

Peace Offerings

*Cross-Disciplinary Writing
by Northern Lights College Students
Vol. 8-2024*



Northern Lights
College



Contents

03

Introduction to *Peace Offerings*
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Welcome to the eighth edition of the Northern Lights
College student journal *Peace Offerings*

04

Animal-Assisted Intervention as an
Alternative Treatment for Veterans
with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

NLC Academic Writing Award Winner
Jona Mae Ballena

10

'Pretendians': Indigenous Identity
Fraud in Canada

NLC Academic Writing Award Runner-Up
Brandi Kennedy

18

Outdoor Play: The Benefits
of Risky Play to Preschool-Aged
Children's Development

NLC Academic Writing Award Runner-Up
Pamela Essensa

24

MDMA and Well-Being: The Role
of MDMA in Enhanced Mental Health

International Student Academic
Writing Award Winner
Paul Plimaco

30

Health Effects of Consumption
of Coconut Oil

International Student Academic Writing Award Runner-Up
Wathsala Hetti Arachchige

36

Night Shift Work: Understanding
the Health Implications for
Healthcare Professionals

International Student Academic Writing Award Runner-Up
Madeline Cabauatan

42

Perfect Body: Social Media Apps,
Fitspiration, and Young Women's Body Image

Indigenous Student Academic Writing Award Winner
Ashlyn Goertzen

48

'Magna Carta' of the Indigenous Nations:
The Importance of the Royal Proclamation
of 1763 in Canadian History

William and Mary Wanka History Prize Winner
David Zimmer

52

Behind the Books: The Uncensored Pages
of Anne Frank's Diary

NLC Technical Writing Award Winner
Karen Jane Gamboa

58

Lesser-Known Devices in Aircraft Maintenance

NLC Technical Writing Award Runner-Up
Jaymar De Leon

Introduction

Welcome to the eighth edition of the Northern Lights College student journal *Peace Offerings*." This issue is a compilation of the 2024 winners of the annual essay competitions including NLC Academic Writing Award, International Student Academic Writing Award, Indigenous Student Academic Writing Award, William and Mary Wanka History Prize, and Northern Lights College Technical Writing Award. The funding for awards is courtesy of William and Mary Wanka Fund and the NLC Foundation, which manages scholarships, bursaries and awards made possible by the generosity of donors. Each year an adjudication panel of instructors receives many excellent compositions originally submitted by students as coursework for their respective Northern Lights College programs. When selecting the essays, we look for quality research and writing, original analysis, and careful editing. The topics are on a wide range of subjects inspired by course subjects, but as this year's winners demonstrate, students often find personal meaning in their research inspired by their own experiences, hobbies, and future goals. Some writers have chosen topics that align with their course lectures, while others have embraced opportunities to research material outside of their degree programs.

Animal-Assisted Intervention as an Alternative Treatment for Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

By Jona Mae Ballena
NLC Academic Writing Award Winner

The NLC Academic Writing Award is sponsored by Northern Lights College and awards the author of the first-place research essay submitted by a student in a Northern Lights College course. The 2024 winner is Jona Mae Ballena's "Animal-Assisted Intervention as an Alternative Treatment for Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder." Jona is a Social Services Worker Diploma student originally from the Philippines who chose to study at Northern Lights College because it offers a practical curriculum to meet her goal of working in a helping profession in either a hospital or criminal justice setting. Her inspiration for her studies comes from her supportive family, Mama Epifane and Papa Arnold, Kuya Jason, Jad, and her boyfriend Jun. Jona chose the topic of therapy dogs as a tribute to her beloved cat name Kage and to honour the positive contributions animals make to human health and the reciprocal joy of human-companion animal relationships.



Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) was defined by Çakıcı and Kök (2020) as an “alternative treatment method” supporting main therapies given to patients suffering from disorders and diseases (p. 117). It is commonly used as a treatment option for people diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which may develop when a person undergoes a “traumatic experience” causing significant and life-altering changes to the mind and body (Nieforth et al., 2022, p. 2). According to Jensen et al. (2022), veterans affected by PTSD who chose AAT often experienced positive impacts on their well-being including “less PTSD severity and better mental health” (“Conclusion” section, para. 1). Studies have shown that veterans with PTSD who underwent AAT demonstrated “improvements in quality of life” (Ortmeyer & Robey, 2019, p.7), and the Institute of Medicine explained how AAT-related “socializations” even prevented the development of PTSD in veterans and military personnel (as cited in Scotland-Coogan et al., 2022, p. 549).

This essay will highlight the importance of choosing AAT as alternative treatment for veterans diagnosed with PTSD. First, it will explain the debilitating effects of PTSD, the deficiencies of traditional treatments, and how AAT became an alternative treatment. Second it will explain the strengths of AAT as a treatment of PTSD. It will elaborate on the scope of AAT in areas of health conditions, life motivation, and social relationships. Third it will discuss the benefits and some disadvantages of AAT in veterans’ social relationships. This paper will argue that there are strong evidenced-based arguments for including AAT therapy in the treatment of PTSD either in conjunction with traditional therapies or as a stand-alone option.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) occurs when a traumatic event or experience happens that negatively and chronically impacts a person’s wellbeing in all facets of life. The American Psychiatric Association has defined PTSD as “re-experiencing symptoms” including traumatic memories that induce undesirable thoughts of guilt and

A close-up photograph of a person's eye, looking slightly to the left. The eye is dark and has a red, irritated appearance. The skin around the eye is a warm, reddish-brown color. The background is blurred, showing some green and yellow tones. A large white quote mark is overlaid on the left side of the image, and another large white quote mark is overlaid on the right side, framing the text below.

“

Medications and counseling are sometimes not effective, so new treatments are needed.

— Dr. Eric L. Altschuler

”



“

Therapy animals offer companionship and unconditional love which can serve as a lifeline for those with little else to live for.

— Toshihide et al.

”

shame (as cited in Scotland-Coogan et al., 2022, p. 552). Clinical findings indicated a population with military background, or veterans, were most likely to suffer from mental disorders and especially from PTSD. Scotland-Coogan et al. (2022) explained that 15% of individuals who have undergone military activities demonstrated PTSD symptoms (p. 553). In addition to physiological factors, societal fears became one of the major reasons why this disorder persisted in veterans. For example, Hoge (2011) detailed that veteran families have mistrust in mental health providers due to confidentiality and medical recordings and that this suspicion caused higher risks and the likelihood of progression of undiagnosed and untreated PTSD (as cited in Scotland-Coogan et al., 2022, p. 548).

Terhaag et al. (2022) cited numerous “well established” research-based interventions, including prolonged exposure, cognitive-behavioral treatment, and cognitive processing treatment (p. 832), offered to veterans suffering from mental health disorders. Although these have been the main therapies used to treat PTSD, Steenkamp et al. (2015) explained that 60% to 72% of patients were unresponsive to these treatments and still had PTSD manifestations after treatment (as cited in Terhaag et al., 2022, p. 832). Furthermore, Fragedakis et al. (2014) explained that veterans have shown fear of being labelled as “weak” when opting for traditional treatments (as cited in Scotland-Coogan et al., 2022, p. 548) causing them to avoid treatments and making them vulnerable to progressive mental conditions.

Early experiments with AAT utilized animal farms in New York as a location for “restful treatments” of veterans under the care of Army Air Corps Convalescent Hospital in 1942 (Çakıcı & Kök, 2020, p. 119). Records of these studies suggested that AAT was used in treating military people who exhibited mental distress. The animals commonly used were dogs, horses, and birds, and interaction with these animals brought overall

health and wellness to patients. In response to these findings, some healthcare professionals embraced AAT when supplementing primary medical treatments.

More recently, some educational institutions and rehabilitation facilities facilitate AAT (Toshihide et al., 2020, p. 621). Early research has suggested that service dogs and AAT have brought significant improvement to patients' mental state.¹ According to Leaser (2005), human-animal bonds created "biological-chemical-physical changes" in a person's body when AAT was administered (as cited in Çakıcı & Kök, 2020, pp. 118-119). Individuals who underwent AAT showed decreased anxiety by 18% and decreased fear by 37% (p. 123). Moreover, inclusion of animals within the healthcare industry has enhanced learning opportunities when studying patients' conditions. For example, studies have shown its ability to "unlock patients' troubles" (Toshihide et al., 2020, p.621) and to create physical and emotional changes that enriched the lives of veterans. Toshihide et al. (2020) elaborated that AAT's goal is to facilitate coping and recovery. For this reason, AAT has become an ideal supplementary treatment for people suffering from PTSD due to traumatic military experiences that chronically affected their lives.

Service dogs have become the most used animals in AAT. Several studies indicated that dogs have trainable characteristics and behaviors easily applied in creating human-animal relationships. Jensen et al. (2022) identified that service dogs used in AAT responded to appearing symptoms through waking, nudging gestures, and application of body pressure to reduce the patient's anxiety thus preventing PTSD attacks. Presence of service dogs enabled safety and daily functioning among veterans with PTSD. A study performed by Scotland-Coogan (2020) noted essential tasks performed by service dogs such as ensuring safety when episodes occurred and recognizing "incoming seizures" (p. 550).

Moreover, Lessard et al. (2018) established that service dogs enriched social activities among families. These studies highlighted how the tasks and performances of service dogs enabled better quality of life.

Moreover, service dogs and veterans were shown to form significant bonds that improved the emotional lives of veterans. Nieforth et al. (2022) related that veterans felt supported when seeing the service dogs, and they had increased feelings of safety and belongingness (p. 2). The bond between the animal and the person produced positive emotional responses. According to Scotland-Coogan et al. (2020), veterans preferred having service dogs to other animals because they formed "emotional bonds" (p. 549) with the dogs. This therapy also permitted awareness of body movements and reactions facilitated by an animal. Toshihide et al (2020) affirmed that "bodily contact" conveyed nonverbal communication similar to "therapeutic exercise" (p. 621). People who chose AAT reported gains in life appreciation, relief of symptoms, and prevention of suicidal attempts or ideations (Altschuler, 2018, p. 12). Çakıcı and Kök (2020) argued that service dogs even acted as "co-therapists" alongside therapy specialists and were a "valuable resource" in couple and family therapy (p. 119).

Furthermore, studies have shown that veterans had opportunities to immerse themselves in the community through AAT. Service dogs provided a "collaborative bridge" to other group-based treatments allowing socialization skills (Scotland-Coogan et al., 2022, p. 548), and they played an important role in teaching veterans the value of connection. O'Haire et al. (2015) articulated that bonds formed with service dogs promoted human association and "warmth and positive emotions" (as cited in Scotland-Coogan et al., 2022, pp. 552-553). Regarding support groups, veterans were motivated to join service dog training programs when they were

¹ As explained by National Centre for PTSD (2017), "Service dogs are trained to accomplish particular responsibilities for someone who cannot complete those functions because of their disability" (as cited in Scotland-Coogan et al., 2022, p. 550).

resistant to other interventions. Moreover, veterans with service dogs had a higher chance of participating in medical health counselling and other medical services included as part of AAT programs (Scotland-Coogan et al., 2022, p. 564). In this way, service dogs encouraged veterans to reconnect with people and enabled social functioning among these individuals.

Despite the obvious advantages of AAT, some studies suggested problems that have arisen from the use of service dogs. Scholars have argued that AAT mends familial connections “helping veterans reconnect, improve relationships and build resiliency” (Nieforth et al., 2022, p. 2). However, others have pointed out the challenges of integrating service dogs in veteran homes including the additional responsibility to the family members who already struggle with financial and medical cares (Nieforth et al., 2022, p. 2). Maintaining a service dog may become a “caregiver burden” and even create emotional disconnect from spouses who feel the pressures of their caring role (p. 2). Thus, research suggested that having AAT requires commitment to care and to the education of recipients of service dogs for successful integration into families, and “family-focused education” should be implemented before having service dogs for better understanding and appreciation of the purpose of service dogs in the treatment of PTSD of veterans (Nieforth et al., 2022, p. 9). On a socio-economic level, it is important that veteran families understand and willingly commit to the integration of service dogs and their care to avoid the feelings of burden and additional responsibility.

Even though AAT is used successfully in many healthcare settings, scholars have argued in their respective discussions and conclusions that AAT application and studies should be expanded. Many scholars suggested that research should cover a bigger sample population in future studies. For example, Ortmeier and Robey (2019) specified that the effectivity

of AAT requires a widened or larger population in reviewing its health benefits (pp. 8-9), and determining the benefits of “service dog partnership” requires more precision in measuring beneficial results (Jensen et al., 2022, “Limitations” section, para. 3).

In conclusion, healthcare practitioners are gradually acknowledging AAT as a treatment for veterans. In early studies, it was discovered that veterans were susceptible to mental health disorders leading to trauma, anxiety, and depression. Some sought medical help through traditional means but realized that treatments were ineffective. As a result, this population avoided seeking any treatments even as their symptoms progressed, or they looked for an alternative such as AAT.

Subsequently, it was discovered that the use of AAT was shown to be beneficial to patients suffering from mental disorders such as PTSD. In addition to physiological and physical benefits, AAT produced external changes that improved quality of life. Veterans preferred AAT due to its human-animal relationship impact and benefits motivating them to live more functional lives. For example, AAT was shown to urge veterans to perform social skills and participate in programs pertaining to mental health. Inclusion of AAT promoted connectedness within group therapies as veterans were encouraged to participate in programs and services. The bonds with the animals and participation in programs enhanced sociability among veterans which increased communication skills needed when forming social relationships. Researchers have pointed out some of the challenges that families face when integrating dogs and encouraged expanding the therapeutic benefits of human-animal relationships by studying larger populations to understand the scope and management of PTSD among veterans. Nevertheless, service dogs are being considered as the ideal animal to be used in AAT because of their trainable characteristics and their ability to bond.

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Helping veterans reconnect, improve relationships and build resiliency.
— Nieforth et al.

”

“Pretendians”: Indigenous Identity Fraud in Canada

By Brandi Kennedy

NLC Academic Writing Award

Brandi Kennedy’s “Pretendians’: Indigenous Identity Fraud in Canada” is the first runner-up for the NLC Academic Writing Award. Brandi was born in the Peace River Country, and after a hiatus from post-secondary studies, she has returned to complete the Social Services Worker Diploma. Two close friends’ return to school as mature students inspired her to take the first step towards one day pursuing her degree in Bachelor of Social Work. Brandi chose to study at Northern Lights College because it offers her the flexibility of taking part-time courses necessary for working full-time and raising her five children. She wrote her essay on “pretendians” after hearing of the controversy surrounding pop singer and writer Buffy Saint-Marie’s claims to Indigenous Canadian ancestry. She saw the research project as an opportunity to share information about the harms of Indigenous identity fraud.



**ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL INDIGENOUS IDENTITY FORUM (2022),
A “PRETENDIAN” IS “[A] PERSON WHO FALSELY CLAIMS TO HAVE
INDIGENOUS ANCESTRY, WHO FAKES AN INDIGENOUS IDENTITY,
OR WHO DIGS UP AN OLD ANCESTOR FROM HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO
TO PROCLAIM THEMSELVES AS INDIGENOUS.”**

In 2023 the investigative documentary program *The Fifth Estate* questioned whether beloved Canadian folk singer and writer Buffy Sainte-Marie, who was known for decades in Canada for her rich heritage as an Indigenous person, was actually Indigenous. The researchers uncovered documents that showed that Sainte-Marie was born in Massachusetts, USA, to parents with Italian and English ancestry. Unfortunately, Sainte-Marie’s case is only the most recent in a string of high-profile exposés. Universities and other institutions, eager to help uplift Indigenous people as part of Truth and Reconciliation, have unfortunately overlooked a need to ensure that everyone who receives accolades, funding grants, and other benefits is truly eligible. The issue of Indigenous identity fraud is fast becoming recognized as a growing problem in Canada. Many influential Indigenous leaders are calling for investigation into the “true national scale” of the problem and a streamlined overhaul of the processes in which people’s heritages are verified before imposters are given advantages that are set aside for the historically underserved Indigenous populations (Baxter, 2024, para. 4).

This essay will discuss why Indigenous identity fraud has become a problem as people seek benefits or opportunities that are meant to be reserved for

Indigenous people. It will discuss the challenges that arise when determining “identity” and consider recommendations put forth by Indigenous organizations and scholars on how to properly determine eligibility in a respectful and compassionate way while also understanding the impact of colonialism including broken connections with families and communities. This essay will argue that while proper vetting of Indigenous identity is complex, it is essential that this form of fraud is acknowledged and addressed.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) published a detailed report with ninety-four calls to action to advance truth and reconciliation between the Government of Canada and the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. Many of these calls to action addressed education and employment gaps. For example, the seventh call to action stated, “We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians” (p. 320). Canadian colleges, universities, and government institutions got to work re-writing policies, creating job opportunities, and consulting with local Indigenous communities to learn how to create welcoming spaces and to provide sources of funding to reduce barriers

“

There are, however, people with less Indigenous blood than a mosquito who claim to be Indigenous. They are pretendians, those who adopt an Indigenous identity when it is advantageous to do so.

— John Cuthand

”

for Indigenous people living on or off reserves. These initiatives were widely welcomed by people who had endured tremendous barriers previously.

According to the National Indigenous Identity Forum (2022), a “pretendian” is “[a] person who falsely claims to have Indigenous ancestry, who fakes an Indigenous identity, or who digs up an old ancestor from hundreds of years ago to proclaim themselves as Indigenous” (p.4). Indigenous identity fraud pre-existed formal awareness, but the media has started to report cases of people making false claims much more frequently than before. Most cases have been linked to people who wanted to use their questionable status to get prestigious jobs or funding for expensive educations (Yaqoob, 2023, “Why Indigenous Identity Fraud” section, para. 6).

When former University of Saskatchewan professor Carrie Bourassa ultimately resigned from her position after her Indigenous identity was proven false, the University suspended Bourassa and hired Métis lawyer Jean Teillet to conduct the investigation and make recommendations to prevent future cases.¹ Teillet’s Indigenous Identity Fraud: A Report for the University of Saskatchewan (2022) explained why Indigenous identity fraud has become common in universities and government including the lure of “many new opportunities,” institutional dependence on “the honour system and self-identification” rather than a formal system of authentication, and “ignorance” about how to recognize Indigenous people (Teillet, 2022, p.13).

It has been argued that the antiquated Indian Act and colonial record keeping make it impossible to say for certain whether an individual is truly Indigenous. For example, practices such as removing children and placing them in residential schools and what some describe as the cultural genocide that took place disrupted the ability to link people to their heritage. In an official statement, the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) (2015) acknowledged the

¹ Bourassa had claimed that she was Métis, Anishinaabe and Tlingit until it was revealed that her relatives have European ancestry. Bourassa held a very prestigious position in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology. She was responsible for operation of an Indigenous community-based health research lab at the university

complications from colonialism exist; however, they asserted the responsibility to ensure that Indigenous people are protected from fraud:

Falsifying one's identity or relationship to particular Indigenous peoples is an act of appropriation continuous with other forms of colonial violence ... The issue is not one of enrollment, or blood quantum, or recognition by the state, or meeting any particular set of criteria for defining "proper" or "authentic" Indigenous identity. The issue is honesty and integrity in engaging the complexities, difficulties, and messiness of our histories (individual and collective), our relations to each other, and our connections to the people and peoples who serve as the subjects of our scholarship (p.114).

In academia, Indigenous identity fraud has led to loss of opportunities for Indigenous professionals, and it exploits the trust of Indigenous communities. For example, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond was once hailed as one of the "most accomplished and decorated Indigenous scholars in Canadian history" (Leo, 2022). During decades of presenting herself as an Indigenous person with Cree lineage through her father, a treaty member of Norway House Cree Nation, Turpel-Lafond was recognized and trusted by and with vulnerable Indigenous populations in the various powerful positions she held as a lawyer and academic. However, in 2022 it was revealed that both of her paternal grandparents were of European ancestry and her father could not have been Cree.

As seen in the Turpel-Lafond case, the opportunities presented by Indigenous identity fraud are undeniable. According to the B.C. Liberties Association, Turpel-Lafond's presentation of herself as Indigenous "played a role in informing her professional roles, her position in the community, and her work to advance human rights on behalf of Indigenous People and advocacy





organizations” (as cited in The Canadian Press, 2023, “Lack of Accountability” section, para. 3). After studying at Harvard and Cambridge Universities and obtaining her law degree, Turpel-Lafond became a former Saskatchewan judge and served as British Columbia’s first Representative for Children and Youth for two terms. As the Representative, she was an advocate for people under 19 years of age who were in government care or involved in the youth justice system. She was awarded the Order of Canada and given eleven honorary doctorates from prestigious universities, and the Reg Robson award was presented to her on behalf of the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association. When Turpel-Lafond’s ancestry was questioned, the BCCLA rescinded the award, but Turpel-Lafond was not offended. In her response, she stated that she was satisfied with her “past work, identity and self-worth,” and that it is “liberating” to be freed of honours as she has “no emotional attachment to titles” (The Canadian Press, 2023, paras. 1-3). She has since rescinded her honorary degrees or had them withdrawn by the universities.

Likewise, Buffy Sainte-Marie’s career has undoubtedly benefited from her inaccurate self-identification. Over her illustrious music career, Sainte-Marie released twenty-one albums, became a recognized children’s book author and illustrator, and was a respected activist for Indigenous rights. She has won multiple Juno Awards, an Academy Award, many Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, and Lifetime Achievement Awards. She has been inducted into the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame and has a Companion Order of Canada. In addition, she has honorary degrees from many Canadian universities. Thus far she has not had honours revoked, but like Turpel-Lafond, she refuses to admit the harms caused. Sainte-Marie holds fast to her claims that her biological family is Cree even though documents have disproven her claim.

Turpel-Lafond’s and Buffy Sainte-Marie’s cases

demonstrate the complexities of identity, which is a contested term. As Tallbear (2022) explained, it should not be “understood only as the personal property of an individual who chooses that identity” nor should we “look too much at genetics for a definition of identity” (as cited in Teillet, 2022, p. 9). In Turpel-Lafond’s case, she may have “decided as a child that her father was Indian and she constructed her identity around that, and ...didn’t look for disconfirmatory evidence” (Leo, 2022). For decades, Sainte-Pierre had claimed that she was born in Northern Saskatchewan on a Cree reservation and had been adopted out in the Sixties Scoop to her family in Wakefield, Massachusetts. Nobody doubted her story because it was common for Indigenous children in the 1940s to be adopted out and sent to the United States. However, Sainte-Marie does have a strong connection to Cree culture. In 1964, she attended a powwow at Piapot Cree Nation and was adopted into the nation in Cree ceremony by Emile and Clara Piapot. Emile was the son of the Chief at that time. Ever since, Sainte-Marie and the Piapot family have maintained a family relationship.

In fact, the Piapot Nation defends Saint Marie’s Indigenous identity and proclaims their pride in her accomplishments as an Indigenous woman. Sainte-Marie enjoyed a lucrative music career and basked in the adoration of Indigenous people who were proud to see her as a peer and a role model. She was featured on the children’s program *Sesame Street* where she shared Indigenous culture. *Sesame Street* gave her a tremendous amount of exposure as she was a regular guest on the show in the 1970s and 1980s. She was heavily involved in advocacy work for rights of Indigenous people and even authored (and illustrated) several children’s books in which cultural teachings were featured. Expressing support for Sainte-Marie, her Piapot First Nation family released the following statement in response to the exposure:

It’s really insulting that someone would question my great grandfather’s choice and right to adopt Buffy as his daughter. No one has the authority to question our sovereignty, we are a sovereign nation, we are sovereign people and our adoption practices have been intact since time immemorial. Having someone question the validity of that adoption ... it’s hurtful, it’s ignorant, it’s colonial, and quite frankly its racist (Lewis & Rigden, 2023, paras. 9-10).

The statement from the family opened a lot of dialogue and sparked some debate online, as some people say they feel duped and misled by Sainte Marie while others stand with the family when they assert that the colonial systems of record keeping are flawed and often irrelevant.

Regardless of this debate, most people agree that more needs to be done to protect the Indigenous community from fraudsters. In an interesting turn of events reported by *The Fifth Estate* documentary, a family member spoke to the CBC claiming that when her music career began to take off, Sainte-Marie threatened family members with sexual abuse allegations if they spoke about her publicly. Some people believe that this implies that she knew she was not presenting herself accurately. Likewise, Teillet’s report for the University of Saskatchewan, made after the Carrie Bourassa incident, identified early “red flags” (p. 19) such as identities shifting over the years, conflicting facts and stories, and vague claims when it comes to naming relatives. The report explained the need to determine reputable sources for verifying family ties and genealogy and why adoption (legal or otherwise) does not make a person miraculously Indigenous. The report suggested institutions create declaration forms in which individuals would be required to disclose information about their heritage.



Other recommendations have been brought forward suggesting that universities need to do more to be welcoming to people of colour and to raise awareness of the harms of identity fraud. For example, in a study involving undergrad students in the American Midwest, Pewewardy and Frey (2004) noted that Native American students identified issues with racism that Caucasian students did not experience. In addition, when it comes to the issue of identity fraud, many students did not acknowledge that it is a problem. When asked “[This college]” should establish/ensure a position on ethnic fraud for both students and faculty requiring documentation of tribal enrollment in a state or federally recognized American Indian nation/tribe with preference given to those who meet this criteria (p. 45), 73% of Native American students agreed with the statement, but only 57% of Caucasian students agreed with it. This implied that a sizable minority of non-Indigenous students failed to realize the harms caused by identity fraud.

Some academics have suggested that, if applicable, post-secondary institutions need to see identity fraud as a matter of academic integrity that affects the school community collectively. For example, Dr. Caroline Tait, Métis Social Work Professor at the University of Calgary, exposed Carrie Bourassa’s false indigenous identity at the University of Saskatchewan. Afterwards, Tait advised that while schools are slow to respond to fraud and it is not just an “Indigenous problem,” the scope of the university is to consider academic integrity:

I believe universities have an obligation to their faculty and students to invest in determining if individuals suspected to be falsifying Indigenous identity are being academically dishonest. I do not believe it is the role of any university to determine who is and is not Indigenous. It is the role of universities to investigate complaints of research and academic dishonesty and misconduct, and to do so in a consistent and collegial fashion. Policies matter (as cited in Henry & Tait, 2023, p. 89).

Tait further argued that it should be the prerogative of Indigenous communities to determine Indigenous identity, but faculty and students should be asked to produce documentation if they are “receiving a job, scholarship, or award given to Indigenous people only” (as cited in Henry & Tait, 2023, p. 88). She further recommended that Indigenous people themselves are best qualified to explore identity claims in a sensitive manner.²

Despite concrete recommendations, many scholars have acknowledged the complexity of determining identity especially as defined by governments and institutions. The Yellowhead Institute suggested in its *Research, Ethnic Fraud, and the Academy Report* (2019) that the systems used by the Canadian government to establish Indigenous identity fail to “fully capture the complexity of Indigenous Peoples’ Identity as described

² As part of their academic integrity policy, Queen’s University was considering imposing sanctions on fraudsters Karima Manji and her twin daughters Amira and Nadya Gill. The twins had studied law and civil engineering at Queens where they had obtained thousands of dollars in grants and scholarships but had forged Indian Status applications.

by those peoples” (Lawford & Coburn, 2019, “A Protocol for Working” section, para. 2). The report explained that people “have the right to self-identify” and that existing methods for establishing status are “fraught with colonial underpinnings, racism, and discrimination” (para. 4). The report recommended that commitments be made by Indigenous students to provide information as a “declaration of their familial connections to community” including names if asked (Lawford & Coburn, 2019, “Indigenous Students Commit” section, para. 2). The recommendations do not mention showing an Indian status card. Moreover, recommendations were outlined for researchers and academics to accept “all reasonable assurances... based on trust, reciprocity, and good faith” (“Indigenous Researchers” section, para. 1). The report also advised that the academics need to support one another in decisions made whether or not

to work with an individual. Kolopenuk (2023) warned that “Staying quiet will not address the pretendian problem; it will allow it to thrive” (p.472).

There is a delicate balance that must be maintained when an institution digs into an individual’s personal history to ensure entitlement to the benefits that are reserved for Indigenous people. There appears to be some disagreement about how this should be carried out in a way that is compassionate and unintrusive and some disagreement about how Indigenous identity is determined, but the collective opinion agrees on this principle: In no way should a privileged person exploit the trust or take resources from those who are meant to be uplifted and supported or those who have experienced multiple barriers and are still living in the aftermath of generations of cultural genocide, trauma, and poverty.

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Outdoor Play: The Benefits of Risky Play to Preschool-Aged Children’s Development

By Pamela Essensa

NLC Academic Writing Award

Pamela Essensa’s “Outdoor Play: The Benefits of Risky Play to Preschool-Aged Children’s Development” is the second NLC Academic Writing Award runner-up. Pamela, who is already a certified ECE (1996), has returned to college as a mature student and has nearly completed her Early Childhood Diploma. She chose Northern Lights College for its accessibility and online options that have permitted her to work full time and do her classwork evenings and weekends. She is a wife and mother of two adult girls and has more than twenty-five years of experience in the field of early childcare. Reflecting on her educational path, Pamela says, “I have learned so much about myself through this journey and how sometimes being uncomfortable and pushing myself can lead to great achievements personally.” She aspires to complete a Master of Early Childhood Care and Education. Pamela chose the topic of the benefits of outdoor play after observing the positive effects on

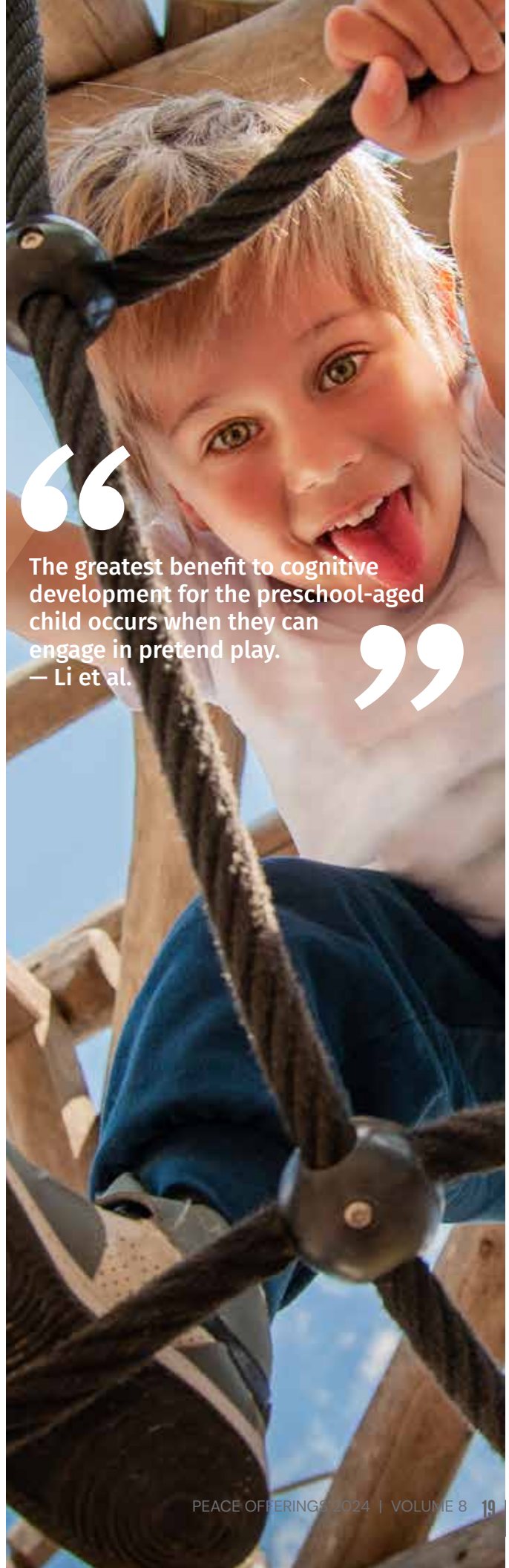
children in her preschool classes. She says, “The sense of community within our group and the social emotional regulation along with the physical benefits that I saw created and nurtured within my classes was enough for me to become a huge advocate for outdoor play.”



Due to social/cultural and physical environment determinants, including “screen activities” such as watching television, sitting in classrooms, and using laptops and phones, children are spending more sedentary time in front of screens and less time outdoors engaged in play (Hidding et al.). Connelly et al. note that only “61.8% of preschoolers (3-4 years) and 47.6% of school-aged children (5-11 years) meet the 24-h Movement Guidelines” (441) as recommended by The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology. Moreover, parents are very likely to protect children from risky play or “thrilling and exciting activity that includes some risk of injury” (McFarland and Laird 159). Knowing that children are seeking risk-taking in their play, adults wish to keep children safe from physical harm, but perhaps in doing so, they are hindering them from developing independence and other benefits to their cognitive, social, and physical stages of development.

This paper will discuss the benefits of risky play in outdoor settings to the developmental stages of preschool-aged children. First, the paper will define outdoor risky play and compare it with risk-taking play observed indoors. Second, the paper will explore parents’ and early childhood educators’ orchestration of the quality and quantity of risky outdoor play. Third, it will discuss the inherent benefits of risky play to preschool-aged children’s socio-emotional, cognitive, and physical development stages. This paper will argue that the benefits of outdoor risky play to children’s development outweigh the risk of injury.

Sandseter et al. define risky play as “thrilling and exciting forms of physical play that involve uncertainty and risk of physical injury” (304). They explain how risky play has been observed in eight categories in outdoor settings: (1) Play with heights, which would include play where children are able to jump from high places such as rooftops or tall play structures; (2) Play that involves high speeds, meaning children riding on objects such as scooters or tricycles or riding toys that are able to



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The greatest benefit to cognitive development for the preschool-aged child occurs when they can engage in pretend play.

— Li et al.

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If we want our children to move mountains, we first have to let them out of their chairs.

— Nicolette Sowder

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obtain high speeds with the risk of crashing or falling; (3) Play with dangerous tools such as axes, power tools, and knives; (4) Play around dangerous natural environments including bodies of water, near fire pits, or along the edge of hills; (5) Play where children explore alone in areas where there is little to no supervision by adults and perhaps no boundaries such as fences; (6) Play with impact, where children can run into something repeatedly for fun; (7) Rough and tumble play, where children engage in rough physical play such as play fighting, wrestling, or sword fighting with sticks; and (8) Vicarious play, where children do not participate in the actual risk taking but still feel the thrill of watching other children engaged in risky play.

All children “have a natural propensity” to engage in forms of risk taking during many different types of indoor and outdoor play (Brussoni et al. 3139). Indoor risky play has been observed by scholars, but findings have shown that it tends to be accomplished at a lower intensity. For example, the indoor risky play category of “play at great heights” may include “climbing onto furniture that is table-height” or play at great speed includes a “child running or spinning on the spot quickly” (Saunders). Arguably, the lower intensity may be due to the smaller overall square footage of the indoor spaces not allowing for the movement needed to encourage risk taking and also to the mindset of educators and parents who often hold the perspective that indoor spaces are for “calmer, formal learning” (Saunders). Risky play can be seen on fixed playground equipment available at most childcare centers and neighborhood playgrounds. A fixed structure play setting may consist of equipment such as a slide, some sort of climbing apparatus, swings, and sandboxes. However, where risky play really flourishes is in a natural outdoor play setting. This type of play space may include the use of trees or tree stumps, bushes and or shrubs, and hills and muddy

areas created for the sole purpose of play or simply existing as part of the neighboring natural environment. Sandseter et al. acknowledge that “nature was found to be positively associated with the total amount of risky play.” This emphasizes the idea that a child’s play space environment can positively impact the type of play the child engages in and increase opportunities for risky play.

In addition to environment, adult support or hinderance of risky play will impact opportunities and potential benefits to children’s development. Early childhood educators (ECE) play a crucial role in the development of preschool-aged children. Carsley et al. found that in 2011 children in Australia “ages of 2-4 years spent twenty-two hours per week on average in formal care facilities, with 52% in care 3-5 days per week” (qtd. in Dankiw et al. 2). This emphasizes the societal norm that children are spending more time in childcare settings and the need for ECEs to embrace outdoor risky play as contributing to children’s development. In early childcare settings, it is the ECE who will study, plan, and observe opportunities to support children with outdoor risky play in their centers. Early learning environments are controlled and often lead to many opportunities for risky play (McFarland and Laird160). Having the ability to navigate risk-taking play environments without the fear of significant injury is part of early childhood education practice. ECEs can plan center play spaces by “eliminating hazards,” defined by Wallach “as a source of harm and that is not obvious to the children” (qtd. in Brussoni et al. 3142). However, they also may permit some autonomy of decision among children. For example, as Brussoni et al. explain, a “broken railing” would not “eliminate all risks” (3142) but would allow children to evaluate risk of injury moments on their own. Regarding ECEs, Stephenson also found that if their “personal attitudes” regarding “risky play are more positive and . . . they

enjoy being outdoors themselves, they are more likely to support children’s risky play” (qtd. in McFarland and Laird 160).

Acceptance of risky play may also vary geographically. For example, in Australia, educators hold risky play as more important than American educators do because of government policy. As Copple and Bredekamp explain, Australia’s early years learning framework (EYLF) states the importance of children’s decision making and the value of risk, but the American National Association for the Education of Young Children’s developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) omits reference to risk taking (qtd. in MacFarland and Gull Laird 160). MacFarland and Gull Laird also note that the prevalence of litigation in the US may be another reason why childcare centers are being more cautious of risky play.

Furthermore, the idea that parents “act as barriers” and hinder children’s development by not allowing enough opportunities for outdoor risky is important to note (McFarland and Gull Laird 161). Parents do not intentionally set out to remove this type of play from their children’s life experiences. In fact, most parents want to ensure they “avoid ‘hovering’ or ‘helicopter parenting’” (McFarland and Gull Liard 165), but they also have clear attitudes about “neighborhood safety” (161) that sometimes may obstruct independent risky play opportunity. McFarland and Gull Laird explain that 40% of parents stated risk taking was “very important” and 41% stated it was “somewhat important” (164). This clearly implies that parents know the importance of risky play. However, they struggle with the threat of injury. Parents reported a “socially assigned responsibility” (167) to keep their children safe, yet they still want to allow for risky play. Additionally, parents are feeling the same pressure from outside sources such as childcare centers, schools, and society overall to safeguard their children from injury. Supporting children with outdoor

risky play opportunities from the parental perspective could come in the form of families allowing and assisting children to help manage their own risks and safety when playing in an outdoor space. This may happen in small increments with the parents guiding the children through the practice and eventually allowing the parents to feel secure with their children's overall risk assessment.

Arguably, the benefits of risky play to children's developmental skill set should take precedence over the inherent fear of injury. When thinking of socio-emotional, cognitive, and physical development in preschool-aged children, risky play has many benefits. Studies undertaken in Australia, Norway, and Canada saw clear gains in each of these areas. Children's socio-emotional development grows with risky play by allowing them to "develop decision making skills" that enable them to make risk-taking decisions later in life (McFarland and Gull Laird 160). Self-control, also known as "self-regulation," may be defined as controlling one's behavior during negative social experiences, and children need this ability to regulate emotions as they navigate the world into adulthood (Li et al. 66). Li et al. explain that children build assertiveness, cooperation, and self-control by engaging in outdoor risky play activities with many of these interactions happening during a pretend play or dramatic play situation. Bahrenscheer and Sederberg also explain how children develop in cooperative play by working together to overcome physical challenges and learning from each other's social cues. Comparing indoor and outdoor play, Shim et al. find that "outdoor play was linked to more peer-based interactive dramatic play" moments (160). Again, this may be due to the larger space presented and the allowance of uninterrupted free play.

The greatest benefit to cognitive development for the preschool-aged child occurs when they can engage in pretend play. This type of play is "also called role play,

make believe play, symbolic play or dramatic play, [and it] requires children to break down boundaries between imagination and reality" (Li et al. 61). Li et al. explain that during pretend play, children gain the ability to work on "symbolic thinking skills, which is regarded as an advanced form of thinking" (62), and language as well as "perceptual-motor and spatial-orientation" (63) develop during this type of play. The latter is important as it pertains to children understanding their bodies and how they move when in an outdoor play space. As Li et al. explain, the understanding that pretend play positively aids cognitive development is founded on the premise that children engage in pretend play significantly more in outdoor settings than in classrooms.

Having access to the minimum time requirements of play would enable children to achieve much-needed physical development they need. Carsley et al. state that "the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology released Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines (CPAG) for preschool aged children, recommending children aged 1-5 years of age have a minimum of 180 minutes of physical activity per day" (145). Large muscle growth and development occurs during risky play outdoors and helps build "balance, coordination and body awareness" (McFarland and Gull Laird 160). This can be seen when children engage in outdoor play space in activities such as balancing on logs or rocks or jumping off tree stumps or over puddles. The positive factor of outdoor risky play on physical development is that as children navigate the outdoor environment, they are challenging themselves to try new motor skills (Bahrenscheer and Sederberg 34). The more preschool-aged children are exposed to this type of play, the better their opportunity for gains in this developmental stage.

It can be concluded that outdoor risky play is important for preschool-aged children to grow not only in their developmental stages but also "holistically"

(Saunders). When given a preference, children choose risky play especially outdoors, and research shows that allowing children to “push themselves within their individual expectation, [will] positively influence their own development” (Bahrenscheer and Sederberg 33). Risk taking in children helps foster decision making skills that are needed later in life. Moreover, research also has shown repeatedly that support from both parents and ECEs is critical for this type of play to be carried out. Although adults struggle with anxiety around the risk of injury, children’s development of self-esteem, self-awareness, socio-emotional, cognitive, and physical development should be taken into account when they engage with preschool-aged children. Adult anxiety may be lessened by adopting an approach such as “safe as necessary instead of safe as possible” (Cevher-Kalburan and Ivrendi 356). Over the years there have been many “changes in societal perceptions of children’s competencies and resilience” (Brussoni et al. 3138), and we are now seeing children as capable people with the ability to make decisions where they are needed.

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MDMA and Well-Being: The Role of MDMA in Enhanced Mental Health

By Paul Plimaco
*International Student Academic
Writing Award Winner*

The International Student Academic Writing Award celebrates many strong academic students at Northern Lights College who are new to Canada. This year's winner is Paul Plimaco's "MDMA and Well-Being: The Role of MDMA in Enhanced Mental Health." Paul is from an island in the Philippines, south of the capital of Manilla, and he chose Northern Lights College, Fort Saint John Campus, to benefit from the support of family already living in the area. He has now completed the Associate of Arts program and plans on returning to the Philippines to pursue a career in an academic setting perhaps as a librarian or an archivist. Regarding his topic of MDMA, Paul observes, "The impression I have is that Canada stands at the forefront in terms of letting go of the stigma that these substances have in society." Efforts to destigmatize substance use, the global challenges to address mental health, and the everchanging "arsenal of medication available" inspired his topic.

Research has revealed a rise in depression and anxiety after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (as cited in Twenge & Joiner, 2020, "Introduction" section, para. 1). This increase in cases, along with the overwhelming demand that the pandemic has placed on health systems of countries around the world, has made access to mental health services more difficult for the people who need them. Scholars are recommending treatment "[s]hifts and innovations" to "ameliorate mental health issues" (Twenge & Joiner, 2021, "Implications" section, para. 4).

Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), also called "ecstasy" (pill form) or "molly" (gel form), came into prominence in Western Europe in the late 1980s and was largely seen as an illicit drug typically used by young individuals (Pedersen & Skrondal, 1999, "Introduction" section, para. 2). It was not until the mid-1990s that researchers started studying the drug for possible pharmacological and therapeutic uses, albeit the studies were mostly done on animals, and researchers focused on the use patterns of individual users and the biological effects on recreational users. However, progress has been made since then by academia and government studies. For example, clinical trials have been conducted on the use of MDMA for its therapeutic potential treating anxiety and depression and alcohol use disorder (Sessa, 2017).

This essay will discuss the positive effects of MDMA as a treatment for anxiety, including social anxiety as well as PTSD and alcohol addiction. It will discuss the possible risks including overdoses due to misuse in non-clinical settings, the risk of hyperthermia, and problems arising from drug interactions. This essay will show the potential that MDMA holds in providing individuals and mental health care professionals an alternative means of addressing mental health issues that continue to be resistant to conventional therapies and medications.

MDMA has potential therapeutic benefits that warrant additional research in clinical settings.

Studies have been conducted on the possible use of MDMA in the treatment of anxiety with some researchers conducting a double-blind experiment on the changes in anxiety symptoms for adult autistic patients (Danforth et al., 2018).¹ Autism typically comes with symptoms of social anxiety, and researchers reported significant improvements to the participants' social anxiety symptoms based on an anxiety scale (Danforth et al., 2018, p. 3140). Furthermore, substantial qualitative research has concluded that MDMA is beneficial in the treatment of the symptoms of anxiety, including "depression, sleep quality, STAI-State anxiety, and global functioning" (Wolfson et al., 2020, p. 6).

Use of MDMA as an aid to psychotherapy in the treatment of anxiety also has the potential to help patients who do not respond well to currently available medications. Some of these available medications might be effective in addressing the symptoms of anxiety, but it's important to note that they also come with several side effects that also may intrude on the lives of the patients. Antidepressants, particularly selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), and tricyclic antidepressants are commonly prescribed to anxiety patients (Leonard & Ames, 2023). These medications, however, take several weeks before they take effect, and patients generally go through different formulations before they can find a medication to address their symptoms with minimal side effects. In contrast, MDMA-based treatment involves the use of MDMA only a couple of times, as the treatment emphasizes psychotherapy (Danforth et al., 2018), compared to conventional medication which requires use on a regular basis or whenever symptoms arise.

Research also has found associations between

¹ In one case study the subject who never had any mental health issues prior to taking MDMA recreationally developed symptoms of anxiety and had to go to therapy for treatment (Potash et al., 2011, "Case Report" section, para. 1). It should be noted that this result was a deviation.

lifetime use of MDMA and improvements in social functioning, which implies that MDMA can be used to aid individuals who have trouble interacting with strangers (Jones et al., 2023, p.7). Additionally, Colbert and Huhes (2022) have noted MDMA's possible use for enhancing romantic relationships. Romantic couples who participated in their research noted what they termed a "relationship tune up" in addition to "other durable positive changes to the relationship" (Colbert & Hughes, 2022, p. 265). While the researchers noted the limitations that their research and its results held (such as the limited and homogeneous nature of their sample size), Colbert and Hughes showed that beyond individual therapeutic benefits, MDMA can also be used to improve relationships eventually leading to better mental health. Furthermore, the durability of the reported positive changes that the couples experienced further established another advantage that MDMA holds over conventional forms of therapy and medication: the endurance of its positive effects.

More recently, MDMA research has been receiving a lot of attention for its potential to treat addictions and PTSD. Preliminary data from research conducted in the UK has established the safety of MDMA "as [a] potential [tool] to treat a range of different addictions" (Sessa et al., 2019, p. 375). While research into MDMA and alcoholism is still in its early stages, studies into MDMA and PTSD are numerous with some long-term studies consistently showing improvements in the PTSD symptoms of the participants.² Oehen et al. (2012) concluded from their research that MDMA can be safely administered in clinical settings, there were self-reported improvements in PTSD symptoms immediately after sessions, and there were measurable improvements in the one-year follow up (p. 49). Moreover, MDMA has shown the potential to help patients manage PTSD symptoms occurring after sexual abuse, described by researchers as "one of the

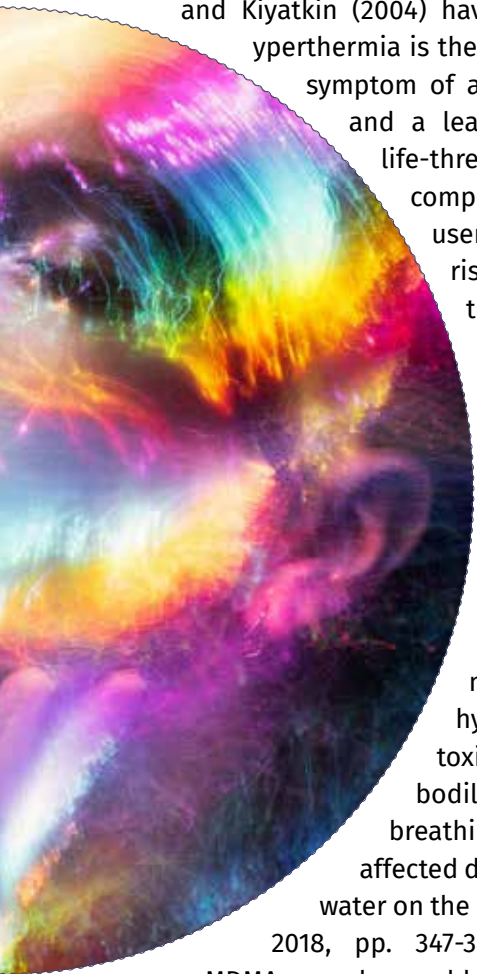
most deleterious forms of trauma" (Jardim et al., 2021), p. 183). Jardim et al. (2021) found that participants who had severe PTSD from sexual abuse manifested improvements in their PTSD symptoms after MDMA-assisted psychotherapy.

MDMA-related deaths (MRDs) have been observed to be on the rise in several countries (Rigg & Sharp, 2018). People have mistakenly attributed this rise to overdoses, but Rigg and Sharp (2018) have determined that it can be attributed to misinformation and lack of practical and truthful information" (p. 348) about the use of the drug. There has, admittedly, been a visible rise in the potency of MDMA purchased for recreational use. But many countries, particularly in Western Europe, have legalized testing centers for harm reduction where recreational users can turn in their MDMA and other drugs to determine their potency (Winstock et al., 2001, p. 1140). Testing of these drugs, however, does not guarantee the safety of MDMA use because most MRDs are caused by other factors not related to a pill's potency.

One of the risks of MDMA use, especially when consumed outside of clinical settings, is the threat of hyperthermia. MDMA inhibits the brain's ability to regulate body temperature thus increasing the chance



² Alcohol use disorder (AUD) and PTSD are highly comorbid, but research hasn't considered the possible therapeutic applications of MDMA for individuals who have both (Verplaetse et al., 2018), so this is a possible avenue for future research.



of hyperthermia. The risk of this happening is also increased by the setting where MDMA is used since it is often consumed during raves or parties—activities in locations that would guarantee a higher ambient temperature (Brown & Kiyatkin, 2004, p. 51). In fact, Brown and Kiyatkin (2004) have determined that “[h]yperthermia is the most dangerous clinical symptom of acute MDMA intoxication and a leading factor for various life-threatening drug-induced complications” (p. 55). Some users who are aware of this risk attempt to prevent this from happening by drinking more water to hydrate themselves and to lower their body temperature while they are on the drug. MDMA, however, also causes more retention of water than usual. This likewise has caused numerous deaths by hyponatremia or water toxicity wherein primary bodily functions such as breathing and heartbeat are affected due to the effect of excess water on the brain cells (Rigg & Sharp, 2018, pp. 347-348). More experienced MDMA users have addressed this risk, however, by setting reminders to drink a fixed amount of water every hour while on the drug.

The third leading cause of MRDs is the interaction with other drugs that the user might have taken in addition to the MDMA (Rigg & Sharp, 2018, p. 348).

Research has noted that MDMA is frequently found with other drugs in autopsies and toxicology reports following drug-induced deaths (as cited in Rigg & Sharp, 2018, p. 348). The only way this risk could be averted is for users to educate themselves about the possible interactions that MDMA can have with other drugs they plan to take and with their prescription medications. While Rigg and Sharp (2018) have observed that many MDMA users have “employ[ed] a variety of self-initiated risk reduction strategies in an attempt to mitigate their risk of MRDs and other harms” (p. 348), they still recommended some steps to decrease the number of deaths from MDMA, primarily the wider dissemination of accurate information on the drug. Their study of the statistics available on MRDs illustrated a general lack of education on these drugs that impacts risk reduction and prevention of deaths.

In addition to concerns about the uneducated use of MRDs, there are concerns regarding the significant side effects. While Rivas-Vazquez and Delgado (2002) have explained that more data is still needed, they have concluded that individuals who use MDMA are “placing themselves at risk for either acute or chronic adverse effects” (p. 425). Significant data has also shown a relevant correlation between MDMA use and organ toxicity which can present itself as simple ailments such as abdominal pain or jaundice or more serious outcomes such as encephalopathy and death (Cajanding, 2019, p. 236). Heavy use of MDMA has also been observed to have neurotoxic effects on serotonin neurons, although this effect seems to be partly reversible following abstinence from the drug (Reneman et al., 2001, p. 1867). These risks, however, have been observed to be highly dependent on the frequency and duration of use (Rivas-Vazquez & Delgado, 2002). Therefore, research must be undertaken on the frequency and duration of the doses in existing experimental MDMA-based psychotherapy.

Future research should consider both short- and long-term adverse effects.

Arguably, research shows that MDMA holds a lot of potential that could help individuals suffering from various mental ailments. But like most drugs, both the illicit and the legal, it can cause problems especially with improper use in non-clinical settings. MDMA has existed in society for approximately a century, and in the past decade much progress has been made in researching its effects, but there is still a lot to be learned. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the war on drugs declared by the US government, which influenced how the rest of the world handled these illicit drugs, has set back research. The intolerant and prohibitionist approach on these drugs has taken

millions of lives in the drug wars around the world, and it has denied people possible alternative means of treatment. Society has been slow in correcting this massive lapse of collective judgment, and politicians have implemented policies that ignore scientific data. However, despite progress being slow, more countries are approving research that may lead to the development of treatment that eventually could be accessed by those who need it most. As with other drugs, the use of MDMA also includes some risk, and unlike drugs that have been studied extensively and approved by government administrations such as Health Canada and the US Food and Drug Administration, there is still a lot of missing information particularly regarding the long-term use of MDMA.



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Health Effects of Consumption of Coconut Oil

By Wathsala Hetti Arachchige

International Student Academic Writing Award

Wathsala Hetti Arachchige's "Health Effects of Consumption of Coconut Oil" is the first runner-up for the International Student Academic Writing Award. Wathsala is from Sri Lanka, and she selected Northern Lights College to study for her Associate of Arts Degree with specialization in education because she preferred a more intimate setting in a smaller city where instructors know their students. She holds a degree in Food Science and Nutrition with specialization in Food Technology and has some experience with academic writing having published a peer-reviewed scientific paper in Sri Lanka. She was interested in the topic of coconut oil because she observed the array of cooking oils available in Canada, in contrast to Sri Lanka where most of cooking uses coconut oil, and she wished to research a "cost effective and a healthy oil" for her own cooking, especially for frying purposes. Although she finds coconut oil is an expensive option in Canada, her research suggests the health benefits and minimal impact on cholesterol levels make it a healthy option.



Oil consumption in the diet has been one of the most controversial topics in the past few decades, as there has been an increase in its consumption and associated negative health effects especially cardiovascular diseases (CVD), diabetes, and cancers. Of the many different types of cooking oils used worldwide, coconut oil holds a very important place especially in the Asian diet. As Foster et al. (2009) explained, the fatty acid profile of coconut oil mainly contains myristic, palmitic, and lauric acid which are medium chain saturated fatty acids. Furthermore, they noted, "Coconut oil is oxidatively very stable because of its high saturates content" (p.38). This makes it a good choice for deep frying and other cooking activities that expose food to very high temperatures. Duarte et al. (2022) explained that the high saturated fatty acids content of coconut oil is responsible for an increase in the low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) in the blood. Additionally, coconut oil increases the high-density lipoproteins (HDL) in the blood and maintains triglyceride to high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (TG/HDL-C) ratio making the cholesterol level balanced.

Consumption of coconut oil has increased in Europe and in North America during the last decade (Duarte et al, 2022, p.2); therefore, it is important to weigh its health benefits and risks. Although previous researchers have discussed both health benefits and defects of coconut oil, they have neglected to discuss these over broad areas such as cardiovascular health, glucose metabolism, and anti-inflammatory properties together. This essay will consider the health benefits of routine use of coconut oil as a culinary oil in the household. First, it will consider the effects of coconut oil on cardiovascular diseases (CVD). Second, it will discuss the effects of coconut oil on glucose metabolism. Third, it will review the anti-inflammatory properties of coconut oil in lungs related responses. This essay will argue that although coconut oil has a very high saturated fatty acid content, there are potential health benefits over several

areas when it is regularly used.

Major health concerns of coconut oil are associated with its saturated fatty acid composition. Researchers have shown that to maintain the total cholesterol levels in terms of blood lipoprotein concentrations that transport cholesterol around the body, dietary fatty acid intakes should be balanced (as cited in Foster et al., 2009, p.17). Low Density Lipoproteins (LDLP) and triglycerides (TG) are common types of cholesterol having a very high chance of depositing in the lumen of the arteries including in the coronary arteries that provide blood to the heart muscle, thus increasing resistance of blood flow to the major energy demanding tissues such as the heart muscle. Duarte et al. (2022) explained that when compared with the other non-tropical vegetable oils such as sunflower oil and olive oil, the three major fatty acids in coconut oil, the lauric(C12), myristic(C14) and palmitic acids(C16), are medium chain saturated fatty acids that increase the blood level of low-density lipoproteins, a major risk factor of CVD. Yet, coconut oil does not show a significant increase on the blood triglyceride (TG) levels (Duarte, 2022, p.2).

Another main type of cholesterol produced by the body is high density lipoproteins (HDLs) visible on a person's blood lipid profile. Ngampeerapong et al. (2018) explained that "HDLs transport cholesterol from the peripheral tissues back to the liver for removal from the system, hence are associated with a reduced risk of CVD" (p.17). Therefore, HDLs are identified as "good cholesterol" appearing in a lipid profile not as harmful as the LDLP and TGs. Marten et al. (2006) noted that when compared to the long chain fatty acids longer than 12 Carbon atoms, medium chain fatty acids of carbon atoms between 8 to 11 are readily metabolized in the body and accumulate less in the blood (as cited in Ngampeerapong et al.,2018, p.262). This finding suggested that although coconut oil has a high percentage of saturated fatty acids, the body metabolizes a considerable amount of them for energy without allowing them to be converted

“ Let food be thy medicine,
thy medicine shall be
thy food.”
— Hippocrates



into harmful cholesterol types that can deposit in the arteries. Lauric acid, which forms more than 50% of the fatty acid content in coconut oil, increases blood LDL-cholesterol as well as HDL-cholesterol as compared with myristic acid and palmitic acid, further reducing risk because they balance each other and thus minimize the negative effects on health. Mensink (2016) noted that “lauric acid showed its ability to reduce the ratio of TG/HDL-cholesterol” (as cited in Ngampeerapong et al., 2018, p.262). This indicated that lauric acid reduced the TG factor by increasing the HDL level and minimizing the negative effects of saturated fatty acids in coconut oil converting to cholesterol.

In addition to the deposition on the cholesterol, other undesirable effects of fatty acids include increasing waist circumference, body fat distribution, and weight gain. However, Duarte et al. (2022) explained that coconut oil consumption does not cause any significant difference in the body fat content or waist

circumference compared with the other oils in common use such as olive oil or canola oil. In fact, one of six studies they analyzed showed a significant decrease of the waist circumference after the consumption of coconut oil compared with sunflower oil (p.7). These findings suggested that the fatty acids in coconut oil not only helped a person avoid weight gain but also may have correlated with thinness compared with other commonly used oils.

Duarte et al. (2022) claimed that “the effect of coconut oil intake on total body fat did not differ in comparison to other oils or fats” (p.7). Supporting this observation, Schwingshackl and Schlesinger (2023) claimed that “epidemiological evidence from indigenous populations in the Tokelau Island Migrant Study, who consume high amounts of coconut in the form of fresh squeezed coconut cream, suggest that coconut fat was not detrimentally associated with cardiovascular health” (p.232). This epidemiological study supported

the argument that the coconut oil did not increase the chance of CVD. In fact, the same study of Schwingshackl and Schlesinger (2023) showed that “the transition of these indigenous populations to a more Western dietary pattern resulted to an increase in obesity and CVD” (p. 232). Foster et al. (2009) stated that “Even though coconut oil is energy dense, some enthusiasts maintain that because of the medium chain length Triglycerides (TG) present, the body burns off the calories more quickly than it would calories from other fat sources” (p.38). His findings were proved by another study of St-Onga and Jones (2003) that found that coconut oil helped overweight men reduce their body fat and lose weight (as cited in Foster et al., 2009, p.38). However, Foster et al. (2009) further suggested that “weight loss relies upon ‘energy in’ to be less than ‘energy out’ [;] reducing (rather than increasing) the consumption of high energy-dense foods, such as coconut oil, is one of the simplest ways to achieve this” (p.38). In general, energy dense foods such as oils should be avoided to achieve weight loss.

The deposition of cholesterol in the artery lumen may reduce the diameter of the arteries increasing blood pressure. When the arterial blood pressure was compared among subjects who consumed coconut oil versus a placebo, it was found that coconut oil increased both systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Although the mechanism related to this observation is unclear, it was suggested that central adiposity and insulin resistance caused by coconut oil might be related to the resulting hypertension (Duarte et al., 2022, p.11).

Another main health concern relevant to coconut oil consumption is the effect of coconut oil on energy metabolism and glucose homeostasis. Out of the seven studies Duarte et al. (2022) analyzed in their meta-analysis, two of them discussed the effect of coconut oil on the pancreatic beta cells and insulin production and how it affects the glycemic index. In these, no

significant change was noticeable with the glycemic index suggesting consumption of coconut oil does not affect the sensitivity of the cells to insulin. Malaeb and Spoke (2020) analyzed a human case report and found there was reduced occurrence of hypoglycemia and less need for insulin treatment after incorporating coconut oil supplements in the patient’s diet. It was suggested that “metabolic and anti-inflammatory properties of coconut oil” improved the glucose metabolism and decreased the need for insulin treatments (p.3). This study found higher blood sugar levels turned into normal and even low blood sugar levels when a patient was given coconut oil treatments on a regular basis.

Another health benefit of coconut oil analyzed by the researchers is its ability to reduce the oxidative stress associated with inflammatory responses in the body caused by many internal and external factors such as solid and liquid air pollutants. The particulate matter (PM) in the air of an average workplace originates from several sources including vehicle and industrial emissions, burning of the waste in urban areas, power generation and burning of fossil fuels, and other particles such as dust released by the wind pollution. One of the common sources of pollution is diesel exhaust particulates (DEP) which originated during the burning of diesel in vehicle engines and industrial processes such as power generation. PM has been a major health hazard in the past few decades and has caused millions of deaths each year, especially premature deaths, and exacerbated respiratory associated diseases as well circulatory system associated diseases when the PM enters the blood through the capillaries of the alveoli in the lungs. Regarding inflammation, Chen et al. (2022) explained that “Once inhaled and deposited into the lung, particulate matter pigmented alveolar macrophages can induce oxidative stress and local inflammation” (p.2). The excessive activation of the alveolar macrophages

is not good for health because it causes inflammation resembling the action of auto-immune diseases in the body.

Researchers are now highly interested in finding natural compounds that improve the immunity of the body to PM exposure (Chen, 2022, p.2), and coconut oil may be one of these positive natural compounds.

Alveolar macrophages (AMs) play an important role in the human body by engulfing and digesting particulate matter entering the respiratory air passages to maintain clear air spaces and minimize the other cells of the respiratory system exposed to these harmful particles. Jiang et al. (2020) reported that particulate matter larger in diameter than 2.5mm caused inflammation in the air passage to the lungs which compromised the health and the activity of the lungs (as cited in Chen et al., 2022, p.2). However, Chen et al. (2022) explained that coconut oil participates in several biological processes in animals as an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory compound, anticancer and anti-microbial agent effective against causing CVD and inflammatory diseases (p.3). Particulate matter in the air such as DEP not only induce the alveolar macrophages and inflammation, but they also induce the cell death and cytotoxicity over a large range of particle sizes. However, it was found that coconut oil provides protection over the alveolar macrophages activity induced by particulate matter in the air. Chen

et al. (2022) explained that oxidative stress is caused by the cell damage due to exposure to particulate matter, and the potential antioxidant properties of coconut oil mediate the activity of the alveolar macrophages which are activated under the above conditions and minimize the cell damage and the death. Furthermore, coconut oil minimizes the activity of various inflammatory mediators activated by the particulate matter and the alveolar macrophages (Chen et al., 2022, p.12). In summary, coconut oil has natural beneficial compounds in it which reduce the harmful effects of body responses against particulate matter in the air.

Despite the many positive findings, some research suggests caveats to coconut oil consumption. For example, regarding diabetes, Foster et al. (2009) observed that “a diet low in saturates may be particularly important for individuals with type 2 diabetes as this can affect insulin sensitivity” (p.18); in other words, a diet rich in saturated fat content such as coconut oil has a negative effect on blood sugar control. Malaeb and Spoke (2020) further discussed findings from animal studies in which diabetic rats were fed various fats to

determine glucose metabolism. During the experimental design, the “oil-fed rats exhibited the best response to an oral glucose tolerance test” (p.3) and exhibited lower levels of total cholesterol after consuming coconut oil, suggesting that higher activity of insulin was due to the reduced triglyceride levels (Malaeb & Spoke, 2020, p.3). However, this animal model does not correlate



with humans because several previous studies proved that coconut oil increased the low-density lipoproteins (LDLP) and high-density lipoproteins (HDL) causing it to increase total cholesterol levels. Furthermore, Schwingshackl and Schlesinger (2023) found that saturated fatty acids improved the fasting glucose Hb1Ac when compared with polyunsaturated fatty acids and monounsaturated fatty acids when taken in equal calories (p. 234). Malaeb and Spoke (2020) concluded that while coconut oil may have a positive effect on glycemic control, this effect is inconsistent throughout studies and “further outcomes research is required in humans before coconut oil intake is advised and popularized, to the general population as well as to patients with diabetes in particular” (p.6).

In conclusion, coconut oil is accepted worldwide as

a healthy food since it has many benefits. This essay discussed the potential health benefits of coconut oil over several areas when it is regularly used. Although it has a very high saturated fatty acid content, coconut oil’s medium chain saturated fatty acids are readily metabolized by the body for energy and have less chance of being deposited as cholesterol in the arteries causing cardiovascular diseases. The fraction that turns into cholesterol is not alarming due to the balance it causes in the LDLP, HDL and TG in a lipid profile. Furthermore, coconut oil has beneficial effects on energy metabolism and glucose homeostasis in the body. Moreover, PM exposure and induced alveolar macrophage reactions can be effectively mediated by coconut oil due to the presence of antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds.

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Night Shift Work: Understanding the Health Implications for Healthcare Professionals

By Madeline Cabauatan

International Student Academic Writing Award

Madeline Cabauatan's "Night Shift Work: Understanding the Health Implications for Healthcare Professionals" is the second runner-up for the International Student Academic Writing Award. Madeline is originally from the Philippines, and she chose Northern Lights College for its "supportive learning environment and diverse program offerings." Madeline is ambitiously pursuing certificates in both General Arts and Sciences and Applied Business Technology. She explains that she was attracted to the knowledge provided by the combination of a broad liberal arts education with practical business skills because it would prepare her for a range of career opportunities. After completing her studies at Northern Lights College, Madeline hopes to work in administrative management or project coordination. Her topic exploring the physical and mental effects of nighttime shifts aligns with her personal experience of working late hours.



According to the International Labour Organization Night Work Convention (1990), night shift may be defined as “all work which is performed during a period of no less than seven consecutive hours, including the interval from midnight to 5 a.m.” (as cited in Statistics Canada, 2022, para. 2). Night shift work has been a necessary practice and is vital in the provision of health and medical services by healthcare professionals including nurses. However, working at night challenges these workers’ circadian rhythms or biological clock and eventually alters their sleep-wake cycles, which may affect their cognitive performance at work and their short- and long-term health.

As Foster (2022) warned, disruptions in the circadian rhythm of the body and poor quality of sleep were “proven to be detrimental to health in many ways” (as cited in Bostock & Mortimore, 2024, p. 120). Bostock and Mortimore (2024) elaborated that disruption in “metabolic” and “immune homeostasis” contributed to higher cancer incidence in shift workers (p. 122). In 2020 the World Health Organization acknowledged that night shift work was a “probable’ class 2A carcinogen” (as cited in Bostock and Mortimore, 2024, p.120). Moreover, night work has been proven to be a risk factor for other serious health concerns such as gastrointestinal, neuropsychological, and musculoskeletal disorders

(Reisenho et al., 2021, p. S101). It has also been linked to “cardiometabolic disorders, including weight gain, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, atrial fibrillation, coronary heart disease, . . . stroke . . . [and] breast cancer” (Moćkun-Pietrzak, 2022, p. 2).

This essay will discuss how night shift work is an essential component of service provision in healthcare; however, it poses great risks to workers’ general well-being. Disruption to the circadian rhythms and sleep-wake cycles of night shift work affects physical, mental, and social health. Specifically, studies have shown that night shift work negatively alters eating patterns and metabolism, compromises reproductive health and even oral health, impairs cognitive function, and is a risk factor for depression and other mental health concerns. This essay will argue that while it is essential to have this type of work schedule in the fast-growing and critical sector of healthcare, there should be institutional recognition of the health risks and implementation of policies and programs designed to help these health workers combat the effects of working night shifts.

The human body has a circadian rhythm that regulates the sleep-wake cycle in 24 hours. Also known as the “body clock,” this is influenced externally by forces such as light and internally by the suprachiasmatic nucleus, a group of cells located in the hypothalamus of the brain.

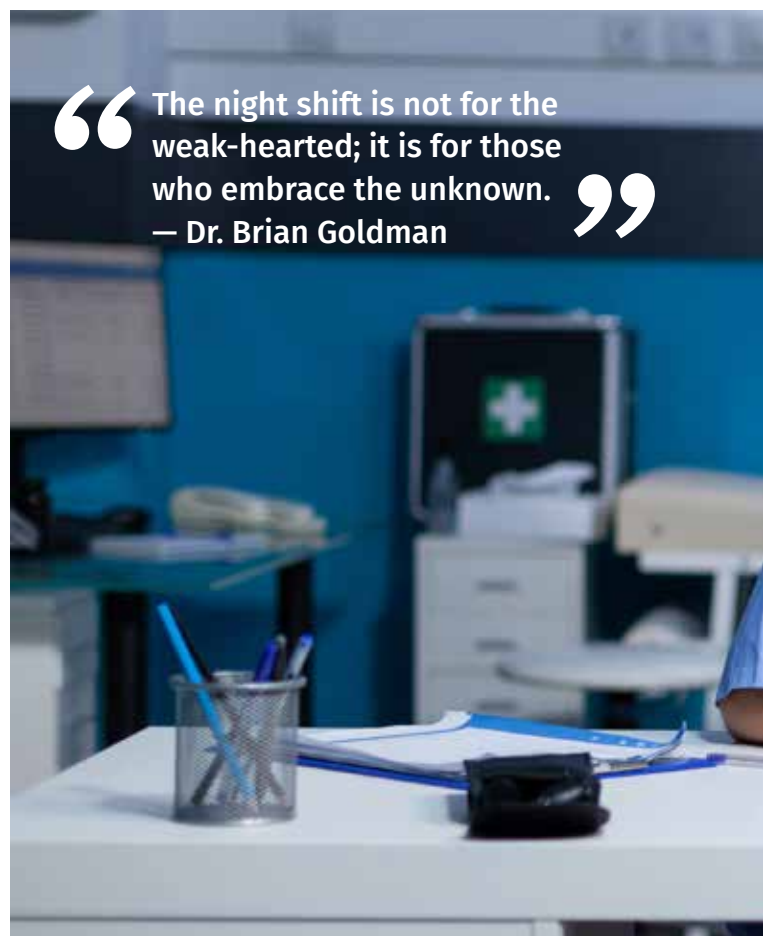
“DISRUPTION OF A PERSON’S NORMAL FUNCTIONING OF CIRCADIAN AND SLEEP-WAKE CYCLES WILL EVENTUALLY RESULT IN SLEEP DEPRIVATION. SLEEP DEPRIVATION DUE TO NIGHT SHIFT WORK SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTS THE COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS.”

In an important early study of the health implications of night shift work, Baxendale et al. (1997) defined circadian rhythms as “individual, measurable parameters within the body which approximate a 24-hour pattern” (p. 308). Baxendale et al. (1997) considered how desynchronized circadian rhythms impacted nurses’ and patients’ health. They found nurses working night shifts and nurses working solely on night duty were “continually altering their exogenous cues” (p. 306) causing imbalance in the circadian rhythms. Nurses were expected to function in a high-stimulation environment even when their rhythms were “desynchronized” from their environment and from each other. This was believed to cause distress in the body leading to “illness or inability to function optimally” (p. 303). Subsequent studies have shown the extent of the health risks of night work to nurses including disrupted sleep patterns, increased vulnerability to certain illnesses, and adverse impacts on cognitive function and mood.

Night shift work has been found to negatively affect the nutritional intake of health workers because it disrupts eating patterns and habits of workers contributing to obesity and weight gain. Amani and Gill (2013) reviewed impacts of shift working on the health and nutritional status of health workers. They categorized their analysis into two parts: studies on the correlation between “shift working and obesity and/or BMI” and studies on the correlation between “shift working and nutritional/dietary patterns” (p. 505). Results of the analysis revealed that shift work “can potentially change the food intake patterns in ways that may be unfavorable to health” (p. 512). In particular, the findings of the study showed that shift work leads to weight gain and obesity due to poor nutrition and varying meal intakes. Additionally, Bostock and Mortimore (2024) correlated shortness in sleeping time with obesity where the main cause is referred to as “non-homeostatic drive” that causes one to eat as often

as possible (p. 122).

Night shift work has negative impacts on the sexual and reproductive well-being of women. Moćkun-Pietrzak et al. (2022) evaluated the effect of night shifts on the “reproductive and sexual health” of midwives (p. 1). In the exploratory study of 520 participants, the authors noted that midwives who work night shifts had a greater tendency to experience reproductive issues and sexual dysfunction. They explained the three most observed negative impacts of doing night shifts included infertility, miscarriages, and longer menstrual



“ The night shift is not for the weak-hearted; it is for those who embrace the unknown. ”
— Dr. Brian Goldman

cycle. Moćkun-Pietrzak et al. (2022) further mentioned in their study that there was a low negative correlation between “the number of night shifts per month with miscarriages” and the “satisfaction in particular aspects of sexual life” (p. 7).

Night shift work has even been found to have an adverse impact on a person’s oral health. Ghasemi et al. (2022) analyzed the connection between working shift hours and the condition of workers’ oral health. The study found that the workers’ length in years of shift work has a positive correlation with DMFT (decayed,

missing, and filled permanent teeth) and with the number of periodontal pockets. The result signaled that working conditions have a negative impact on oral health. Also, psychological stress due to night working conditions may lead to higher risk of dental caries and periodontal diseases.

Disruption of a person’s normal functioning of circadian and sleep-wake cycles will eventually result in sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation due to night shift work significantly impacts the cognitive performance of healthcare professionals. Kaliyaperumal et al. (2017)



noted that 69% of nurses working night shifts are affected by sleep deprivation (p. 2). They confirmed that sleep deprivation, characterized by poor sleep quality and inadequate sleep quantity, affected workers' concentration and increased cognitive defects, leading to compromised well-being and safety at work (p. 2). Furthermore, the authors noted that resulting poor concentration affected the efficiency, decision-making, and error rates of workers during the night shift schedule. The study also found that healthcare workers exposed to night shift work and sleep deprivation had lower-level scores of "intellectual ability, maths, response inhibition, attention, simple reaction time, and working memory" (p. 3). Bostock and Mortimore (2024) also pointed out that "reduced alertness and an increased incidence of accidents" are among the outcomes of working night shifts (p. 122).

Night shift work affects not only the physical and social health of nurses but also their mental health. Studies have shown that the social health of nurses was impacted by shift work, affecting their family and other personal relationships (Reisenho et al., 2021, p.101). Healthcare workers have a three-time higher incidence of depression than the general working population (Zhang et al., 2023, p. 202). This may correlate with work-family conflict and poor sleep. As Zhang et al. (2023) explained, "work-family conflict arises when competing role demands from the work and family domains vie for a person's finite time and energy resources, resulting in experienced distress and mental health symptoms; but drained resources can decrease opportunities for stress-reducing activities including sleep (p. 202). Sleep is crucial in mental recovery, and, over time, lack of recovery has an adverse effect on mental health including depression. Naidon Cattani et. al. (2022) considered physical damage to the body caused by sleep deprivation but also emotional harms to the person

such as "psychological harms, negative feelings about oneself and life in general; and social harms, isolation and difficulty in family and social relationships" (p. 4). Nurses were found to experience more "unhappiness" and "decreased self-esteem and mood lability" when compared with the general public" (p. 7).

While night shift is an important schedule requirement in the health industry, a recognition of the health risks that come with it should be a major concern. Bostock and Mortimore (2024) suggested how workplaces may provide support to improve the well-being of health workers during night-time shifts. The authors proposed the need for napping as an "evidence-based practice that has been shown to make the workplace safer" (p. 122). Additionally, they recommended incremental consumption of caffeine and routine regular health checks for night shift workers to ensure that they are fit to continue work. Moreover, they recommended that there should be frequent monitoring of employees for any significant negative health indicators associated with working night shifts. Workplaces also may provide ongoing "health and dietary guidance" (p. 123). Kaliyaperumal et al. (2017) also recommended workplaces incorporate bright light and encourage exercise (p. 3). Changes to the working environment and work culture may help lessen or moderate the negative impact and hazards night work brings to healthcare workers.

Thus, while it is essential to have this type of work schedule, there should be a recognition of the health risks that come with this essential service. As part of a transparent recruiting process, health workers should be informed of the negative impacts of night work duty so they may make informed decisions to proceed in their career choice or not. Also, health companies should be required to have policies and programs designed to help these health workers combat the effects of working night shifts. The negative impact of

night shift work worsens for workers with prolonged and continuous night shift work, so it is important to break the cycle that creates burnout and workplace inefficiency as well as long-term health consequences for employees.

In conclusion, night shift work has undeniable negative impact on health workers physical, social, and cognitive performance. Countermeasures should be in place where night shift work is unavoidable. These policies and programs should be a requirement for health institutions implementing night shift work. There

are institutions that give night differential incentives for night shift work, and it would be better if these were implemented in every workplace. Furthermore, health benefits such as annual physical examinations and emotional support mechanisms should be given to health workers doing night shift work. As healthcare is becoming a widely debated topic in Canada, we should also remain cognizant of the strains of the occupation on workers. Attention to their health will also help in recruiting and retention of valuable employees in the industry.

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Perfect Body: Social Media Apps, Fitspiration, and Young Women’s Body Image

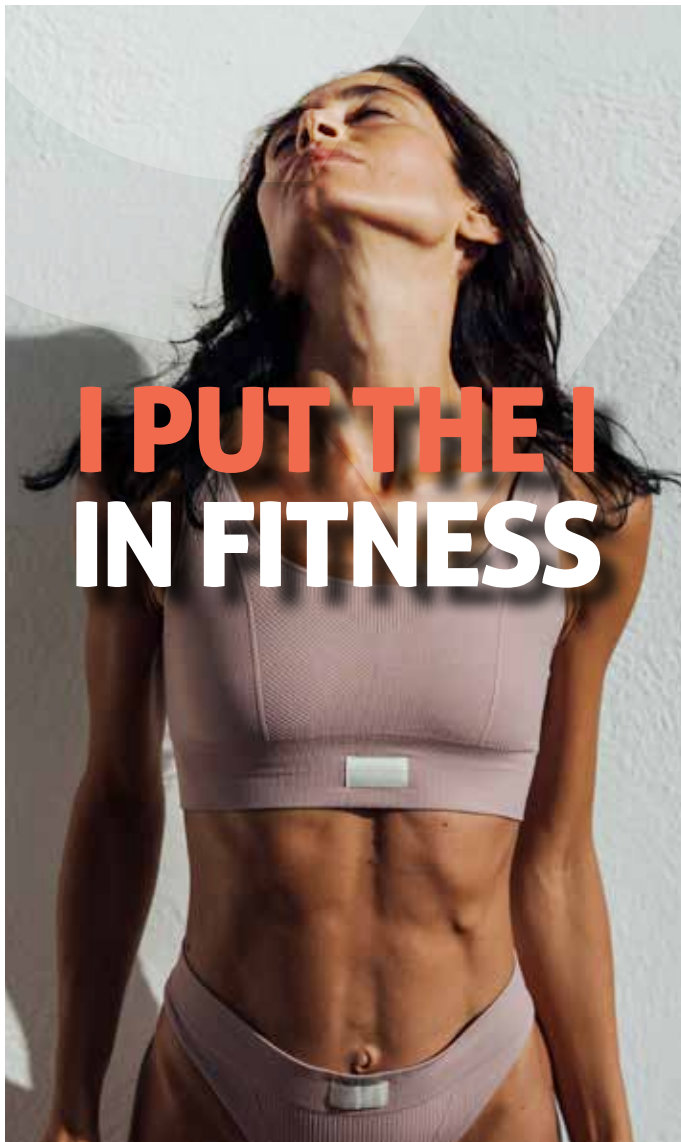
By Ashlyn Goertzen

Indigenous Student Academic Writing Award Winner

Ashlyn Goertzen’s “Perfect Body: Social Media Apps, ‘Fitspiration,’ and Young Women’s Body Image” is the winner of the Indigenous Student Academic Writing Award. Ashlyn has completed her first year at Northern Lights College working towards an Associate of Arts Degree (Health Studies). She aspires to enroll in an accelerated nursing program, but she’s keeping her options open to pursue a career as a nurse practitioner or a doctor. She was drawn to the topic of “fitspiration” because of her interest in physical fitness, especially figure skating and gyming.



“ Sometimes I forget that I am human with a body, not a playdough that can be pressed and squeezed until it fits the predetermined mould this society has deemed “beautiful”. — Anonymous ”



The use of social media apps has emerged in the last two decades as a way to stay in touch with friends and family, keep up with the news, promote products, and share experiences and knowledge. As estimated by Carrotte et al. (2017), 79% of adolescents use social media daily (“Overview of Fitspiration” section, para. 1). Social media makes it possible to share photos of oneself to thousands of people in just one click, but this exposure makes social judgment and internal comparison inevitable. For adolescent girls especially, “social media usage was associated with greater internalisation of beauty ideals” (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2012, as cited in Stewart & Ogden, 2021, p. 632). To counteract negative beauty standards, body positivity social media campaigns have attempted to “challeng[e] conventional attractiveness norms by increasing visibility of a diverse range of body sizes” (Stewart & Ogden, 2021, p. 632), and influencers are offering alternative ideals of fitness and strength. However, despite the body positivity movement, young girls worldwide still hold themselves up to unrealistic beauty standards that result in damaging impacts on physical and emotional wellbeing.

This essay will discuss how social media apps emphasizing thinness and extreme fitness have an interrelated relationship with negative body image among girls and young women. First, it will discuss how ideals perpetuated by social media, specifically the thin-ideal, encourages detrimental self-comparison with digitally enhanced images leading to disordered eating, body shame, and depression. Second, it will discuss why the athletic ideal or “fitspiration,” more recently popularized by social media, has the potential to be healthy but also may encourage old beauty stereotypes, obsessive exercise, and a belief in the importance of appearance over function. It will also consider how the body positive movement as a whole has limitations. Third, it will provide insight into the correlation between time spent on social media and body dissatisfaction among young women. This paper will argue that social media

has intensified exposure to beauty ideals marketed as “body positive” or contributing to health and wellness, but these images may sustain beauty stereotypes that encourage unhealthy alteration habits and directly correlate with lowered self confidence in adolescent girls and young women.

During puberty, a vital time in which adolescents become aware of their social status, young girls also experience radical physical changes. Body image concerns are found to spike during this transition between girlhood and womanhood resulting in self-consciousness (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2022, p. 683). Due to genetics, changes in fat distribution are in opposition to the thin body idealized by social media thus contributing to the stress of social status in this stage of life. Stewart and Ogden (2021) explained that body dissatisfaction occurs when one’s appearance does not match the ideals found on social media (p. 632). Jiotsa et al. (2021) explained that “body dissatisfaction is characterized by an inconsistency between one’s real body and the idealized body” (“Introduction” section, para. 3). It was also noted by Choukas-Bradley et al. (2022) that concerns about body image contribute to disordered eating and depressive episodes with the risk of eating disorders most dominant in adolescent girls undergoing puberty (p. 683).

Pressures to be thin can come from many different channels including television, music, and magazines, but now they are predominantly produced through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. According to Stewart and Ogden (2021), the ideal body type as deemed by social media is that of a slender woman with a low body fat percentage and a small waist (p. 631). The thin ideal has created a negative juxtaposition with being “obese” or “overweight”; it promotes the notion that “thinness equates to happiness, success, and gain” (Rodgers, 2016, as cited in Stewart &

Ogden, 2021, p. 632).

Research has shown clearly that the thin ideal is detrimental because it encourages emotionally damaging self-comparison with digitally altered images. As stated by Choukas-Bradley et al. (2022), the thin-ideal is troublesome due to the lack of transparency from influencers posting media. Idealized photos made to inspire usually have been manipulated and enhanced (p. 684). Ozimek et al. (2023) also observed that photoshop has affected the verifiability of individuals’ profiles online. Alteration of looks on social media apps has become commonplace, and young girls look up to images of women that are photoshopped and retouched and compare themselves to unrealistic and unattainable standards. Consistent with promotion of higher beauty standards, individuals of Eurocentrically determined “average” beauty, now evaluate themselves as less attractive due to comparison with the “more attractive” idealized individuals who are using photo manipulation to achieve their desired looks (Ozimek et al., 2023, “Introduction” section, para. 7). Furthermore, comparison of oneself to figures on social media is correlated with lowered self-esteem and body satisfaction. Ozimek et al. (2023) explained that that even the individuals who digitally alter photos and videos before posting online “reported feeling less attractive, poorer self-esteem, and increased negative mood” (“Introduction” section,

**LIFTING WEIGHTS
MAKES WOMEN HUGE?
FALSE.
CUPCAKES MAKES
WOMEN HUGE.**



“ You don’t get the ass you want by sitting on it. ”
— Jamie Fifer,
Social Media Influencer

para. 8). The negative feelings resulting from exposure to heavily edited material may lead to disordered eating, body shame, and/or depression (Dixon & Weeks, 2019).

Adolescent girls are encouraged through a moral code reinforced through social media to achieve a particular body type or look even if the ideal is unrealistic and unattainable. As with changes in fashion, ideal body images are shifting, and more recently the athletic ideal has been promoted.¹ The health and wellness sector of social media has grown dramatically in recent years. It is possible for this type of exercise promotion to be motivating; however, it also ties negative connotations and stereotypes to healthy lifestyles, such as equating being thin with being healthy. For example, in college-aged girls, Aparicio-Martinez et al. (2019) found young women conforming to two ideals: “the thin ideal” as previously mentioned but also “the athletic ideal” (p. 10). The latter may be defined as a “desire” for a more “‘muscular,’ ‘toned,’ and ‘athletic’” body (Dell’Erba et al., 2024, p. 74). Both ideals may result in obsessive exercise and food restriction, or both; and in both cases, a thinner body is the goal.

Analogous to the thin-ideal, “fitspiration” (#fitspo) is another branch of social media having detrimental effects on adolescent girls’ body image. Carrotte et al. (2017) claimed that young people have been turning to social media for information about “health and health behavior norms” (“Overview of Fitspiration” section, para. 1). The use of social media to share recipes, exercise tips, and photos of food/people is a subcategory of “fitspiration.” “Fitspiration” differs from the “thin-ideal” in that women are expected to be extremely thin but also have muscle and look toned. It also suggests a “moral obligation” to achieve this ideal (“Impact of Fitspiration” section, para. 1). The viewing of “fitspiration” images may predict the increased incidence of compulsive exercise. Moreover, an important critique of “fitspiration” is that it

focuses heavily on the appearance of the body, not the function of the body; thus, leading to high rates of body dissatisfaction (Carrotte et al., 2017).

Additionally, images that make up “fitspiration” or “thin-ideal” content often objectify women. The emphasis of “looks over function” for females depicted in social media suggests that women’s appearances are their most important quality and that bodies are primarily meant for the gaze, not performance. Furthermore, this objectification of the female body is typically sexualized. Objectification theory was posited by Fredrickson and Roberts in 1997 prior to the evolution of social media, but it can be easily applied to the thin and athletic ideals. Liberman and Burke (2022) explained the theory as women viewing themselves as objects because they are repeatedly sexualized and seen as objects by others in society and in the media. The theory assumes that being objectified progresses into self-objectification due to women internalizing external judgement. “Fitspiration” images almost always include the whole body, omit or deemphasize the face (“face-ism”), and put emphasis on the buttocks or stomach region (Carrotte, et al., 2017, “Objectification Theory” section, para.1). Objectification can occur when others gaze on the woman or she looks at herself; it can be intentional or unintentional (Liberman and Burke, 2022, p. 1162). Butkowski et al. (2019) observed that the objectification of women also may lead to body surveillance, which is the constant comparing and assessing of oneself against the cultural ideal. Predictably, objectification has many adverse effects such as body dissatisfaction, eating disorders, “appearance anxiety,” and depression (Liberman and Burke, 2022, p. 1163).

The unattainable ideals circulating on social media prove problematic as adolescents compare their appearances to others. McCrory et al. (2022) explained social comparison theory as individuals assessing

¹ The athletic ideal (“promuscularity”) applies to males and females and men are just as likely to be objectified in different ways, but women are depicted more frequently in fitspiration posts, and women more likely to access fitspiration content (Carrotte et al, 2017, “Fitspiration Content Analysis” section, para. 3).

their own personal abilities and assets against other individuals whom they view as “similar to themselves” (p. 170). As noted by Li et al. (2019), there are two forms of social comparison: upward comparison and downward comparison. Upward comparison is the act of comparing oneself to an individual or individuals perceived as “better” than the viewer, while the latter, downward comparison, is the act of comparing oneself to those perceived “worse” in some way (p. 302). Upward comparisons may lead to an assessment of lower self-worth, while downward comparisons may lead to the contrary, resulting in heightened self-worth. The social comparison theory assumes that individuals have a drive to accurately assess their “opinions and abilities” while also assessing their social and cultural position (Li et al., 2019, p. 302). The use of social media has caused a rise in social comparison taking place among adolescent girls who are extremely vulnerable to the images and videos they are surrounded by daily.

As pushback against restrictive body ideals, the body positivity movement on social media is meant to convey realistic body types to young girls and increase society’s acceptance of body diversity while counteracting the unrealistic ideals. However, Choukas-Bradley et al. (2022) cited research that showed that the body positive movement may not effectively promote body positivity but rather may affirm previous body standards: “[C]ritics of the movement argue that body-positive messages reassert the importance of physical appearance and may increase shame for individuals who struggle with body acceptance” (p. 692). Moreover, an image may be accompanied by the hashtag “body positive,” but images are still photoshopped and self-objectification is still encouraged. Social media has made progress in expanding the diversity of its influencers, the body types being promoted, and the critique of unrealistic ideals; however, women are still sexualized and digitally altered,

and viewers are still encouraged to compare.

There is a notable correlation between time spent on social media and heightened levels of body dissatisfaction. To be beautiful is to be viewed as desirable, likable, and in conformity with social expectations and trends. As indicated by Carrotte et al. (2017), perceptions of beauty are based on experiences; therefore, it is unsurprising that social media perpetuates internalization of beauty standards. The routine use of social media apps that emphasize beauty is correlated with “a greater drive for thinness, thin-ideal internalization, appearance comparison, and weight dissatisfaction” (Stewart & Ogden, 2021, 632). McLean et al. (2016) undertook research that indicated how social media engagement may potentially lead to negative consequences for body satisfaction and self-worth evaluation. In fact, a comparison between girls who used social media regularly and those who did not showed that the latter gave lower importance to their body shape, weight, and appearance. Findings showed that the young girls most vulnerable to negative body image feelings were also most likely to use photo “manipulation” to achieve beauty ideals (Maclean et al., 2016, p. 133). Levels of high self-photo investment (the number of photos, specifically selfies, taken a day) and photo manipulation, specifically, were correlated with higher body dissatisfaction and dietary restraint (McLean, et al., 2016). Butkowski et al. (2019) observed that likes and comments may be viewed as validation or social acceptance; women who create and post photos are more likely to experience low self-esteem than those who use social media to scroll.

In conclusion, to counteract the negative effects of social media, Stewart and Ogden (2021) have suggested influencers on social media emphasize function and health of the body rather than appearance. Additionally, they recommended more media literacy about altered

images and encouragement of “body compassion” rather than body comparison (p. 632-633).

These recommendations deserve serious consideration because adolescent girls are experiencing unprecedented exposure to beauty ideals when they use social media. While trends such as the athletic ideal

and “fitspiration” and body positivity may purport to be healthier ideals to aspire to, research has shown that they can have negative outcomes including lowered self-esteem and heightened valuing of appearance as well as more serious outcomes such as unhealthy alterations of the body and compulsive exercise and disordered eating.

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'Magna Carta' of the Indigenous Nations: The Importance of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 in Canadian History

By David Zimmer

William and Mary Wonka History Prize Winner

The winner of the William and Mary Wonka History Prize is David Zimmer's, "The 'Magna Carta' of the Indigenous Nations: The Importance of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 in Canadian History." David is a student in the Associate of Arts/AHCOTE Program. He appreciates the affordability, location, and accelerated teacher education program offered at Northern Lights College. His goal is to become an elementary or middle school teacher of either history or music in School District 60, Fort Saint John. David credits his dad, who taught at North Peace Secondary School, as well as his time as a Youth Leader in Kanata, Ontario, as the inspiration for his studies. He was drawn to the topic of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and its significant impacts on Indigenous and pre-Confederation Canada while writing an essay for his Canadian History Pre-Confederation course.



By the KING.
A P R O C L A M A T I O N .

When it comes to important historical documents in Canada, a small number come to mind including the original Numbered Treaties (1870-1921), the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), and the Constitution Act of 1867. These documents are regarded as significant for their role in the development of Canada as a nation. However, there is another document that predates the others that should be noted for its historical importance: The Royal Proclamation of 1763, which was created close to a century before Confederation. Issued by King George III in October 1763, it caused an uproar among European settlers in the American colonies. It gave some power to Indigenous Peoples in North America. The latter nicknamed it the First Nation's People's or Canada's "Magna Carta."¹

This essay will explain the importance of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 to Canadian history. First, the essay will discuss how the Royal Proclamation of 1763 served as the basis for modern Indigenous treaty negotiations to follow from the time of its creation to the modern day. Second, the essay will explain how the Royal Proclamation of 1763 offered official recognition of the presence of Indigenous peoples and their ancestral right of land ownership in North America. And third, this essay will discuss how the Royal Proclamation of 1763, through legal means, regulated colonial expansion to protect Indigenous peoples from European settlers, specifically from the American colonies. Due to its foundation for modern Indigenous treaty negotiations, its official recognition of Indigenous people and lands, and its legal regulation of the colonies, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 remains one of the most significant documents in Canadian history.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 served as the basis for all contemporary treaty negotiations as well as for modern Indigenous treaties to follow. Treaty negotiations with Indigenous Peoples have been transpiring for centuries post-contact with European settlers. In addition, treaty negotiations among the Indigenous Nations themselves had been occurring for millennia pre-contact. However,

before the Royal Proclamation of 1763, there was no set standard for how these treaties should be fairly negotiated between Indigenous peoples and with the North American colonies.

According to Thomas Peace, when the Royal Proclamation of 1763 was issued, the document established a "system for treaty-making" with Indigenous peoples.² Subsequently, the foundation was laid for what future treaties with Indigenous peoples would follow under the Crown. Furthermore, it determined that the Indian Affairs Department officials would be the only people dealing with Indigenous and Crown relations. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 makes the Crown's position very clear that it would be the official mediator between settlers and Indigenous peoples:

We do hereby strictly forbid, on Pain of our Displeasure, all our loving subjects from making any Purchases or Settlements whatever, or taking Possession of any of the Lands above reserved without our especial leave and Licence for that Purpose first obtained... We shall at any Time think fit by ourselves or by our Commissaries to be appointed for this Purpose, to direct and appoint for the Benefit of the said Trade.³

This clarifies that treaties between Indigenous peoples and Europeans, or subjects to the Crown, from that point on would be officially, legally, and fairly negotiated to prevent further conflict and bloodshed between the Indigenous peoples and the North American colonies. Significantly, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 is the reason why non-Indigenous Canadians are obligated to recognize Indigenous peoples and the treaties that have been negotiated with them.

Additionally, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 is significant because it officially recognized Indigenous peoples and Indigenous lands. Although Indigenous peoples have been discriminated against by European influences over the last

1 Thomas Peace, "The Politics of Proclamation, The Politics of Commemoration," *Canada Watch* (2013): 5, http://activehistory.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/CW_Fall2013.pdf

2 Peace, 5

3 Peace, 5 George R., Proclamation, *Royal Proclamation of 1763*, 7 October 1763 (3Geo III), reprinted in *Canadiana*, 2024, <https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oochm.63273/2>

By the KING,
A P R O C L A M A T I O N .

two centuries, there once had been a mutual partnership with European settlers. The British, for the most part, solidified their partnership with Indigenous peoples after the Seven Years War with the French in the previous years. John Borrows explains that the principles of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty of Niagara were largely founded upon the developing relationship between Indigenous peoples and European settlers.⁴ Furthermore, the Royal Proclamation of 1763, along with the Treaty of Niagara, were the result of “the formulation of principles to regulate the allocation of land, resources, and jurisdiction between them.”⁵ Before the Royal Proclamation of 1763, there was neither official recognition that North America was first inhabited by Indigenous peoples nor recognition that Indigenous people had sovereignty over those unceded lands.

According to John Borrows, although there was a lack of input from Indigenous peoples in the development of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the articles found in the document “reflected First Nations’ perspectives as much as if the First Nations were present and in agreement at the signing because of the relative power possessed by the First Nations in 1760.”⁶ Therefore, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 not only recognized the Indigenous peoples to have inhabited and owned lands in North America prior to European settlement, but it also recognized that Indigenous peoples had autonomy and were independent from European and colonial rule.

Furthermore, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 is significant because it regulated colonial expansion in order to protect the Indigenous peoples from the American colonies. As mentioned previously, there were no regulations when it came to ownership of land in the colonial realms. This left the Indigenous peoples vulnerable to conflicts and to “unfair negotiations” and “fraudulent business arrangements” with the American

colonists for most of the eighteenth century. To prevent the ongoing Indigenous-settler conflict and disorder as well as to maintain a good relationship with the Indigenous peoples of North America, the British government created the Royal Proclamation of 1763 to declare that Indigenous peoples and lands not already occupied by settlers should remain under ownership of the Indigenous peoples unless purchased by the British Crown. Brian Slattery explains that “In order to avoid conflicting settlements and consequent war, it was necessary for them to establish a principle which all should acknowledge as the law by which the right of acquisition should be regulated as among themselves.”⁷

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 made it a requirement under law for all colonists “who have either willingly or inadvertently seated themselves upon” Indigenous territory, to remove themselves from Indigenous lands that were not already ceded or purchased by the British government and “are still reserved” for the Indigenous peoples.⁸ According to Robert N. Clinton, despite the self-interests of the American colonists, “British law sought to assure ... a continued right of occupancy” for Indigenous peoples on their home soil. This regulation then gave Indigenous peoples, for the most part, legal rights and sovereignty over their lands and limited what colonists could do in unceded Indigenous territory. In other words, if European colonists continued to unrightfully take over Indigenous territory and provoke Indigenous peoples, the European colonists would be in conflict with the most powerful political force of the time, the British Empire. This makes the Royal Proclamation of 1763 a significant precursor to the progress of Indigenous rights in Canada.

To summarize, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 was the foundation for modern treaty negotiations that we see today in Canada because it set precedent for the relationship between the Indigenous Nations and the Crown. Furthermore, the Royal Proclamation of 1763

4 John Borrows, “Wampum at Niagara: The Royal Proclamation, Canadian Legal History, and Self Government,” in *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equity and Respect for Difference*, ed. Michael Asch (UBC Press, 1998), 156, https://www.sfu.ca/~palys/Borrows-1997-Wampum_at_Niagara.pdf

5 Borrows, 156.

6 Borrows, 158

7 Brian Slattery, *Aboriginal Title and the Royal Proclamation of 1763: Origins and Illusions* (ResearchGate, 2019), 24, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Brian-Slattery/publication/337821333_Aboriginal_Title_and_the_Royal_Proclamation_Of_1763_Origins_and_Illusions/links/5debe6f2a6fcc28370ef2cc/Aboriginal-Title-and-the-Royal-Proclamation-Of-1763-Origins-and-Illusions.pdf

8 George R., *Proclamation, Royal Proclamation of 1763*, Canada, Royal Proclamation of 1763.

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officially recognized Indigenous peoples and Indigenous occupancy. It not only recognized the ancestral occupancy of the Indigenous peoples in North America, but it also it recognized the autonomy of the Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, it regulated the North American colonies to protect, to a certain degree, the interests of the Indigenous peoples and their right of sovereignty over their territories. The Crown had the intention of granting legal power to Indigenous peoples over the colonists.

Historians have debated where the Royal Proclamation of 1763 stands in Canadian history. Arguably, it is an important document because of its foundation for

modern treaty negotiations, official recognition of Indigenous peoples and their lands, and legal power to regulate the colonies to protect Indigenous peoples and lands. Furthermore, this document is certainly important to Indigenous peoples in Canada because it offered early progress in Indigenous rights including being a precursor to Truth and Reconciliation. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 demonstrates the historical origins of Indigenous-settler relations and how treaties are to be negotiated in a fair, just, and organized manner. In conclusion, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 is the “Magna Carta” of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

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Behind the Books: The Uncensored Pages of Anne Frank's Diary

By Karen Jane Gamboa
NLC Technical Writing Award Winner

The NLC Technical Writing Award is awarded to a student in the Business Management Diploma Program or in NLC technical programs. This year's winner is Karen Gamboa's "Behind the Books: The Uncensored Pages of Anne Frank's Diary." Karen has five years of experience as a nurse in the Philippines. During the COVID 19 pandemic, Karen witnessed the struggles of healthcare professionals being overlooked and mismanagement contributing to overwhelmed healthcare systems globally. Seeing the growing demands of healthcare, she believed Northern Lights College's Business Management Post-Degree Diploma – Health Administration Specialization would offer her a pathway to a vocation in efficient leadership and management in healthcare. While researching her project on Anne Frank, Karen saw that young Frank had the same love of writing that she had as a child. When Karen was just four years old, she had already written short poems about nature and the theme of "growing up." She appreciated the history and psychology behind Anne Frank's story and was surprised that there is always

more to uncover when studying history. Karen believes that writing can "connect heart and mind" to social realities. She quotes from her essay: "Some [stories] are rewritten to justify the present, but these words from the past are the bearers of humanity today."



Anne Frank, an author now known worldwide, has become an important symbol of Nazi genocide, and yet her passages from her famous diary have been redacted. As Popowyz (2023) explained, Anne addresses Kitty, a fictional character to whom she dedicates her letters that form *Diary* as she documents her daily life in a secret annex during the Holocaust. As many children do, Anne creates imaginary friends to cope with anxiety and boredom, and like other teenagers, Anne is finding her own adult identity, but she does so while growing up in a small space with no exposure to the outside world. Anne has difficulty expressing herself to those who share the hideout, so she writes her feelings in the diary where she keeps her secrets and observations. Her creation is now considered an important “coming-of-age narrative” (Popowyz, 2023, “Documenting the Holocaust” section, para 5) and an invaluable record of the Holocaust, but it has been very controversial.

After Anne Frank died in a concentration camp, her diary was kept by her father Otto Frank who decided his daughter would have wished to publish. On June 25, 1947, Otto Frank published Anne’s work in Dutch as *Het Achterhuis* (“The House Behind”), but some passages were omitted and rewritten. Since then, there have been numerous attempts to redact, censor, or ban the diary. This paper will analyze the controversy surrounding Anne Frank’s diary. First, this essay will discuss the initial redaction of Anne’s diary that was undertaken by her father who attempted to omit Anne’s discussion of sexuality and hurtful details about their family. Second, it will discuss why some schools and other institutions have censored or attempted to ban the work. It will explain what was restored in more recent versions of the diary in the context of attempted book bans and restrictions that are under intense scrutiny worldwide. This essay will argue that Anne Frank’s case suggests that the attempts of publishers and bureaucracies to censor or ban Anne Frank’s work not only threaten intellectual freedoms but also misrepresent Anne as a

complex person.

Otto Frank knew Anne’s diary was an important document while they were confined during the war, but as he read the passages of his daughter’s diary after her death, there were certain topics he did not expect a young girl to write about. Therefore, under the advice of Contact Publishing who felt Anne’s expression of sexual feeling may be too sensitive, he was compelled to omit some pages. Anne’s father was the first of many to have doubts about publishing Anne’s expressions of sexuality and her private thoughts about family (Blakemore, 2020, “Did Anne’s Father Edit” section, paras. 2-3). Anne’s father omitted pages that included dirty jokes, expressions of love for Peter van Pels who also stayed in the annex, and curiosity about sex and prostitution including a reference to his visit to a brothel (Blakemore, 2019, para. 4). These topics are understandable given that Anne was growing into a young adult during the twenty-five months of hiding (Blakemore, 2020, “Sexual Anatomy” section, para.2). As Otto Frank prepared the manuscript for publication, he also removed pages that discussed his marriage to Anne’s mother Edith, Anne’s bleak views of her parent’s relationship, and Anne’s criticisms of her mother. Otto also excluded a brutal section about Anne’s hatred of her friends. When Otto published *Het Achterhuis*, the book gained fame globally, and readers accepted the sanitized version of Anne as a symbol of the Holocaust (Blakemore, 2020, “Hoax, Fraud or Forgery” section, para 1).

When Otto died in 1980, he handed five redacted pages to his friend Cornelius Sujik, International Director of the Anne Frank Center USA, who then shared it with journalist and author Melissa Müller. Blakemore (2020) explained that these pages consisted of Anne’s description of her parents’ marriage as “tepid” (“Sexual Anatomy” section, para. 1). They also included Anne’s teenaged curiosity about sexual matters and her thoughts about her genitalia, discussion of sex education, desire expressed towards both males and

“ *I fall asleep with the strange feeling of wanting to be different than I am or being different than I want to be, or perhaps of behaving differently than I am or want to be.* **”**
— Anne Frank



females, and an interest in intercourse. As two years in the annex pass, Anne’s writing becomes mature, and her confidence in jotting her daily life in the diary increases as she writes about masturbation and menstruation and even describes her feces (“Sexual Anatomy” section, paras. 2-3).

When Melissa Müller authored *Anne Frank: A Bibliography* and wished to include the redacted material, the Anne Frank Fonds (Foundation) in Basel, holders of the copyright on the diary, prevented her from including Anne’s discussion of her parents’ marriage (Brawarsky, 1998, para. 3). Müller was forced to paraphrase the pages. It wasn’t until 2003 that the original pages were published by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation. These included Anne Frank’s dirty jokes and her discussion of same-sex attraction and sexual anatomy.

Book banning and censorship have been undertaken throughout history affecting education, libraries, and readers and challenging literary expression and democratic free speech. The banning of books has a long history. As explained by Harvard Library (2023), in the United States, the first book banning happened in 1637 when *New English Canaan* was seen as seditious for its mocking of the first English settlers of America. It was banned by the Puritan government. One of the political rights that America has passed in government is The First Amendment which includes the freedom to share ideas and to be vocal about specific issues (“freedom of speech”). However, book banning still removes materials from libraries in an effort to suppress “lifestyles or political ideas” (Yuko, 2023, “The Stories We Tell” section, para. 4). Yuko (2023) explained book banning of today focuses on attempts to keep certain books out of the hands of children and young adults. “Censorship” is the “suppression of content or ideas” while “banning” takes many forms including removal from library shelves (Huertas, 2023, para. 2). The freedom to read is suppressed when books are banned, and

recently, there has been a rise in attempts to suppress literature. The American Library Association in the United States reported a total of 695 attempts to censor books from January 1, 2023, to August 31, 2023 (Borresen, 2023, para. 4).

Over the past 40 years, there have been many attempts to censor and even ban Anne Frank's Diary in Sweden, Norway, Austria, Lebanon, and the United States. For example, after the discovery of Anne Frank's omitted passages, in the 1980s and 1990s attempts were made in Texas, Virginia, and Alabama to remove Diary from schools due to her describing her anatomy and the perception that the diary was too disturbing for younger children. Blakely and Cajes (2023) explained that several attempts to ban Anne Frank's Diary started in 1982 when a family in Virginia objected to the description of genitals and Anne's account of her "crush" on a female friend ("Attempts" section, para. 1). In 1983 in Alabama, another attempt to ban the work was reported as the complaints insisted that the diary was too depressing for young readers (Price, n.d., para.7). In 1990 some parents protested the release of Anne Frank's memoir because it was pornographic, and they succeeded having it removed from the library for a time. In 2010 schools in the Culpeper County, Virginia, banned the 50th Anniversary The Diary of a Young Girl: Definitive Edition due to "sexually explicit material and homosexual themes" (Wolf Baldessero, 2024, para. 10).

More recently, in 2016, a graphic novel illustrated by David Polonsky reignited the discussion of banning the book in elementary and high schools. This graphic adaptation of Anne's life during the holocaust and some of the more sensitive passages are illustrated to be more appealing to young audiences. According to Goodyear (2023), the book "[became] the centre of a political firestorm" in several U.S. school districts," and a Texas teacher was fired for sharing the graphic novel of Anne's work consisting of sexuality and censored passages (para. 4). Whereas in the original version edited by her

father Anne has the personality of an obedient and friendly schoolchild, in the 2016 graphic novel Anne is a young adult with questions. When graphic artist David Polonsky and writer Ari Folman adapted Otto Frank's version and made a graphic illustration in promotion of Anne Frank's legacy, Folman argued that as he read the passages repeatedly, he was respectful of the fact that Anne is a girl full of humor and observation (para. 5). Importantly, he attempts to retain Anne's personality and inquisitiveness in the graphic illustration.

Anne's twenty-five-month life in the annex was difficult for a child growing into womanhood without a chance to explore and know the world outside. Ironically, Anne was a victim of genocide and yet has been portrayed as a saintly schoolgirl. Her diary is the only surviving document of the horror of hiding from war and the Nazis, and yet her chronicles about the Holocaust have been a misunderstood. Unlike her adult censors and editors, Anne certainly seems to have more insight into her complex character, as she writes,

I have one outstanding trait in my character, which must strike anyone who knows me for any length of time, and that is my knowledge of myself. I can watch myself and my actions, just like an outsider. The Anne of everyday I can face entirely without prejudice, without making excuses for her, and watch what's good and what's bad about her. This self-consciousness haunts me, and every time I open my mouth, I know as soon as I've spoken whether 'that ought to be different' or 'that was right as it was.' I condemn so many things; I couldn't begin to name them all... Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right person's right path, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands (Franke, 1969, p. 230).

Anne is curious, honest, and accurate when describing her daily life during the Holocaust, and she also is capable of analyzing her growth, her moods, and her hormone changes in a way that makes her description of adolescent feelings and ideas surprisingly insightful.

Anne Frank's Diary is an important document that offers insight into the history of the Holocaust. It has been read in 70 different languages and has created a vivid description of how Jewish people tried to survive during that horrendous era. Webster (2019) argued that Anne's story is an integral part of history and especially of women's history (para.2). The integrity of Anne's Diary and her ability to express herself honestly is even more important as challenges to books and free expression are escalating and questions about the future of democracy are increasing. Emily Knox, National Coalition against Censorship Board president, argued that book

and banning create fear in society. When books are banned or censored, educators will be unsure of what they will teach and this has a "chilling effect" (as cited in Oliver, 2023, "Book Bans 'Tear the Community Apart'" section, para. 2). Knox added that in a dystopian society, there will be no writers, for they would fear being targeted when expressing their ideas and sharing their creations.

Literature plays a vital role in the formation of culture. Merriam-Webster (2024) defined literature as "writings...expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest." It allows people to move back



in time and learn something about the past and the present. Literature offers entertainment to readers and cultivates the views of readers. Lorenzo (2014) argued literature is the “foundation of humanity’s cultures, beliefs, and traditions” (para. 2) and “an instrument of revolution” (“Literature in Revolution” section, para.

1). In this context, Diary offers a historical record, as Anne intended it to do, and it offers political resistance against injustice. The Diary of Anne Frank is an important document about the horrors of the Holocaust. Today, the diary also emphasizes political conflicts that have resulted in the banning and censoring of her books.

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Lesser-Known Devices in Aircraft Maintenance

By Jaymar De Leon

NLC Technical Writing Award

Jaymar De Leon's "Lesser-Known Devices in Aircraft Maintenance" is the runner-up for the NLC Technical Writing Award. Jaymar is from the Philippines and has always dreamed of studying in Canada. He chose Northern Lights College because "it offers specialized programs, affordability, and industry connections, and it is ideal for focused education and career development." He sees the Aircraft Maintenance Technician program as a first step in a fascinating and demanding career path, and after graduation, and he aspires to secure an apprenticeship with Air Canada. He sees this career as a viable way to provide for his family and ensure a stable future. He credits his supportive girlfriend Vhanessa for motivating him towards a challenging career in aviation as they look toward a fulfilling future together.



As Martijn Barten explains, the aviation sector “encompasses almost all aspects of air travel” and its operations, including the airline industry, aircraft production, airline research, and military aviation. He defines “aviation” as “mechanical air transportation,” with airplanes and helicopters being the primary categories. As emphasized by BAE Systems, an international defense and aerospace company, every aircraft in service needs to undergo a rigorous regimen of “scheduled or preventive servicing, inspection, testing, repair, overhaul” as well as modification operations by certified Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) technicians.

Aircraft maintenance is a highly regulated field. To guarantee the success of every flight, MRO technicians must guarantee the safety of the crew and passengers. Their responsibilities encompass the replacement and maintenance of aircraft components, identification and resolution of mechanical and electrical problems, and maintenance benchmarking (to align with industry standards). They install, modify, service, and repair parts of propeller-driven airplanes, jets, and other types of aircraft (“Aircraft Maintenance Technician”). They employ their meticulous approach to uphold strict safety standards while working with intricate systems.

While significant components such as engines require maintenance checks, there are important but lesser-known aircraft parts that also require inspection, replacement, and modification. This essay will discuss the function of turnbuckles, audio panels, and magneto timers and some of the common necessary repairs that maintenance personnel look for during inspections of these devices.

Aircraft Devices: Turnbuckles

As Lexi Keller explains, a turnbuckle is a rigging device with marine and construction applications used to change cables, ropes, and wires’ length and tension. Smaller turnbuckles have household use for structures such as shade sails and fencing. They’re used



in scaffolding construction, where several lines need to be tensioned at once, and they have applications in electrical work, plumbing, and carpentry and in recreation including playground equipment, such as swings or other leisure equipment, and in sporting including wrestling and boxing rings. Put simply, turnbuckles are a crucial part of every application that involves cables or ropes.

In aviation, large planes now have hydraulic actuated components but retain cables for redundancy purposes. Some planes have flight controls “actuated by pushrods and bellcranks,” but others have cables and pulleys for aircraft control systems, or in other words, they serve the purpose of “telling . . . airplanes where to go” (Prizio). Therefore, in the aviation industry, control cable system maintenance is critical. As Jeff Simon explains, the rigging of the aircraft control system needs at least annual maintenance (sometimes more often depending on exposure to weather) to avoid “autopilot system issues, tight or jammed flight controls etc.” This is important to “ensure that the aircraft performs as it was designed.”

Cables need to be adjusted to the specifications for faster control response time. Simon explains that cable tensions must be checked, and as the sections of cable are held together through turnbuckles, these sections must be inspected in the process of ensuring correct tension. Cable tensions are adjusted by twisting the turnbuckles that connect the sections of cable together. Simon admits that this is one of the “most neglected maintenance tasks out there” even though it’s critical to ensure flight controls are centered in neutral and a pilot is able to get the response they need when they move a control to its maximum travel in an emergency.

In addition to checking cable tension, maintenance technicians must inspect the turnbuckles themselves. Dave Prizio offers examples of specifications noting that turnbuckles should not be bent or have more than three threads visible on either end. A wire should be inserted through witness holes in the turnbuckle body to ensure that the turnbuckle screw is far enough in to block the hole. Turnbuckles should not be closer than two inches to pulleys (Prizio). Moreover, maintenance personnel may look for cracked and corroded turnbuckles or turnbuckles that have stripped threads. The Federal Aviation Administration’s Service Difficulty Reports and Aviation Maintenance Alerts observes cracked and corroded and bent turnbuckles and control cable separation in many annual inspections. They report that in one instance of a Cessna 182Q Skylane, turnbuckle failure led to loss of control in flight requiring emergency landing (as cited in “Cable Turnbuckles”). These devices are small but an essential component of aircraft rigging.

Aviation Communication: Audio Panels

As Eric Morris explains, for pilots to maintain “safe and efficient flight operations,” communication is essential. Pilots who communicate well can retain “situational

awareness,” collaborate with air traffic control, and send valuable information about weather, navigation, and potential crises (Morris). Whether pilots are flying with a private license under visual flight rules (VFR

Instrument Flight Rules or VFR in the United States) or flying with the guidance of ATC (air traffic control), all aircraft have radio communication equipment that is similar in function. Communication between aircraft and air traffic control including requesting and relaying information due to changing weather patterns and navigating growing traffic is essential. The ability to communicate verbally and share information via aircraft is crucial for pilots to coordinate with ground-based ATC, command centers, maintenance centers, and other relevant parties.

From the pilot’s entry in the cockpit to the aircraft’s final descent, the pilot and air traffic controller communicate often during a passenger-carrying commercial flight. Early avionics systems used radio stations to facilitate voice communication between pilots and command centers or airports (Wang and Zhao). This allowed pilots and staff to comprehend one another’s conditions, adapt to dynamic changes in the air and on the ground, coordinate their plans, and use collaborative management throughout the flight (Smith). However, since the advent of satellite, the primary function of aircraft communication systems





is to establish a communication channel between every aircraft and the relevant ATC authority. These developments have improved the aircraft's ability to manage flight operations (Wang and Zhao).

Alongside the aircraft communication transceiver is an independent electrical module known as the "audio panel." This apparatus directs audio output from the specific receiver in use to the crew loudspeaker and headphones, and it sends microphone input from the crew microphones to the specific transmitter (Ribbons). As audio communication is so important and noise is a common complaint, maintenance of the audio panel is essential to troubleshoot for "distorted or garbled reception," intermittent and weak reception, or even total audio failure (Maher 166). Minor troubleshooting may involve checking antennas and headset cables and volumes, but maintenance of deterioration of larger systems is also required. As audio panels have many switches, these are often a source of trouble. Ground loops are also a concern when resistance or impedance cause oscillations and resulting noise ("Ground Loops"). Old signal cabling must be upgraded, and poor audio

wiring should be corrected ("Can You Hear Me"). The audio panel is an intricate and important apparatus that requires maintenance for essential communications.

Electromechanical Devices: Magnetos

The electromechanical device known as a magneto supplies the electrical energy required for aircrafts' internal combustion engines to ignite the fuel-air mixture. They are utilized in piston aircraft engines and are essential components of the ignition system ("What is a Magneto"). Magnetos are frequently utilized as an ignition source in tiny airplanes with piston engines. There are two magnetos in every piston engine. The corresponding engine's ignition system will receive power from the magnetos. If one magneto fails, the backup magneto will keep working as designed even if one of them fails.

If the airplane's electrical system fails, magnetos guarantee that the piston engines will keep running. For example, it might be necessary for pilots to deliberately turn off the aircraft's electrical system to prevent an electrical fire from spreading. The engines will keep running if the airplane's ignition system is based on



magnetos. Magnetos have a straightforward construction, which also eliminates the need for an external electrical source to function. As Mike Hart explains, even as other technologies have changed over time, magnetos are still a common option even after a century of engineering. Magnetos do not rely on the electrical system of the aircraft. They do not depend on additional onboard power sources or batteries. Rather, magnetos generate their own energy. The aircraft's engines will continue to operate even if its electrical system goes offline or loses power (Hart).

Despite their reliability, magnetos do experience deterioration or "wear and tear, plus the stress of creating and releasing thousands of volts each minute" (Hart). As Bill Ross explains, "While the magneto is very reliable and robust, it is intolerant of neglect or abuse." He explains that a magneto check is one of the first things that student pilots learn, and magneto maintenance is necessary: "There are very specific maintenance checks recommended by the manufacturer that are extremely important to both the safety and reliability of the engine and aircraft" (Ross).

Maintenance requires disassembling, cleaning, and inspecting the parts of the magneto including distributor, wires, and spark plugs. Since spark plugs are in continual touch with the engine mixture, they can get carbon buildup which can result in misfire, loss of speed, or loss of engine power ("What is a Magneto"), so the magneto needs to be lubricated. Impulse coupling (which winds and releases a spring to spin the magneto rapidly) should be inspected for wear, as "impulse coupling that is not functioning properly can lead to the engine firing in full advance timing and thus lead to kickback during starting." This can wreck the starter and engine components (Ross). Additionally, inspections should look for cracks in the distributor drive gear because these can lead to fracture of the gear and prevent the sparks distributing to the cylinders. Finally, the magneto

functions because of a rotating magnet that generates a current on a coil of wire. The magnets themselves may last many years, but they do lose their magnetism so the electric current it generates will create a less powerful spark and result in loss of power (Durdin). Good maintenance is necessary to ensure that the magnetos and the aircraft as a whole function properly (Rosa).

One of the most important parts of aviation is maintaining aircraft, which calls for skilled technicians and high-quality equipment to guarantee safety, dependability, and airworthiness. While critical maintenance is performed, for example, on engines or propellers because errors in their performance may endanger life, there are many other aircraft components that require attention to oversee crew and passenger safety. Turnbuckles, audio panels, and magnetos are essential components that require attention from MRO technicians



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