MILLER BAY INDIAN HOSPITAL
1946-1971

First Nations and Tuberculosis in Northwest BC
Started as RCAF hospital in 1944 though never used as such
Tuberculosis and Canada’s Indigenous Peoples

• Evidence of TB before European contact

• Effects of colonization promoted spread (overcrowding, starvation)
### Contrasts in Treatment and Prevalence of TB in Canada (BC), 20\textsuperscript{th} century

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-aboriginal</th>
<th>Aboriginal</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Tranquille sanitorium opened in 1906, closed in 1958</td>
<td>• Miller Bay opened in 1946, closed in 1971</td>
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<td>• By 1939, TB death rate falling, “treatment was under control”</td>
<td>• In 1939, death rate 5-10 times higher than for non-First Nations people.</td>
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<td>• Much support and publicity from service clubs, volunteers, Canadian TB Association</td>
<td>• Only funding from Indian Affairs (federal government)</td>
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“Old Cahoose”

• Dr. Galbraith in Bella Coola
Opening of “Indian Hospitals” in BC

Coqualeetza—Sardis (former residential school, destroyed by fire) 1941

Miller Bay—initially for both TB and VD (STI’s) 1946

Nanaimo 1946
Hospital Layout
Treatments

Before TB drugs
• Bedrest
• Lung collapse
• Major chest surgery

After TB drugs appeared
• Combinations of medications
• Rest depending on extent of disease: Strict rest periods observed
• Shorter hospitalization needed
Miller Bay Indian Day School
Schooling at Miller Bay

Bedside teaching
Classroom (later)
Occupational therapy—handicrafts
Music: Guitar, harmonica, choir
Adult education
On the job training
“Irregular Discharges”

• Higher rate at Miller Bay than at other 2

• More women than men

• Younger age group (below 35 years)
• “Coercion” and “police methods” used in early years
Patient experiences in mid-1950s

- Patient and Staff survey 1954—Women’s ward

- Led to staff changes, Patient’s council, newspaper produced by patients

- Dr. Fiddes—change in policy re mothers and newborns
Working at Miller Bay
Accommodation
Early 1960s

Educational and employment opportunities
Recreation for Staff

- Recreation Hall moved from Seal Cove Airforce Base to Miller Bay – later used by patients also

- Bus transportation to Prince Rupert

- Families of staff—children went to school in Prince Rupert
Phasing Out and Closure

• More diversified in 1960s—less TB

• Became extended care facility by late 1960s; school phased out

• Final closing 1971; patients transferred
1970-2015

• Used as fish farm, petting zoo, residence for mill workers
• Fire destroyed buildings which were then demolished
• Paintball site
• Gradually disappearing under the brush
Then and Now
REFERENCES


Books on “Indian” Hospitals


