

SJT Resources | Flip Sheet

July, 2011

The St. James Town (SJT) Initiative is Wellesley Institute's signature project and its largest community-based research initiative. Visit us online at www.wellesleyinstitute.com and www.sjtinitiative.com for free downloads, news, blogs, and extensive resources in health equity, housing, social innovation, and immigrant health.

Voices of Multicultural Youth: Impact of urban neighbourhood on health and well-being



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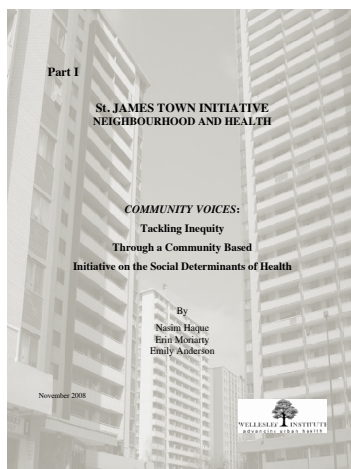


Voices of Multicultural Youth: Impact of urban neighbourhood on health and well-being (PhotoVoice) (July, 2011)

The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Their healthy growth and development is a collective interest of our society. Our study takes place in St. James Town (SJT), a neighbourhood of downtown Toronto, Canada. SJT is a highly multicultural neighbourhood and is established as an immigrant receiving area with about 64 percent of its residents being immigrants and 26 percent having arrived in Canada within the last five years. Photovoice is an arts- and community-based participatory research (CBPR) method where voices are captured and shared through photography and storytelling. Using this technique, people can identify, represent and convey specific issues of their community. The findings indicate that the youth have a broad understanding of health, as they discuss the physical and social structures of the neighbourhood have implications on their health and well-being.

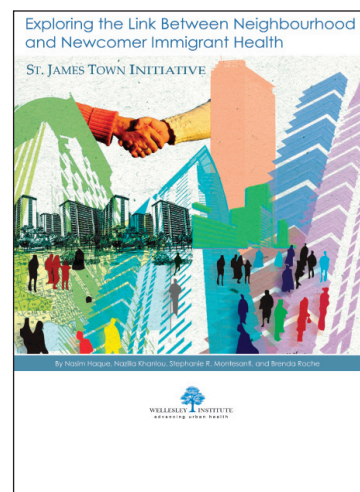
Community Voices: Tackling Inequity Through a Community Based Initiative on the Social Determinants of Health

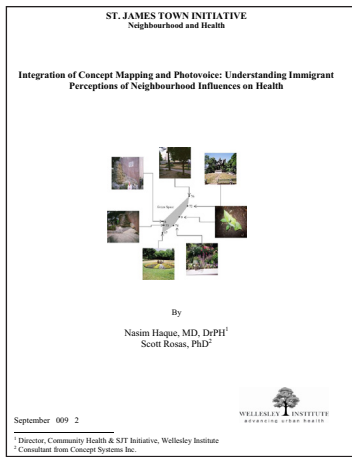
This report reflects the “voices” of SJT newcomer residents through the use of Photovoice. Photovoice is an inclusive methodology because it places power in the hands of study participants from the onset. It enables under represented, marginalized people to record and reflect their personal and community's strengths and concerns through photographs which generate dialogue, and share knowledge about important local issues. Twenty-seven residents used photography and storytelling to record neighbourhood characteristics and their perceived implications on residents' health and wellbeing. The findings from this study indicate there are a multitude of neighbourhood factors that influence the health and wellbeing of St. James Town residents. Both the positive and negative features of St. James Town were examined and several main themes emerged as being perceived to play a role in resident health and well-being. Using this information, policy recommendations have been developed.



Exploring the Link between Neighbourhood and Newcomer Immigrant Health (July 2010)

This qualitative research was conducted by the Wellesley Institute in St. James Town (SJT), an urban multicultural neighbourhood located in the northeast corner of Toronto's downtown core. This study examined both the “place-based” characteristics of SJT and individual-level factors, including newcomer immigrants' perceptions of the neighbourhood, their social relations, and their access to health and social services in the neighbourhood. This study was based on focus groups and individual interviews with three ethno-racial immigrant populations: Tamil, Filipino, and Chinese (Mandarin speaking). It compares their experiences with those of Canadian-born residents in the neighbourhood. The study also interviewed health and social service providers in SJT and the surrounding area. The results indicate that SJT newcomer immigrant residents experience a range of challenges relating to physical, mental, and social health and well-being. Health outcomes and well-being are the result of a complex web of causation where risks are related to individual behaviour, neighbourhood, access to social and health services, and social support. Responses and experiences were similar across the ethnic groups and non-immigrant residents in SJT.



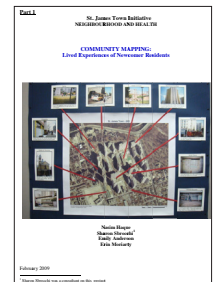


Integration of Concept Mapping and Photovoice: Understanding Immigrant Perceptions of Neighbourhood Influences on Health

Through an innovative approach to community-based research, this makes use of two participatory research techniques: (a) Photovoice, a qualitative method where individuals provide insight into their lived experiences through photography and storytelling; and (b) concept mapping, a mixed-methods participatory technique where a group systematically organizes and represents ideas solicited by its members. This study establishes that these two techniques can be effectively combined to engage participants in multiple ways throughout the process of project development, data collection, data analysis, and organizing complex data (visual cues) into useful information for program planning and policy advocacy. The combination of these two participatory methods resulted in a conceptual framework of factors influencing immigrants' health and wellbeing, while the photographs with captions facilitated interpretation and action at multiple levels. Paper published in *Journal of Family and Community Health*. Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 193–206

Community Mapping: Lived Experiences of Newcomer Residents

Community mapping is a community-based participatory research method that allows residents to directly reflect on, document, prioritize, and share their experiences of health and place in their neighbourhood. Eighteen residents of St. James Town created hand-drawn maps which documented the places in St. James Town that are important to them and impact their health, and each participant also participated in an individual informal interview to discuss the issues identified in their maps. Their knowledge was aggregated onto a map that shows the most important places and associated issues for residents.



Policy Briefs

- Voices of Multicultural Youth: Impact of Urban Neighbourhood on Health and Well-Being**
 This is the first of a series of policy briefs that analyzes youth-related policy implications from the St. James Town Initiative's Voices of Multicultural Youth report and sets out recommendations and options for action.
<http://sjtinitiative.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/photovoice-policy-briefing.pdf>
- St. James Town Research Into Action: Improving Living Conditions for SJT**
 Our living conditions play a crucial role in our livelihoods. St. James Town residents identified several attributes of the neighbourhood that impacted their everyday lives and affected their health and well-being. This policy brief analyzes the implications of research findings from SJT Initiative and sets out recommendations and options for action.
<http://sjtinitiative.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/policy20brief20-20improving20living20conditions.pdf>
- St. James Town Research Into Action: Language Training**
 One of the largest barriers to immigrant health and well-being is language proficiency. It is a vital component of an immigrant's successful integration into the Canadian labour market. This policy brief analyzes the implications of research findings from SJT Initiative and sets out recommendations and options for action.
<http://sjtinitiative.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/policy20brief20-20language20training.pdf>
- St. James Town Research Into Action: Immigrant Employment**
 Canadian immigrants face a number of barriers to employment and are often underemployed or working in precarious work environments. This policy brief analyzes the implications of the research findings from SJT Initiative and sets out recommendations and options for action.
<http://sjtinitiative.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/policy20brief20-20immigrant20employment.pdf>
- St. James Town Research Into Action: Availability and Access to Health and Social Services**
 The St. James Town qualitative study showed that newcomers to St. James Town face a number of barriers relating to the availability, accessibility and cultural acceptability of health and social services. Interviews with service providers in St. James Town highlighted the challenges they faced to meet the needs of a diverse immigrant population, along with funding constraints which affect the availability and kinds of services provided.
<http://sjtinitiative.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/availability-and-access-to-health-and-social-services.pdf>
- St. James Town Research Into Action: Impacts of the Physical Environment on Health and Well-Being**
 The St. James Town qualitative study demonstrates that the physical environment in which people live impact their health and well-being. Participants reported in individual interviews and focus groups a number of issues related to their physical environment that they believe adversely affected their health and well-being.
<http://sjtinitiative.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/impacts-of-the-physical-environment-on-health-and-wellbeing.pdf>

The Wellesley Institute is a Toronto-based non-profit and non-partisan research and policy institute. Our focus is on developing research and community-based policy solutions to the problems of urban health and health disparities.