



STRENGTHENING INTERACTIONS BETWEEN RESEARCHERS & PRACTITIONERS TO DESIGN & EVALUATE EVIDENCE-INFORMED INJURY PREVENTION

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WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION?

*'Exchange, synthesis and ethically-sound application of research findings within a complex set of interactions among researchers and knowledge users. In other words, knowledge translation can be seen as an acceleration of the knowledge cycle; acceleration of the natural transformation of knowledge into use.'*¹

"We have worked with several agencies over a number of years, developing research-practice partnerships. This has required mutual organisational understanding, high levels of trust and compromise and key individuals to act as 'boundary spanners'. The developing partnerships have provided: the ability to strengthen the evidence to action chain; more authentic evaluation support; and additional, practice-relevant research opportunities."
Knowledge Broker/Researcher

BACKGROUND

Community-based organisations (CBOs) that conduct health promotion interventions may not have the time, research expertise or capacity to evaluate programs and disseminate findings. This limits development, demonstration and dissemination of evidence-informed practice and effectiveness.

Knowledge synthesis, translation and exchange are central to evidence-informed practice. They may include systematic reviews, robust evaluation, capacity building and skill development.² Recently there has been a drive towards knowledge translation, which facilitates knowledge sharing between researchers, practitioners and policy-makers. A knowledge broker (KB) may be used to initiate and promote interaction between researchers and end-users.³

Our aim is to develop capacity for evidence-informed decision making (EIDM), and build momentum for knowledge translation with health promotion practitioners. We describe our experiences to broker information exchange between two non-government CBOs and researchers in Western Australia (WA).

DISCUSSION

Contemporary health promotion practice has shifted and many organisations now work in partnership with researchers. However, there is still limited published literature exploring experience of practitioners in the uptake of evidence. Lack of personal contact, timeliness, resources, relevance and quality of research have been cited as barriers.³ Our research-practice partnerships have:

- reinforced the importance of personal relationships and the significant time investment needed to establish trust
- facilitated relationship development, co-located staff and provided ongoing support
- tailored approaches for the local context
- provided opportunities to write together and disseminate findings across a variety of platforms
- established new opportunities which now extend nationally and internationally

VIGNETTE 1

In 2012 a WA injury prevention CBO contacted the research group to develop and implement its evaluation plan. Further work was undertaken on the evaluation plan in 2013. In 2014, a 3-year partnership was negotiated by a knowledge broker (KB) who was a member of the research group. The KB has played a critical role linking researchers with practitioners to establish and promote information exchange, facilitate access to evidence, and extend opportunities for mutually beneficial collaboration. Evaluation tools have been co-developed and implemented, staff have been co-located, and barriers to knowledge use have been assessed. The emerging partnership builds capacity to inform future decisions and actions of the CBO and research group.

"My co-location enables two way knowledge translation. It supports us to deliver evidence informed activities and builds understanding about the practicalities of implementation."
Practitioner

"One of the greatest challenges facing modern organisations is not too little information but too much, potentially of dubious quality. By working in partnership, community organisations and researchers can form a mutually beneficial partnership where what is delivered is evidenced based and the research which is undertaken has immediate applicability."
Researcher

"Co-generation of knowledge and co-learning are advantages of working with academics, policy makers and practitioners. Partnering allows access to a valuable pool of knowledge, skills and networks, which strengthen program design and delivery."
Practitioner

VIGNETTE 2

In 2012 a working relationship was established between the research group and another WA injury prevention CBO. This work consisted of a review of the literature and informing evaluation methods. The KB's ongoing facilitation has guided the relationship into a 3-year partnership. The KB has been central to the development of collaborative trusting relationships. To date extensive formative evaluation has been conducted, research instruments have been designed, tested and used in the field and findings have been published through a variety of dissemination modes. Research students have been recruited, providing additional support to explore emerging research opportunities.

KEY MESSAGE

Using the 'researcher-practitioner exchange' to add credibility and relevance in determining 'what works for whom and why' is an effective way to improve injury prevention interventions.

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