



TITLE: Traditional Smudging Ceremonies: Safety and Guidelines

DATE: 13 July 2016

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the safety of ceremonial smudging practices?
2. What are the evidence based guidelines for the safe practice of smudging?

KEY FINDINGS

No relevant literature was identified regarding traditional smudging ceremonies.

METHODS

A limited literature search was conducted on key resources including PubMed, The Cochrane Library, University of York Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) databases, Canadian and major international health technology agencies, as well as a focused Internet search. No filters were applied to limit the retrieval by study type. Where possible, retrieval was limited to the human population. The search was run on July 7, 2016. The search was limited to the English language, but no date limit was imposed. Internet links were provided, where available.

SELECTION CRITERIA

One reviewer screened citations and selected studies based on the inclusion criteria presented in Table 1.

Disclaimer: The Rapid Response Service is an information service for those involved in planning and providing health care in Canada. Rapid responses are based on a limited literature search and are not comprehensive, systematic reviews. The intent is to provide a list of sources of the best evidence on the topic that the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) could identify using all reasonable efforts within the time allowed. Rapid responses should be considered along with other types of information and health care considerations. The information included in this response is not intended to replace professional medical advice, nor should it be construed as a recommendation for or against the use of a particular health technology. Readers are also cautioned that a lack of good quality evidence does not necessarily mean a lack of effectiveness particularly in the case of new and emerging health technologies, for which little information can be found, but which may in future prove to be effective. While CADTH has taken care in the preparation of the report to ensure that its contents are accurate, complete and up to date, CADTH does not make any guarantee to that effect. CADTH is not liable for any loss or damages resulting from use of the information in the report.

Copyright: This report contains CADTH copyright material and may contain material in which a third party owns copyright. **This report may be used for the purposes of research or private study only.** It may not be copied, posted on a web site, redistributed by email or stored on an electronic system without the prior written permission of CADTH or applicable copyright owner.

Links: This report may contain links to other information available on the websites of third parties on the Internet. CADTH does not have control over the content of such sites. Use of third party sites is governed by the owners' own terms and conditions.

Table 1: Selection Criteria

Population	Adults
Intervention	Smudging ceremonies
Comparator	No comparator
Outcomes	Q1: Harms associated with smudging Q2: Evidence-based guidelines
Study Designs	Health technology assessments, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, randomized controlled trials, non-randomized studies, evidence-based guidelines

RESULTS

Rapid Response reports are organized so that the higher quality evidence is presented first. Therefore, health technology assessment reports, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses are presented first. These are followed by randomized controlled trials, non-randomized studies, and evidence-based guidelines.

No relevant health technology assessments, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, randomized controlled trials, non-randomized studies, or evidence-based guidelines were identified regarding traditional smudging ceremonies.

References of potential interest are provided in the appendix.

Health Technology Assessments

No literature identified.

Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses

No literature identified.

Randomized Controlled Trials

No literature identified.

Non-Randomized Studies

No literature identified.

Guidelines and Recommendations

No literature identified.

PREPARED BY:

Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health

Tel: 1-866-898-8439

www.cadth.ca

APPENDIX – FURTHER INFORMATION:

Non-Randomized Studies

Safety of Moxibustion – No Patient Outcomes

1. Huang J, Lim MY, Zhao B, Shao L, Lao L. PM2.5 and ash residue from combustion of moxa floss. *Acupunct Med*. 2016 Apr;34(2):101-6.
[PubMed: PM26516134](#)
2. Lu CY, Kang SY, Liu SH, Mai CW, Tseng CH. Controlling Indoor Air Pollution from Moxibustion. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2016;13(6).
[PubMed: PM27331817](#)
3. Wheeler J, Coppock B, Chen C. Does the burning of moxa (*Artemisia vulgaris*) in traditional Chinese medicine constitute a health hazard? *Acupunct Med*. 2009 Mar;27(1):16-20.
[PubMed: PM19369189](#)

Qualitative Studies

4. Greensky C, Stapleton MA, Walsh K, Gibbs L, Abrahamson J, Finnie DM, et al. A qualitative study of traditional healing practices among American Indians with chronic pain. *Pain Med*. 2014 Oct;15(10):1795-802.
[PubMed: PM25041140](#)
5. Aboriginal healing in Canada: studies in therapeutic meaning and practice [Internet]. Ottawa (ON): Aboriginal Healing Foundation; 2008. [cited 2016 Jul 11]. Available from: <http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/aboriginal-healing-in-canada.pdf>
See throughout for references to smudging

Guidelines and Recommendations – Safe Smudging Practices Not Specified

6. Wilson D, de la Ronde S, Brascoupé S, Apale AN, Barney L, Guthrie B, et al. Health professionals working with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis consensus guideline. *J Obstet Gynaecol Can* [Internet]. 2013 Jun [cited 2016 Jul 11];35(6 eSuppl):S1-52. Available from: <http://sogc.org/guidelines/health-professionals-working-with-first-nations-inuit-and-metis-consensus-guideline/>
See: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Views of Health, pages S26 to S27

Clinical Practice Guidelines – Uncertain Methodology

7. Facilitation of smudging ceremonies [Internet]. Saskatoon (SK): Saskatoon Health Region; 2016. (Policy number 7311-20-004). [cited 2016 Jul 11]. Available from: <https://www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/about/RWPolicies/7311-20-004.pdf>

Reviews

8. Rowan M, Poole N, Shea B, Gone JP, Mykota D, Farag M, et al. Cultural interventions to treat addictions in Indigenous populations: findings from a scoping study. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy* [Internet]. 2014 [cited 2016 Jul 11];9:34. Available from: <https://substanceabusepolicy.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1747-597X-9-34>
9. Hayatt A. Healing through culture for incarcerated Aboriginal People. *First Peoples Child and Family Review* [Internet]. 2013 [cited 2016 Jul 11]; 8(2):40-54. Available from: <http://journals.sfu.ca/fpcfr/index.php/FPCFR/article/view/166>

Additional References

Government Resources

10. 11 Indigenous spiritual practices. In: Policy on preventing discrimination based on creed [Internet]. Toronto (ON): Ontario Human Rights Commission; 2015 [cited 2016 Jul 11]. Available from: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-creed/11-indigenous-spiritual-practices>
See: 11.1 Ceremonial practices and customs
11. Correctional Service Canada. Commissioner's directive: Aboriginal offenders [Internet]. Ottawa (ON): Government of Canada; 2013 [cited 2016 Jul 11]. Available from: <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/politiques-et-lois/702-cd-eng.shtml>
See: 6.g
12. First Nation programs and services [Internet]. Whitehorse (YK): Department of Justice, Yukon Government; 2013 [cited 2016 Jul 11]. Available from: <http://www.justice.gov.yk.ca/prog/cor/fnps.html>

Non-Clinical Guidelines – School-Based Policies

13. Smudging protocol and guidelines for school district No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen) [Internet]. Merritt (BC): School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen); 2016 [cited 2016 Jul 11]. Available from: <http://www.sd58.bc.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Smudging-Protocol.pdf>
14. Policies: health, safety and environment. Smudging and pipe ceremonies [Internet]. Saskatoon (SK): University of Saskatchewan; 2015. [cited 2016 Jul 11]. <http://policies.usask.ca/policies/health-safety-and-environment/smudging-and-pipe-ceremonies.php>
15. Smudging practices in schools [Internet]. Winnipeg (MB): St James-Assiniboia School Division; 2015. (Policy #358709). [cited 2016 Jul 11]. Available from: <http://polmanual.sjsd.net/polmanualpdf/Section%20I%20-%20Instruction/IMDE%20Smudging%20Practices%20in%20Schools.pdf>

16. Smudging protocol and guidelines for school divisions [Internet]. Winnipeg (MB): Aboriginal Education Directorate, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning; 2014. [cited 2016 Jul 11]. Available from: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aed/publications/pdf/smudging_guidelines.pdf
17. Smudging. Administration procedure manual AP:135) [Internet]. Birtle (MB): Parks West School Division; 2014. [cited 2016 Jul 11]. Available from: <http://www.pwsd.ca/Policies/Section%201/135-Smudging.pdf>
18. Guidelines for smudging and ceremonies using smoke at the First Nations longhouse. Vancouver (BC): The University of British Columbia, First Nations House of Learning; 2011. [cited 2016 Jul 11; updated 2015 Jun]. Available from: <http://aboriginal-2.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2015/06/FNHL-Smudging-Policy-June-2011.pdf>