize and nuance the divergences followed by a single quote and if more quotes are needed guide the reader between quotes.

23. Repetition of quote on p. 22, l. 36.

24. Also, p. 22, l. 3 – quote was already used before?

Thank you, we have added more summaries between quotes and removed the duplicate quote.

Discussion

25. According to APA 7th, the discussion should start with a sentence on the study goal and main findings.

Thank you, we have added an opening sentence about our study goal and main findings.

26. P. 24: it is not clear how children's bodies buried on residential school grounds is related to the findings. Maybe focus more on what is stated in the results section? Also, the visit of the Pope seems a bit out of place here (even though the lost children are of course a highly important topic). In my opinion, the whole text on p. 24 is not directly related to the findings and could be deleted and voiced elsewhere in a more fitting outlet.

Thank you for this suggestion – when we were initially developed and then pilot testing the survey, these topics came up – in particular, Lac Ste. Anne pilgrimages. Pope Francis' visit occurred after we had developed and published the survey, so we feel it is essential to highlight it. We have provided more detail about the context of our survey development in this regard. These topics also came up during our research sharing circle data analysis groups (see notes and whiteboard themes attached as supplementary files).

27. The authors mention implications without explicating these, this could take up a much greater part in the discussion.

28. At the moment the discussion still seems a bit weak. However, without a clear research question, I am unable to make suggestions for improvement.

29. More research is needed: this could also be more detailed and specific.

Thank you - we have expanded our section about implications, clarified our research question, and updated our section on recommended research.

30. Even though, Fig. 1 looks very appealing. If the picture is thought to foster health, spirituality, and wellbeing, I would suggest to formulate the themes in a positive way, instead of "colonization and systems".

Thank you for your suggestions about Figure 1 - it is not necessarily meant to foster health, spirituality, and wellbeing, it is meant to illustrate the continued search. Additionally – as these themes and figure were identified and designed by the circle sharing group participants, I am not at liberty to change them.

VERSION 2 - REVIEW

Reviewer	2
Name	Weitkamp, Katharina
Affiliation	University of Zurich
Date	09-Dec-2024

COI

I have some minor points. The manuscript improved in the revision process.

1. Funding information should be moved either to the title page or before references.
 2. Information in the methods section seems a little mixed across the subheadings. Participants section contains information on procedure, research question, Métis population, survey but not the sample description.
 3. Data should be presented in APA 7th style, for instance mean age use parameters: "mean 40.76 yr, standard deviation 11.87 yr)" (M=40.76, SD=11.87)
 4. P. 11, 29: numbers need to be written in text-form at the beginning of a sentence following APA 7th guidelines.
 5. limitations section is quite lean. The authors could think about trustworthiness criteria of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and discuss potential limitations alongs this line.
-

VERSION 2 - AUTHOR RESPONSE

Thank you for your thorough review.

We have made the following changes in our manuscript (see our "Main Document" - marked copy):

1. We moved our funding information to just before the references.
 2. We moved information in the methods section to fit the subheadings more appropriately.
 3. We presented data in APA 7th style.
 4. We wrote numbers in text form at the beginning of sentences.
- We added more detail to our limitations section. Thank you for considering our revision, Carla Ginn