

Knowledge broker role in public health organizations

A summary of

Dobbins, M., Robeson, P., Ciliska, D., Hanna, S., Cameron, R., O'Mara, L. et al. (2009). A description of a knowledge broker role implemented as part of a randomized controlled trial evaluating three knowledge translation strategies. *Implementation Science*, 4(23). doi:10.1186/1748-5908-4-23



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Categories:

Method, Implement, Knowledge brokering, Knowledge exchange, Organizational change

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Method

Relevance For Public Health

This method could be used to inform the development and implementation of a knowledge broker intervention in public health settings, with key lessons learned and activities and functions delineated for a knowledge broker.

Description

Knowledge brokering requires a diverse set of skills, activities, knowledge and competencies to support individuals and organizations in using research evidence. This method describes the [implementation of a knowledge brokering intervention in public health](#) units, as part of a [research study to evaluate the impact of knowledge translation and exchange strategies](#) on evidence-informed decision making. Through this knowledge brokering intervention, key activities and lessons learned emerge to build capacity in using research evidence in public health programs and policies.

[Dobbin's framework](#) guided the development of knowledge translation and exchange strategies used in this intervention (knowledge broker, tailored and targeted messaging, registry of research evidence). Characteristics of the innovation, organization, environment and individual interact with stages of innovation adoption. These inter-relationships influence dissemination and adoption of practice and policy change.

Key lessons learned from the knowledge brokering intervention include:

- Conduct an in-depth assessment of individual participants and organizations as early as possible to build relationships
- Create a mechanism (i.e. network) to promote interaction and knowledge sharing among participants and the knowledge broker
- Take time to build relationships and capacity for evidence-informed decision making
- Supplement virtual interactions with the knowledge broker with face-to-face interaction
- Be aware of organizational and environmental factors that will influence the impact and success of the intervention (i.e. political and organizational changes, issues of confidentiality, etc.)

Implementing the Tool

Who is Involved?

The knowledge broker is primarily responsible for assuming the roles and functions discussed. Recipients of this role would be participants in a knowledge translation and exchange activity facilitated by a knowledge broker.

Steps for Using Tool

Knowledge brokering activities are classified into the following seven categories:

- Conduct initial and ongoing needs assessment (individual and organizational) — The knowledge broker used [Dobbins' framework](#) and the [Canadian Health Services Research Foundation \(CHSRF\) Self](#)

These summaries are written by the NCCMT to condense and to provide an overview of the resources listed in the [Registry of Methods and Tools](#) and to give suggestions for their use in a public health context. For more information on individual methods and tools included in the review, please consult the authors/developers of the original resources.

[Assessment Tool](#) to assess strengths, knowledge and capacity for evidence-informed decision making at individual, organizational and environmental levels

- Scan the horizon — The knowledge broker must be knowledgeable of up-to-date evidence and have capacity to "scan the horizon" for research relevant to current organizations and activities
- Perform knowledge management
- Facilitate implementation of knowledge translation and exchange strategies (such as developing tailored, targeted messages, training workshops, etc.)
- Identify, develop and maintain key network partners
- Build individual capacity in evidence-informed decision making
- Facilitate and support organizational change

Evaluation and Measurement Characteristics

Evaluation



Has been evaluated.

Through a randomized controlled trial, [Dobbins et al. \(2009\)](#) found that the knowledge broker intervention overall did not demonstrate a positive effect on the use of research evidence in public health organizations, although knowledge brokering was effective in organizations with a low organizational research culture. It is possible that the duration and intensity of the knowledge broker intervention (dose of the intervention) was insufficient to bring about change.

Validity

Not applicable

Reliability

Not applicable

Methodological Rating



Not applicable

Tool Development

Developers

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Method of Development

A stratified randomized controlled trial was conducted examining the impact of knowledge translation and exchange strategies (knowledge broker, targeted and tailored messaging, registry of research evidence) on the use of research evidence in public health organizations. The key activities of the knowledge broker and lessons learned were drawn from a daily journal kept by the knowledge broker of all interactions with staff and reflections. These were reviewed and coded by the knowledge broker and the first author to identify major themes and knowledge broker roles and functions.

Release Date

2009

Contact Person

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Resources

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|----------------------------------|---|
| Title of Primary Resource | A description of a knowledge broker role implemented as part of a randomized controlled trial evaluating three knowledge translation strategies |
| File Attachment | None |
| Web-link | http://www.implementationscience.com/content/4/1/23 |
| Reference | Dobbins, M., Robeson, P., Ciliska, D., Hanna, S., Cameron, R., O'Mara, L. et al. (2009). A description of a knowledge broker role implemented as part of a randomized controlled trial evaluating three knowledge translation strategies. <i>Implementation Science</i> , 4(23). doi:10.1186/1748-5908-4-23 |
| Type of Material | Journal article |
| Format | Periodical |
| Cost to Access | None. |
| Language | English |
| Conditions for Use | Copyright © 2009 Dobbins et al; licensee BioMed Central Ltd. |

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| Title of Supplementary Resource | A randomized controlled trial evaluating the impact of knowledge transfer and exchange strategies |
| File Attachment | None |
| Web-link | http://www.implementationscience.com/content/4/1/61 |
| Reference | Dobbins, M., Hanna, S., Ciliska, D., Thomas, H., Manske, S., Cameron, R. et al. (2009). A randomized controlled trial evaluating the impact of knowledge transfer and exchange strategies. <i>Implementation Science</i> , 4(61). doi:10.1186/1748-5908-4-61 |
| Type of Material | Journal article |
| Format | Periodical |
| Cost to Access | None. |
| Language | English |
| Conditions for Use | Copyright © 2009 Dobbins et al; licensee BioMed Central Ltd. |

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| Title of Supplementary Resource | A framework for the dissemination and utilization of research evidence for health care policy and practice. |
| File Attachment | None |
| Web-link | http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12439759 |
| Reference | Dobbins M., Ciliska D., Cockerill R., Barnsley, J. & DiCenso, A. (2002). A framework for the dissemination and utilization of research evidence for health care policy and practice. <i>Online Journal of Knowledge Synthesis for Nursing</i> , 9(7). Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12439759 |
| Type of Material | Journal article |
| Format | Periodical |
| Cost to Access | Journal article purchase |
| Language | English |
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