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Ethical issues faced by occupational therapists working with Aboriginal people in Quebec-Canada

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Introduction: Approximately 5% of Canadians see themselves as Aborigines, including First Nations, Inuit and Metis. The significant inequities faced by these Canadians compared to other Canadians in terms of health, well-being, education, housing and economic development are well documented in the literature. Although they are few in number, some occupational therapists work with and within Canadian Aboriginal communities. In doing so, they face ethical issues. To date, these issues – from the point of view of Quebec-Canadian occupational therapists – are not documented.

Objectives: This research's objective was to document the ethical issues faced by occupational therapists while working with and within Aboriginal communities in Quebec-Canada, and the means they used to overcome these issues.

Method: To achieve this goal, a qualitative phenomenological approach was used, namely Husserl's descriptive and transcendental phenomenology. Occupational therapists were encountered through individual semi-structured interviews that were audiotaped and later on transcribed. Giorgi's methodological steps was used to analyze narratives.

Results: Ten occupational therapists participated in the research. As the data analysis is underway, the conference will present the results of the study. For the time being, the preliminary results show that all participants faced ethical issues while working with Aboriginal people. These issues are mostly related to culture and systemic discrimination and stigmatization, but participants find ways to navigate them.

Conclusion: This research will provide solutions to support occupational therapists working with Aboriginal people so that these communities can be better served and their health and occupational needs fulfilled in a more equitable way.