We are honored to be included in a special edition of
the Journal of the International Association of Official
Statistics (JIAOS) on “Measuring Indigenous Identifi-
cation”. Many authors in this special edition are Indi-
genous. We look forward to sharing our research.

Too often, research about Indigenous people is not
featured in statistical journals, but it should be. Statis-
tics and data tell stories with numbers in a power-
ful way. Indigenous people have many stories to tell
and some of these stories, as shown in this edition,
have been difficult to be told, for statistical and non-
statistical reasons - small sample sizes, data ownership
or misinterpretation of results to name a few. That is
not to say that research has not been performed in In-
digenous communities. It has, but too often, research
been done to us, not by us or for us.

This special edition did not come out of nowhere.
For years, many of us have worked with Indigenous
communities in our own countries and throughout the
world, as members or as allies. For the most part, many
authors in this edition met through the International
Group for Indigenous Health Measurement (IGIHM),
co-chaired by Sam Notzon and myself. Sam was one
of the founders of IGIHM, along with Ian Ring and
Richard Madden, both of Australia. We discovered that
IGIHM is a valuable forum to share concerns and solve
mutual problems facing Indigenous people in the four
founding countries – Australia, Canada, New Zealand
and the United States. We have held monthly confer-
ence calls and in-person workshops and conferences
every other year or so. Much IGIHM research has
been published, including in this journal and in this special
edition.

The theme “Measuring Indigenous Identification”
came from the work of an IGIHM Work Group on
Identification. IGIHM members realized that research
could be vastly improved by examining exactly how
Indigenous people were identified in the four countries
and other countries around the world. When identifi-
cation methods varied (as they often did), results var-
ed and so did the impact on programs, policy and the
everyday lives of Indigenous people.

Some common themes have emerged from IGIHM
and are elaborated upon in this special edition. After
colonization, Indigenous people tended to become a
small part of the larger population in their own coun-
tries. Although we are still here, our stories and con-
cerns are often subsumed in larger national dialogues.
Our communities and traditions remain alive, but not
without endurance and sacrifice encompassing many
generations. Measures of health and socio-economic
status tend to indicate that Indigenous people are worse
off than their countrymen and women. We wish to take
control of our own narrative and tell our own stories
in our own way. This will help address the program,
policy and legislative challenges faced by Indigenous
people in their countries.

This edition contains a paper on the history of the
IGIHM, one containing an overview of Indige-
nous identification, five on specific countries (Aus-
tralia, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand and the United
States), one containing a summation and next steps,
and two papers focusing on services and suicide.

Indigenous people are not limited to the four coun-
tries in IGIHM. Indigenous people are found through-
out the world and number over 300 million, with the
majority in China and India, according to Dr. Ian
Anderson’s landmark study entitled, “Indigenous and
tribal peoples’ health” (The Lancet-Lowitja Institute
Global Collaboration): a population study”, published
in the April 20, 2016 online edition of the Lancet. The
Lancet study is a rich collection of data that includes
comparisons in 23 countries between Indigenous peo-
ples and the general population on a host of health
and socio-demographic indicators. Many of the Lancet
co-authors were Indigenous, which provided another
venue for international collaboration among Indige-
nous researchers. This special edition owes much to
Dr. Anderson’s work.

This edition could not have happened without the as-
stance and inspiration of Dr. Fritz Scheuren, a mem-
er of IGIHM and former editor of the JIAOS. He en-
couraged us to perform research and publish in this
journal. Special thanks go to Dr. Kirsten West, the cur-
rent editor, who approached us with the idea of a spe-
cial edition. Dr. West remains a staunch ally and we
are grateful for her support and guidance. She and her
Guest Editorial

Team: Greta Cherry, Kim Willems and Katherine Condon, have gone above and beyond in bringing this edition to fruition. Thank you.

Finally, we are not done. We, as Indigenous people and our allies, have much to do and will continue our efforts to develop, analyze and present good solid data to tell our stories and improve the lives of Indigenous people everywhere.

We hope you enjoy these papers.

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