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The Influence of Intergenerational Trauma on Epigenetics and Obesity in Indigenous Populations: A Systematic Literature Review
Krista Schafte

(This abstract is a placeholder for a project to be submitted for publication elsewhere.)

Abstract

This review examines the current literature on the interactions between intergenerational trauma, epigenetics, obesity, and Indigeneity. This literature review examines the results of six studies conducted in several cultural settings; the participants include Indigenous communities and students in Canada, cohorts in the UK, geneticists and scientists in Mexico, parents from Middle Eastern backgrounds, and families from Ukrainian backgrounds. The focus and findings of the selected studies varied from cultural to biological focuses, and from discussion regarding trauma, epigenetics, obesity, or Indigeneity, but they support three broad statements. First, they support that obesity has genetic and epigenetic factors. Second, intergenerational trauma is prevalent in Indigenous communities. Finally, intergenerational trauma has cultural and biological influences on obesity. One study investigated intergenerational trauma, epigenetics, obesity, and Indigeneity, while the rest of the selected studies focused on only two or three of the topics. Based on the results of this review, this research calls for additional research in epigenetics, lines of transmission, and obesity. This review also calls for continued studies regarding trauma, motherhood, and the connection between trauma, obesity, and epigenetics in Indigenous communities. Finally, frameworks of healing need continuous development, such as culturally relevant programs, parent workshops, and government initiatives.