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"Neighbourhoods and smoking: Developing and validating measurement instruments to better understand social inequalities in smoking"

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**Non-scientific abstract (from application):** While on the whole the population prevalence of smoking is dropping, smoking prevalence and incidence is following an increasingly steep social class gradient, across all age groups, with people of lower educational attainment, in working class occupations and lower income levels experiencing a lower rate of decline in smoking than the other social categories. Based on these disappointing findings, our research proposal asks two questions: 1) Why is it that the lower socio-economic (SES) smokers are not following the secular trend at the same rate as the rest of society; and 2) What are the attributes of neighbourhoods that might help us develop different interventions to reach the 19% of the population who continue to smoke? In this proposal we suggest that part of the answer to both questions may lie in a growing body of research focusing on the role of neighbourhoods in the production of social inequalities in health. Our research group has developed an innovative theoretical framework that explores the relationship between individual’s attributes (or what we call capitals) and neighbourhood domains in the creation, sustenance and reduction of smoking in neighbourhoods. This project therefore has two specific objectives: 1) To operationalise our theoretical framework, thereby permitting for the empirical analysis of the complex relationship between individual and neighbourhoods factors involved in social inequalities in smoking; and 2) To develop and validate a set of instruments that will later form the basis of a survey of social inequalities and smoking in the greater Montreal area. This research will be conducted in three successive phases. Using focus groups and validation exercises, the ultimate goal of this proposal is to develop and validate two sets of instruments that will form the basis of our future survey. Until now it has been unclear as to how neighbourhoods shape the unequal distribution of smoking in geographical areas. This project will help answer this question and will serve to guide both future research as well as tobacco interventions.