Indigenous Community Health Indicators Project: Evaluating Tribal Community Social, Cultural, and Spiritual Health and WellBeing

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Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, WA

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The objective is to develop a multi-dimensional and culturally meaningful definition of health…

…that considers how social, environmental and cultural aspects of life influence the overall well being of individuals and the community.
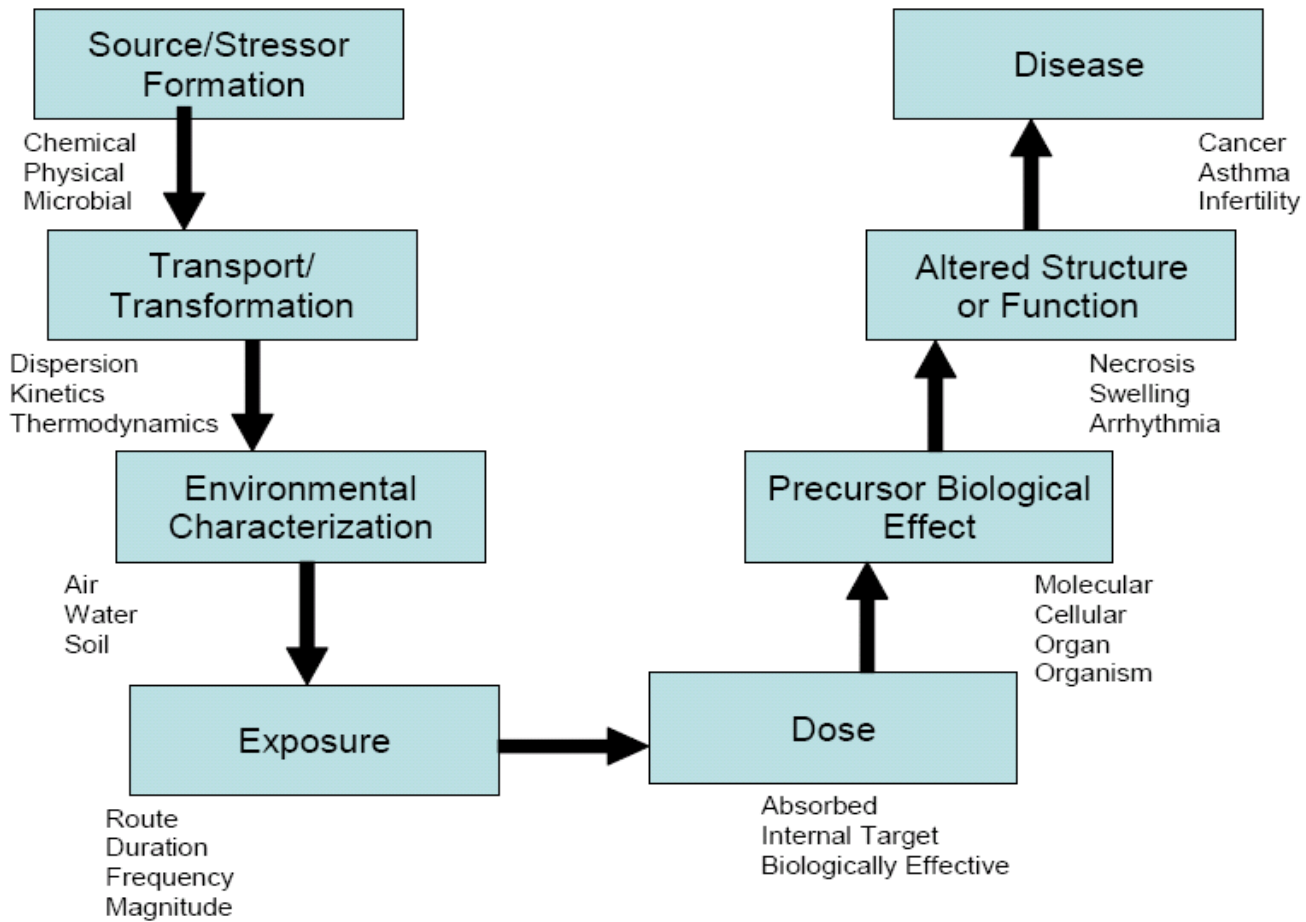
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Figure 2. The Source-Exposure-Dose-Effects Continuum

EPA 2008

Community-based Indigenous health indicators (IHIs):

Resources Security

Community Connections

Cultural Use

Self Determination

Education

Wellbeing (emotional security)

Creating metrics for the IHIs

- *Natural measures*, e.g., "# of diabetics"

- *Proxy measures*, e.g., "% community participation in ceremonies" as a proxy for cultural importance

- *Constructed metrics,* used when other scales aren't possible; e.g, community support for a proposed development rated on a scale of 1-5, with each rating denoting a different level of support.

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Testing the metrics: hosting workshops

Often in cleanups the main consideration is individual physical health --- a possible reduction in the numbers of people getting sick or dying due to pollution. This concern is important.

Examples of concerns that are left out of health assessments:

- ability to educate youth about harvest practices
- staying connected to important outdoor locations
- ability to "feed the spirit" when traditional foods are polluted

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Natural Resources Security – where are we now?

Sharing: On a scale of 1-4, does everyone in your community have access to natural resources such as local clams and fish if they want them?
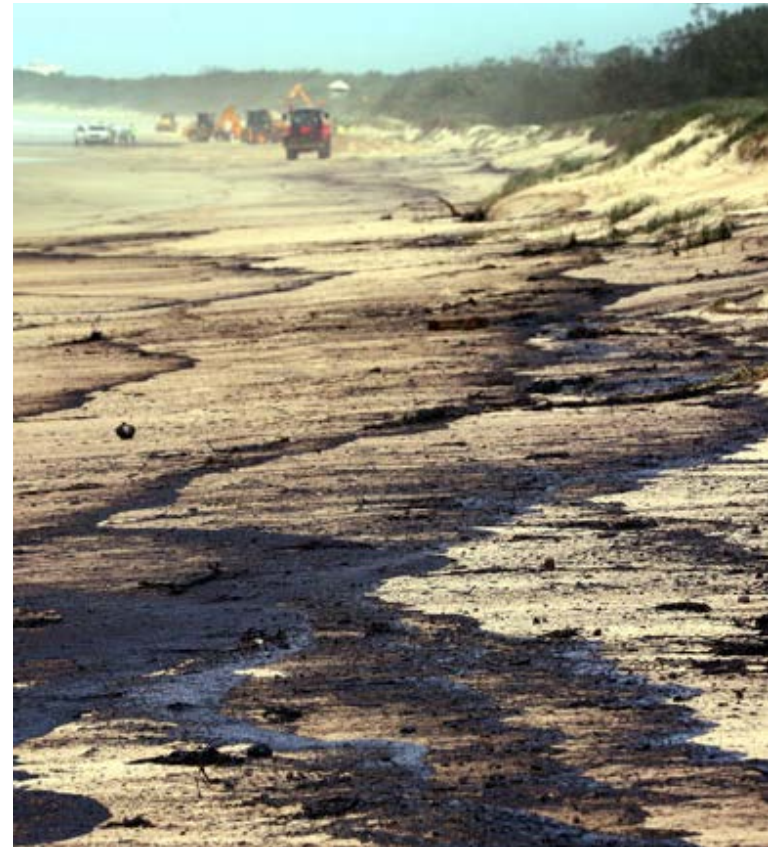
1. Things are very bad   0%
2. Not very good   0%
3. Looking pretty good   0%
4. We're doing great   0%

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How IHIs are ranked and weighted may change dependent on context
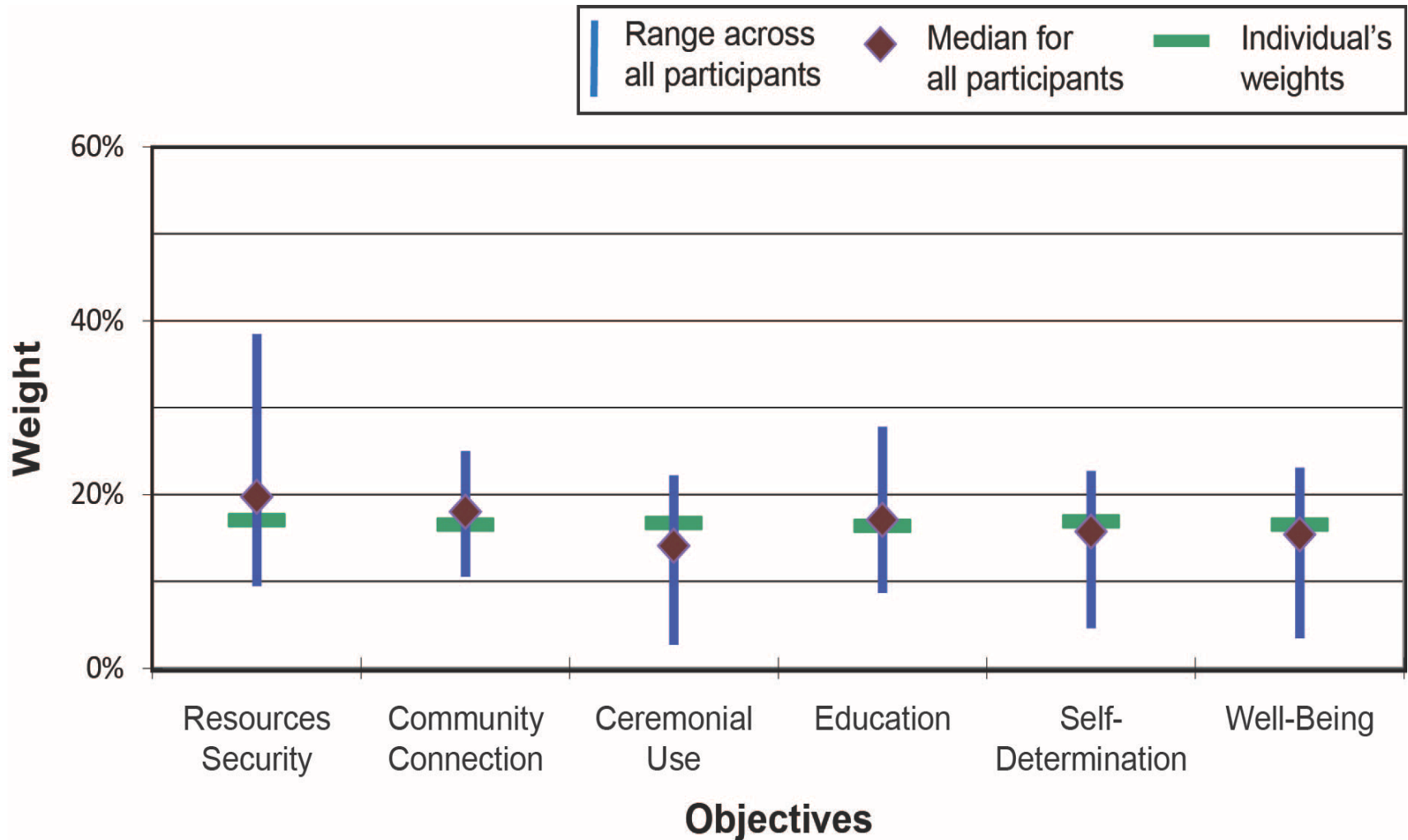

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Scenario 1: Beach Clean-up after Oil Spill

- Oil spills from tanker
- Beaches are closed to clam digging and other harvesting (e.g., beach seining)
- Tanker owners are bankrupt; Gov't has limited funds
- Oil will likely never be 100% cleaned up

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Scenario 1: Oil Spill Clean-up

Ex: Ranking Resources Security

Sharing: On a scale of 1-4, does everyone in the community have access to natural resources if they want them?

Sharing: On a scale of 1-4, will everyone in the community have access to natural resources if they want them in 2100?

1. Things are very bad	0%	0%
2. Not very good	0%	0%
3. Looking pretty good	0%	0%
4. We're doing great	0%	0%

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Swinomish Community Health Sensitivity Matrix

	Projected Impacts: *Low* → *High*				
	Potential opportunity (+ % Δ)	**Low** (O to -25% Δ)	**Medium** (-26 to -50% Δ)	**Medium-high** (-51% to -75% Δ)	**High** (> -75% Δ)
Priority concerns:			CC		CU
Low ↓	ED	WB	SD		
High			NRS		

Δ = change; results are not representative of the community; results are for discussion purposes only

NRS = Natural Resources Security
ED = Education
SD = Self-Determination

CU = Cultural Use
CC = Community Connection
WB = Well=Being

Potential uses

- Health Impact Assessment

- Measuring baseline health

- Risk Assessment

- Natural Resource Damage Assessment

- Ecosystem Services /Cultural Ecosystem Services

http://www.swinomish-nsn.gov/ihi/

Thank you.

"Like we say, it's our spiritual food [seafood] so it feeds our soul; so it might poison our body, but then we'd rather nourish our soul."

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Beach seining at Lone Tree.—*Photo by: Tyler Long*

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