

A population health research transfer strategy

Canadian Population Health Initiative (2001)

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REGISTRY OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION METHODS AND TOOLS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

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| RESOURCE: | Method |
| ACTIVITY: | Knowledge Dissemination, Knowledge Exchange, Knowledge Application |
| STAGE: | Planning, Doing |

DESCRIPTION

This method is based on the understanding that interaction between researchers and decision makers is fundamental to knowledge transfer. A key outcome of interaction is developing long-term collaborative relationships between these two groups. The Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI), an initiative of the Canadian Institute for Health Information, aims to promote knowledge transfer and uptake of population health research by decision makers and develop policy options to improve population health. Ongoing collaboration ensures the research process is relevant for decision makers and facilitates the uptake of research findings during decision making.

This resource follows from a 1997 CPHI pilot project designed to bring together researchers and decision makers to bridge the divide between evidence and policy making. CPHI conducted an environmental scan of knowledge transfer strategies from 17 organizations involved in health or social research or policy. Academic, policy think tank and government organizations were represented. Through this process, the developers identified knowledge transfer strategies that are relevant to population health decision

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makers.

The user is guided through these strategies, each presenting considerations related to the following elements of the process:

- 1) the target audience (who is engaged)
- 2) the point in time during the research process (when to engage with the target group(s))
- 3) the method of engagement (how the target audience is engaged)

RELEVANCE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Although not specifically developed for use in public health, the method is transferable to this context. The authors view government departments engaged in health services as potential collaborators in the implementation of this method. Many of these strategies can be used in public health to enhance collaborations with other government agencies, such as Health Canada and regional health boards and authorities. Furthermore, cross-departmental government initiatives can provide a means for effective knowledge transfer of research and policy findings.

EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Evaluation

Information not available

Validity

Not applicable

Reliability

Not applicable

Methodological Rating

Not applicable

IMPLEMENTING THE TOOL

Who is Involved?

Delivery and administration of the method could be completed by one or various public health staff, including researchers, managers or directors.

To make practical use of research findings, and depending on the scope of the project, potential participants may include: policy groups, government departments, academic facilities, international organizations, regional health boards, professional organizations, community organizations, business groups, the public, the media and public health practitioners.

Time

Information not available

Engaging decision makers early in the process is critical. The researchers suggest that relationships with decision makers are maintained throughout all phases of the research process. Building and maintaining these relationships can be time-consuming. Thus, an appropriate amount of time should be scheduled to allow for the transfer of knowledge from one audience to another. The authors also emphasize the importance of timing strategies designed to engage decision makers before, during and after research is complete.

Additional Skills Needed for Implementation

Knowledge of the population/public health context, the research process and aspects related to knowledge translation would be useful for the implementation of this method. The authors suggest using the services of a research transfer specialist.

Steps for Using Tool

This resource guides the reader through a three-step process of knowledge dissemination, exchange and application. Knowledge transfer strategies are categorized according to: 1) target group, referring to who is engaged; 2) timing, pertaining to when the target audience is to be engaged in the research process; and 3) method, or how the target audience needs to be engaged.

Examples of strategies include:

1) Engaging the Target Audience (Who)

- Including diverse stakeholders, where specific partners are targeted depending on the issue
- Fostering linkages across different government departments that influence healthy public policy
- Partnering with community organizations, the business community, media and the general public to indirectly influence the decision-making process
- Using research transfer (knowledge translation) specialists to engage a diverse network of partners and target audiences

2) Timing of Engagement (When)

- Engaging with diverse stakeholders and decision makers early in the research process to inform research priorities
- Conducting environmental scans to identify research gaps (and set research priorities)

- Evaluating the impact of research on decision making following the engagement process

3) Method of Engagement (How)

- Developing a working group with key stakeholders to create research questions, inform the research process and assist with dissemination
- Developing a knowledge transfer strategy for each project
- Developing multiple formats to maximize uptake of research findings (e.g., pamphlets and websites for the public and community groups)
- Promoting collaboration through fostering "common space" to encourage information sharing and facilitate interactions among stakeholders
- Promoting capacity building within partner organizations to strengthen the use of research

The developers offer several examples to support and build on these and other recommendations.

Conditions for Use

Not specified

TOOL DEVELOPMENT

Developer(s)

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Method of Development

The goal of the Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI) was to ensure that the results of research and policy were attended to by those who make practical use of them in policy and decision making. The CPHI completed an environmental scan of effective strategies for knowledge transfer and policy engagement with seventeen organizations involved in health, social research and policy. Through this process, the developers identified successful models of research-policy exchange. A synthesis of the results informed this method for planning and implementing a knowledge application and dissemination strategy.

Release Date

2001

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RESOURCES

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Title of Primary Resource | An Environmental Scan of Research Transfer Strategies |
| File Attachment | None |
| Web-link | https://secure.cihi.ca/estore/productSeries.htm?pc=PCC31 |
| Reference | Canadian Population Health Initiative (2001). <i>An environmental scan of research transfer strategies.</i> |
| Type of Material | Environmental scan |
| Format | On-line Access |
| Cost to Access | |
| Language(s) | French |
| Conditions for Use | Copyright © 2001 Canadian Institute of Health Information |

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| Title of Supplementary Resource | How can research organizations more effectively transfer research knowledge to decision makers? |
| File Attachment | None |

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|---------------------------|---|
| Web-link | |
| Reference | Lavis, J. N., Robertson, D., Woodside, J. M., McLeod, C. B., Abelson, J., & The Knowledge Transfer Study Group. (2003). How can research organizations more effectively transfer research knowledge to decision makers? <i>The Millbank Quarterly</i> , 81(2), 221-248. |
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