

Researcher – Decision-maker Resource Guide

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Compiled by T. Stewart, L. Harmata, and L. Bzdel
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For further information:

Health Organization Studies
3-23 Business Building
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2R6
Canada

Phone 780 492 2525
Fax 780 492 5709
Email hos@ualberta.ca
Web www.bus.ualberta.ca/hos

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Researcher – Decision-maker Resource Guide

Introduction

In the field of health services, there is increasing pressure on decision-makers and researchers to work together in meaningful ways. Everyone benefits from initiatives leading to improved patient outcomes and improved wellness, and projects where decision-makers and researchers collaborate are more likely to have these positive results. Furthermore, there are economic and political forces to consider. Decision-makers are challenged to show that they engage in due diligence and evidence gathering in conducting the operations of their organizations. They see the need for using the best evidence in reaching and executing decisions. Researchers are being called upon to show the relevance of their work to practitioners, often as a condition of receiving funding. All this scrutiny is an incentive for researchers and decision-makers to capitalize on their different perspectives and work collaboratively. For each group, there are tangible benefits in meeting their own goals by participating jointly in research ventures.

Purpose

Productive partnerships facilitate the successful application of useful research findings in practice. While there is always need for new clinical discoveries, many of the benefits from existing discoveries are lost if they are not effectively implemented in well run organizations. As such, this guide is intended to nurture partnerships that focus on organizational improvements, particularly those improvements designed to better deliver health services.

The goal of this guide is to assist your efforts in creating and maintaining these types of researcher - decision-maker collaborations. Using the criteria outlined in the Appendix, and the experience of the authors to further cull down the list, the guide cuts through the large body of literature on this topic and presents resources that are truly useful to you. The guide will save you time and effort in searching for material to help with your partnership, and let you focus on your research goals.

“Decision-maker” defined. In general, decision-makers are considered to be in some supervisory or management capacity in their organizations. However, for the purposes of this resource guide, “decision-makers” also include policymakers. Occasionally articles were included even if “practitioners” were the collaborators, where the article seemed to be useful in understanding collaborations.

Who Is This Guide For?

This guide is a tool for those who want to better understand researcher - decision-maker collaborations in the health services sector, particularly those collaborations developing organizational knowledge. It is particularly appropriate for researchers, administrators, policy makers, and funders. This guide can help you if you have questions such as:


- What are potential benefits?
- What is the nature of a productive researcher - decision-maker partnership?
- What are the challenges facing these collaborations?
- How are such partnerships best established?

Using the Guide

This guide is a pointer to resources that can help you. Each entry provides:

- the name of the resource,
- what type of resource it is (document, collection or a tool),
- information to help you find the resource,
- a description of the resources.


For convenience and accessibility, a citation to the paper version and electronic version is provided when available. The table of contents provides a quick glance at how the resources are grouped. For those using the electronic version, you may also find using your browser's **Find** function to be helpful in locating items using a keyword. (**Find** is usually triggered through a menu or by using Ctrl-F on your keyboard.)

You will see this symbol, , in most sections. This symbol indicates resources the authors thought were of particularly high quality and were very relevant to the section.


Resources

I. Primer

This primer is the “best of the best.” If you are new to the concept of researcher – decision-maker partnerships and collaboration, then reading the resources found in this section will provide you with the knowledge to go forward.

 Gaskill, D., Morrison, P., Sanders, F., Forster, E., Edwards, H., Fleming, R., & McClure, S. 2003. University and industry partnerships: Lessons from collaborative research. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 9: 347-355. Availability: Subscription required. [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#)
An Australian perspective is presented.
Type: Document

 Golden-Biddle, K., Reay, T., Petz, S., Witt, C., Casebeer, A., Pablo, A., & Hinings, C.R. 2003. Toward a communicative perspective of collaborating in research: The case of the researcher – decision-maker partnership. *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, 8(4, Supplement 2): S2:20-S2:25. Availability: Subscription required. This paper describes a case of a partnership between researchers from the School of Business at the University of Alberta and decision-makers from the East Central Health Authority continuing over two and a half years. The partnership was created as part of a program of research over the years 2000 to 2003, funded by the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) and the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (AHFMR), designed to investigate the implementation of change in health care organizations. This paper suggests that researcher – decision-maker partnerships are best understood from a bi-directional information-sharing viewpoint, “a communicative perspective.” The effectiveness of partnerships is enhanced when researchers are able to position their work in the context of an organization to which it can be applied, and when decision-makers perceive how the research findings can assist them in accomplishing their objectives.
Type: Document

 Kouri, D. 1999. Bridging the gaps: Improving interaction between researchers and decision-makers – An example from the health care sector. Occasional paper no. 3. Saskatoon: HEALNet Regionalization Research Centre.
<http://www.regionalization.org/OP3.pdf>. Accessed 2 Aug. 2004. (23 pages, PDF)
“HEALNet’s objective is to optimize the use of research information in health care decision-making. Literature on research uptake informs us that one way to do this is to achieve closer interaction between decision-makers and researchers (Webber, 1991-92). Decision-makers do not generally seek research-based information to support every decision they make. However, the probability of use is increased if the information presented is coherent and clearly relevant to issues at hand. And the probability of research being relevant in both content and form is higher when decision-makers and researchers understand a question in the same way.” (From Executive Summary.) Using the context of the HEALNet Regional Health Planning Project and two examples from

work in the field that relied on the involvement of decision-makers, the paper makes recommendations for successful partnerships.

Type: Document



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Synthesis Project

http://www.rwjf.org/publications/synthesis/about_the_project

The site is aimed largely at researchers who are endeavouring to produce useful documents for decision makers and policy creators. This Foundation has created a tool for producing such documents from their own research; a number of examples are provided by following the Reports & Briefs links.

Type: Collection



Tamlyn, K., Creelman, H., & Fisher, G. 2002. A model for successful research partnerships: A New Brunswick experience. *Canadian Oncology Nursing Journal*, 12(3): 146-151. Availability: Subscription required. [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#)

This article presents a **three-way** partnership: academic, public and private (consultant) partnership.

Type: Document

II. Researcher Resources

This section of the Guide contains items of interest to researchers and academia. You will find articles discussing the decision-maker perspective and how to formulate research questions taking that perspective into account. Case studies and communications are addressed.



Amabile, T.M., Patterson, C., Mueller, J., Wojcik, T., Odomirok, P.W., Marsh, M., & Kramer, S.J. 2001. Academic-practitioner collaboration in management research: A case of cross-profession collaboration. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44: 418-431. Availability: Subscription required.

This article is part of a special issue reporting on a research forum devoted to knowledge transfer between academics and practitioners. It focuses on three possible determinants of researcher-practitioner collaboration success: collaborative team characteristics, collaborative environmental characteristics, and collaboration processes. The study looks at how these determinants can influence research progress, research team functioning and benefits to individual team members.

Type: Document



Journal of Health Services Research & Policy Special Journal Supplement.

The *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy* published a special supplement in October of 2003 entitled "Researcher: Decision-maker Partnerships" (Volume 8, Number 4, Supplement 2). A number of the articles in this issue may be of interest to researchers. Availability: Subscription required. Table of Contents available at this link:

<http://www.catchword.co.uk/rsm/13558196/v8n4x2/contp1-1.htm>.

The opening editorial: "Convergent evolution: The academic and policy roots of collaborative research" by J.L. Denis & J. Lomas (pp.S2:1-S2:5) discusses the content of the supplement in general and the articles contained therein in particular.

Type: Collection



Rynes, S.L., Bartunek, J.M., & Daft, R.L. 2001. Across the great divide: Knowledge creation and transfer between practitioners and academics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44: 340-356. Availability: Subscription required.
This article is part of a special issue reporting on a research forum devoted to knowledge transfer between academics and practitioners.
Type: Document

Frenk, J. 1992. Balancing relevance and excellence: Organizational responses to link research with decision-making. *Social Science & Medicine*, 35: 1397-1404. Availability: Subscription required. [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#)
Although this article is older, it does address some of the issues of partnerships. It might be especially useful to those wishing to set up a collaborative research centre.
Type: Document

Goldberg, S. 2004. You say 'to-may-to(e)' and I say 'to-mah-to(e)': Bridging the communications gap between researchers and policy-makers. CPHI report on moving from research to policy: Improving the health of Canada's youth. http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/dispPage.jsp?cw_page=GR_1169_E. Accessed February 1, 2005.
"This is a report from a CPHI [Canadian Population Health Initiative] workshop held in Toronto last February that examined the policy environment and methods of translating research results for users in policy settings. The report is intended to provide support to researchers who are developing policy implications, disseminating their research and communicating and relating the findings to decision-makers, NGOs and the public. This report and the workshop were developed to help researchers improve their understanding both of the policy development process and of effective knowledge exchange methods in the context of youth health issues." (From CIHI)
Type: Document (Forum)

Larson, E.L. 2003. Minimizing disincentives for collaborative research. *Nursing Outlook*, 51: 267-271. Availability: Subscription required. [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#)
This article is well organized and readable and provides a thoughtful response to some of the challenges the academic environment provides for collaborative research.
Type: Document

Lavis, J.N., & Keenan, S.P. 2001. Bringing health services research to (and from) critical care. *Journal of Critical Care*, 16(4): 127-132. Availability: Subscription required. [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#)
This article is useful to researchers for understanding the perspective of decision-makers, and could help researchers frame research questions that would be appropriate in collaborative settings.
Type: Document

Mitton, C., & Patten, S. 2004. Evidence-based priority-setting: What do the decision-makers think? *Journal of Health Services Research and Policy*, 9(3): 146-152. Availability: Subscription required. [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#)
The research conducted in this article involved in-depth interviews with senior decision-makers in an Alberta health authority before and after they implemented a macro-level priority-setting framework. The study found that the barriers to using evidence in setting priorities were crisis-orientated management, lack of time and lack of skills. After the implementation, the decision-makers found they desired further information on the capacity to benefit from their new tool, but they wanted the information from multiple

sources, not just one metric.

Type: Document

Mohrman, S.A., Gibson, C.B., & Mohrman, A.M. Jr. 2001. Doing research that is useful to practice: A model and empirical exploration. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(2): 357-375. Availability: Subscription required.

The authors develop a theoretical model for conducting research that is useful to practitioners. They test out their model with a research project involving ten companies. They found that the practitioners perceived the research to be useful to the extent "self design is informed by its results." They also found perceived usefulness was correlated to the establishment of forums where researchers and practitioners could share their perspectives and "join their thought worlds."

Type: Document

Morse, S.W. 2003. Bending the ivory tower: Communities, health departments and academia. *Community-Based Public Health: Policy & Practice*, 7: 1-6.

<http://www.partnershipph.org/col4/policy/policy7.pdf>. Accessed 2 Aug. 2004. (6 pages, PDF). [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#)

This brief, prepared by the Partnership for the Public's Health, examines how some complex health and social problems can be addressed by partnerships between health departments, researchers, and communities. Items presented are principles of partnerships, challenges and benefits of partnerships, and the needed infrastructure to support partnerships.

Type: Document

Ross, S. 2002. Partnership experiences: Involving decision-makers in the research process. Paper presented at the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation annual conference, Vancouver.

http://www.researchtopolicy.ca/presentations/slides_7_partnerships22february2002.pdf. Accessed May 3, 2005. (26 pages, PDF)

This slide presentation relays the findings of a study of several CHSRF-funded research programs involving decision-maker partners. The presentation puts forward a number of benefits and drawbacks in having decision-maker partners, and gives the researcher a better idea of what to expect in these types of joint endeavours. Another good abstract of this same research is found at: Ross S.E., Lavis J.N., Woodside J.M., Rodriguez C., Denis J-L. 2002. Partnership experiences: Involving decision-makers in the research process. Report submitted to the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation, August 2002. Abstract accessed at

<http://www.researchtopolicy.ca/documents/documentchoice.asp?doctype=1&pubID=48> on May 3, 2005.

Type: Document

III. Decision-Maker Resources

Of particular interest to decision-makers, the resources in this section largely focus on how to be a good research partner. Many of these resources are produced by funders with the aim of practically preparing decision-makers to engage in more research endeavours.



Hanson, T. 2004. A guide for governing research activities within ECH. <http://www.ech.ab.ca/publications/SearchGuide.pdf>. Accessed: 01 Apr 2005. (20 pages,

PDF)

This guide, prepared for the East Central Health region in Alberta, provides very practical steps to direct this region's researchers (internal and external) in their investigative activities. The guide includes flowcharts and easy to follow tables on the region's requirements in research applications.

Canadian Health Services Research Foundation. 2004. How to be a good research partner: A guide for health-system managers and policymakers. http://www.chsrf.ca/other_documents/pdf/partner_e.pdf. Accessed: 7 July 2004. (7 pages, PDF)

This guide was designed to assist decision-makers to better understand their potential role as a research partner in collaborative health services research projects funded by CHSRF. It was produced to foster the production of high-quality, relevant research. The guide contains information on the following topics (listed in the introduction): "What is a decision-maker partner? What is collaborative research? What do I need to know about being a decision-maker partner? How do I become a decision-maker partner in collaborative research? Sharing the results: how do I get the word out? What other resources are available to decision-maker partners?"

Type: Document

Canadian Health Services Research Foundation. 2001. If research is the answer, what is the question? Key steps to turn decision-maker issues into research questions. Conference Report. http://www.chsrf.ca/knowledge_transfer/pdf/research_e.pdf. Accessed 7 July 2004. (10 pages, PDF)

This document summarizes the ideas and advice of participants in the third annual Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) workshop in 2001. Participants drew on their own experiences to discuss the following question: How can a decision-maker figure out if their issue is researchable, and if so, what the research question might be? After acknowledging that high quality relationships between researchers and decision-makers are critical to the production of effectual research questions, participants highlighted eight important strategies for decision-makers to use in maximizing the effectiveness of their relationships with researchers. This article provides an efficient summary of these strategies.

Type: Document (forum)

Seltzer, J., Helfenbein, S., & Paxman, J. 2001. Turning research into action: The decision-linked research approach. *The Manager*. Management Sciences for Health. <http://erc.msh.org/mainpage.cfm?file=2.1.1.htm&module=health&language=English>. Accessed 24 June 2004. (HTML)

From introduction: "This issue of *The Manager* presents a process known as 'decision-linked research,' the goal of which is to establish effective partnerships between researchers and decision-makers so that the research findings can be transformed into programmatic actions. The issue focuses on how to formulate these partnerships, how to forge common interests between researchers and the users of research results, how to make research understandable to those who will be affected by the results, and finally, how to transform research results into actions aimed at improving policies, strategies, and programs." (Editors) The Management Sciences for Health organization has a world-wide public health focus, with a particular interest in reproductive health and family planning issues. Some of the recommendations and models in this document spring from this context, and may be more or less applicable to specific situations. However, this model of "decision-linked research" may be adaptable to other contexts/situations.

Type: Collection

IV. Supplementary

This area of the guide contains background material that will broaden your knowledge of engaging in collaborative research.

a. Secrets to Successful Partnerships

The resources found below augment the core resources already discussed in the **Primer** found at the beginning of the Guide. Websites containing various models and tools to assist your collaborative efforts are included in this section.



Canadian Health Services Research Foundation. 2002. Productive partnerships: Report on the 2002 CHSRF annual invitational workshop. Conference Report. http://www.chsrf.ca/knowledge_transfer/pdf/2002_workshop_report_e.pdf. Accessed 7 July 2004. (10 pages, PDF)
Workshop participants, including 150 CHSRF funded researchers and decision-makers, were asked to consider what constituted “success” in a researcher/decision-maker partnership. Building on the consideration of this question, workshop participants outlined the most important goals of research and then identified the characteristics of partnerships that would be able to achieve those goals. A summary of responses is given in this document. Goals identified were as follows: accessible, practical research; application of research; sustained relationships. Characteristics of successful partnerships were identified as follows: cultural sensitivity; trust; commitment; clear roles and expectations; partner with the organization, not just the individual; organizational support.
Type: Document (forum)

Center for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health
<http://www.cacsh.org/>

The goal of this centre is to assist collaborative partnerships. It does this by assisting partnerships, funders and decision makers. They have created a *Partnership Self-Assessment Tool* which is freely available on the website. In addition to tools, the Center conducts research of its own, policy analyses and joint learning opportunities; their website contains publications and models.
Type: Collection

Centre for Knowledge Transfer Website
<http://www.ckt-ctc.ca>

The Centre for Knowledge Transfer provides training to scholars, health sector researchers and students to do knowledge transfer. The Centre also endeavours to increase the knowledge transfer skills of decision-makers. The website provides direction to more knowledge transfer resources, as well outlining the Centre’s annual Spring Institute and other courses they make available to interested parties.
Type: Collection

KEYS – Knowledge Exchange Yields Success
<http://www.fcrrs.ca/keys/>

This CHSRF website collects together a number of articles and websites all focused on promoting the successful exchange and implementation of research in practicing health

care settings. The articles oriented towards researchers tend to cover the idea of collaboration better than the articles oriented to decision-makers, which focus more on finding research to use in making decisions.

Type: Collection

LeGris, J., Weir, R., Browne, G., Gafni, A., Stewart, L., & Easton, S. 2000. Developing a model of collaborative research: The complexities and challenges of implementation. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 37: 65-69. Availability: Subscription required. [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#)

A model of collaborative research is presented based on the complex interaction of change processes, organizational processes, research processes and collaborative processes. A 2.5 year joint research project between a southern Ontario hospital and university school of nursing is then depicted through the model. The article concludes with recommendations for collaborative research in the future.

Type: Document

Lein, C., Collins, C., Lyles, J.S., Hillman, D., & Smith, R.C. 2003. Building research relationships with managed care organizations: Issues and strategies. *Families, Systems & Health*, 21: 205-214. Availability: Subscription required.

This article discusses the challenges one faces in getting access to managed care organizations in the United States in order to conduct clinical research, and how collaborative relationships can be an effective tool in reaching this goal. A three step process is presented: “1) assessment of organizational structure, history, and culture; 2) finding common ground; and 3) project implementation.” (From introduction)

Type: Document

Western Regional Training Centre for Health Services Research (WRTC-HSR)
2004 Summer Institute

<http://www.wrtc-hsr.ca/SummerInstitute.html>

In June 2004, the WRTC-HSR conducted its Summer Institute on the topic of *Negotiating the Shoals of Applied Research in Population and Public Health and Health Services and Policy Research*. The site is very well organized, and while the presentation slides are not as complete or “meaty” as papers, they do provide gatherings of key ideas regarding researcher – decision-maker partnerships. The Plenary session presentations provide excellent overviews of the topics, while the panel presentations often provide corresponding case summaries. The daily topics were: **Beginning with the End in Mind: Creating a Research Partnership; Getting to it: Implementation of the Research Plan; Defining Success: Effective Evaluation & Communication of Applied Research; Keeping it Off the Shelf: Strategies and Best Practices.**

The WRTC-HSR also conducts other activities regarding knowledge transfer; these can be explored at <http://www.wrtc-hsr.ca/>.

Type: Collection (forum)

b. Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

In the United States, the concept of Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) has gained momentum.

Definition: “Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a collaborative process of research involving researchers and community representatives; it engages community members, employs local knowledge in the understanding of health problems and the design of interventions, and invests community members in the processes and products of research. In addition, community members are

invested in the dissemination and use of research findings and ultimately in the reduction of health disparities." (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). 2001. *Community-Based Participatory Research: Conference Summary*. Conference on Community-Based Participatory Research, November 27-28, 2001, Rockville, MD. <http://www.ahrq.gov/about/cpcr/cbpr/cbpr1.htm>) Accessed 2 Aug. 2004.

CBPR grew out of the traditions of action research and participatory action research. While it has been used in several fields, it has become a particular focus of the public health field, with an underlying objective of helping underserved or economically disadvantaged population groups. While the mandate of CBPR is often somewhat broader, in that many such projects include more varieties of stake-holders, the principles guiding CBPR correspond to those of researcher – decision-maker partnerships.



Viswanathan, M., Ammerman, A., Eng, E., Gartlehner, G., Lohr, K.N., Griffith, D., Rhodes, S., Samuel-Hodge, C., Maty, S., Lux, L., Webb, L., Sutton, S.F., Swinson, T., Jackman, A., & Whitener, L. 2004. *Community-Based Participatory Research: Assessing the evidence*. Evidence Report/Technology Assessment No. 99 (Prepared by RTI—University of North Carolina Evidence-based Practice Center under Contract No. 290-02-0016). AHRQ Publication 04-E022- 2. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. <http://www.ahrq.gov/downloads/pub/evidence/pdf/cbpr/cbpr.pdf>. Accessed February 01, 2005. (296 pages, PDF)

This extensive systematic review consolidates literature on health-related community-based participatory research. The report states that the key questions that are addressed are: "1) What defines CBPR?; 2) How has CBPR been implemented to date with regard to the quality of research methodology and community involvement?; 3) What is the evidence that CBPR efforts have resulted in the intended outcomes?; and 4) What criteria and processes should be used for review of CBPR in grant proposals?"

Type: Document

Adams, A., Miller-Korth, N., & Brown, D. 2004. Learning to work together: Developing academic and community research partnerships. *WMJ*, 103(2): 15-19. <http://www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org/uploads/wmj/Adams.pdf>. Accessed 2 Aug. 2004. (6 pages, PDF) [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#)

Two CBPR projects in Wisconsin are examined, and characteristics of successful partnerships based on these experiences are presented. The article emphasizes that, in order for the partnership to be lasting and successful, academics must be aware of how their perspective differs as well as converges with the perspective of their community partner.

Type: Document

Askew, I.A., Matthews, Z., & Partridge, R. 2002. Going beyond research. Key issues paper. *Moving beyond Research to Influence Policy Workshop*. University of Southampton, 23-24 January 2001.

This is a UK paper written to summarize a two-day international meeting (Jan 2001) on reproductive and sexual health. It focuses to some extent on international research, such as UK or US-based research for other countries in Africa or Asia. While the context is specific, there are significant points throughout that could be generalizable to many health settings regarding the researcher - decision-maker partnership. An interesting concept presented is the role of "mediators" in research communication, which may or may not operate in certain circumstances in the Canadian context.

Type: Document (Forum)

Baker, E.A., Homan, S., Schonhoff, Sr. R., & Kreuter, M. 1999. Principles of practice for academic/practice/community research partnerships. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 16(3S): 86-93. Availability: Subscription required. [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#)

The focus of this article is on principle of practice that can assist researchers in developing, implementing and evaluating their collaborative partnerships. "The principles presented are: (1) identify the best processes/model to be used based on the nature of the issue and the intended outcome; (2) acknowledge the difference between community input and active community involvement; (3) develop relationships based on mutual trust and respect; (4) acknowledge and honor different partner's 'agendas'; (5) consider multi-disciplinary approaches; (6) use evaluation strategies that are consistent with the overall approach taken in the academic/practice/community partnership; and (7) be aware of partnership maturation and associated transition periods." (From introduction.) The principles are examined in the case of a family violence prevention program.

Type: Document

Community-Based Participatory Research E-Mail Discussion Group

<https://mailman1.u.washington.edu/mailman/listinfo/cbpr>

This e-mail list (listserv) was created from a partnership between Seattle-based Community-Campus Partnerships for Health and the Wellesley Central Health Corporation (<http://www.wellesleycentral.com/>) in Toronto. The list is oriented to people from community organizations, colleges and universities, public and private funding agencies, decision makers and policy makers who wish to share information and discuss issues. The address above takes you to a page explaining how to subscribe to this list.

Type: Tool (e-mail list)

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Website

<http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/commbas.html>

Of particular interest on this site may be the links to "Reports and Presentations" and "Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles".

Type: Collection

Lantz, P.M., Viruell-Fuentes, Israel, B.A., Softley, D., & Guzman, R. 2001. Can communities and academia work together on public health research? Evaluation results from a community-based participatory research partnership in Detroit. *Journal of Urban Health*, 78: 495-507. Availability: Subscription required. [\[Link to Journal of Urban Health abstract\]](#)

A four year old, extensive multi-partner research partnership in Detroit is examined. The partners included academics, the Center for Disease Control, the city health department, a health care system and several community organizations. The article presents a number of the challenges the partnership has faced, and presents factors for its success, including "(1) developing a sound infrastructure and set of processes for making decisions and working together, (2) building trust among partners, (3) garnering committed and active leadership from community partners, and (4) receiving support from CDC." (From introduction)

Type: Document

Lewis, Y., & McGranaghan, R. 2004. Establishing community-based participatory research partnerships: Facilitating factors, challenges and recommendations. Presentation at Society of Public Health Education (SOPHE) Mid-Year Conference. Orlando, FL: May 2004. http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/SOPHE%205-4.pdf. Accessed May 3, 2005. (53 pages, PDF)

This is a PDF version of a slide presentation. It focuses on building research partnerships

in the public health field between community based organizations and university researchers. While there are issues that arise in such partnerships that are specific to the public health field or specific to the involvement of community organizations, the larger issues surrounding building productive working relationships are very similar. This presentation clearly outlines these issues, providing useful information for those considering partnerships.

Type: Document (forum)

c. Case Studies

Case studies enable us to learn from the victories and tribulations of others. They present practical and relevant experiences. Some real life examples of researcher - decision-maker partnerships are discussed in this section.

Allam, S., Blyth, S., Fraser, A., Hodgson, S., Howes, J., Repper, J., & Newman, A. 2004. Our experience of collaborative research: Service users, carers and researchers work together to evaluate an assertive outreach service. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 11; 368-373. Availability: Subscription required. [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#) "In September 2000, a research team from Sheffield University was commissioned to evaluate the Lincolnshire Assertive Outreach Service. An essential aspect of this evaluation was service users' and carers' experiences of receiving the service and this was researched in collaboration with service users and carers who are members of 'Linc-Up' (the Lincolnshire Partnership Trust Service User and Carer Reference Group)." (From introduction.) Service users and carers were involved in all aspects of the project, including interview design and dissemination of findings. The authors reflect on the experience and explain the challenges and rewards of the collaboration.

Type: Document

Brazil, K., MacLeod, S., & Guest, B. 2002. Collaborative practice: A strategy to improve the relevance of health services research. *Healthcare Management Forum*, 15(3): 18-24. http://www.cchse.org/Forum/F%20o%20r%20u%20m_Fall2002.pdf. Accessed 2 Aug. 2004. (69 pages – article 6 pages, PDF) [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#).

This article presents a case study describing a research program in western Ontario that encourages meaningful involvement of the researchers and decision makers. The authors argue that researchers need to first identify relevant decision-making partners, and then respond to their needs. Organizational factors, such as capacity for research and research utilization, location, governance, and skill set are described. Lastly institutional barriers that inhibit effective collaboration are presented.

Type: Document

Trostle J., Bronfman M., & Langer A. 1999. How do researchers influence decision-makers? Case studies of Mexican policies. *Health Policy Plan*, 14(2):103-114. [\[Link to PubMed abstract\]](#)

The researchers in this article interviewed 67 researchers and policy makers in Mexico looking for factors that enhanced or impeded exchanges between policy makers and researchers. The interviewees were involved in programs for AIDS, cholera, family planning and immunization. The study found many factors that were similar to those found in industrialized nations, but they also found factors they felt were unique to programs in developing countries.

Type: Document

d. Funders

The agencies that fund research and the health care system are encouraging greater researcher - decision-maker collaboration. Some of these agencies and the resources they have created to facilitate these partnerships are highlighted below.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

(<http://www.ahrq.gov>)

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is the health services research arm of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The website includes the Agency's extensive publications catalogue, many of which are freely available. The Research Findings section contains many items of interest to decision makers. The AHRQ actively funds community-based participatory research; some of their work is already found in the CBPR section of this guide, but the AHRQ website is a source for further investigation for those intensely interested in CPBR.

Type: Collection

Canadian Health Services Research Foundation Website

(http://www.chsrf.ca/home_e.php)

"The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation: (i) funds management and policy research in health services and nursing; (ii) supports the synthesis and dissemination of research results; and (iii) supports the use of research results by managers and policy makers in the health system (whom we call decision-makers)." This site is organized into "portals" for researchers, decision-makers, and knowledge brokers. It has a number of excellent publications about the collaborative process, which were highlighted at the beginning of this resource guide.

Type: Collection

Canadian Health Services Research Foundation. 2004. What counts? Interpreting evidence-based decision-making for management and policy. Report of the 6th CHSRF Annual Invitational Workshop Vancouver, British Columbia, March 11, 2004.

http://www.chsrf.ca/knowledge_transfer/pdf/2004_workshop_report_e.pdf. Accessed 24 May 2005. (18 pages, PDF)

This report covers many of the basics of evidence-based decision making such as what is evidence, and what does evidence-based decision-making consist of. The report includes a section that elaborates on lessons on evidence-informed collaborations from Andy Oxman. The six lessons are: "1) Policy makers alone are accountable for decisions about policy; 2) researchers are accountable in different ways than policy makers; 3) researchers can help inform the judgments of policy makers; 4) even institutionalized decision-making processes can be endangered; 5) it will always be easier to say yes than no; 6) the best policy makers are rarely in place for long periods of time."

Type: Document

Canadian Health Services Research Foundation. 2000. Health services research and... evidence-based decision-making. Previously published in Canadian Health Services Research Foundation's *1998 Annual Report*.

http://www.chsrf.ca/knowledge_transfer/pdf/EBDM_e.pdf. Accessed 7 July 2004. (11 pages, PDF)

Evidence-based decision-making in health policymaking and management is an extension of the evidence-based medicine paradigm that developed in the early 1990s. However, significant differences in the types of uncertainty faced by policymakers and managers

versus those faced by clinicians affect the manner and extent to which research is “used” by these different decision-makers. This document explores the nature of the relationships between researchers and decision-makers such as policymakers and managers, and looks at the additional complexities contributed by the influence of research funders and “knowledge purveyors”. It suggests that improvement in evidence-based decision-making involves strengthening the relationships between all of these groups, especially by increasing the number of opportunities for interaction.

Type: Document

Canadian Health Services Research Foundation. 1999. Issues in linkage and exchange between researchers and decision-makers: Summary of a workshop convened by the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation.

http://www.chsrf.ca/knowledge_transfer/pdf/linkage_e.pdf. Accessed 24 March 2004. (31 pages, PDF)

This document is the product of a national workshop organized by the CHSRF for researchers, decision-makers, and research funders in February of 1999. Workshop participants prepared for the conference by identifying challenges to linkage and exchange. Using this foundation, the participants convened in groups to identify concrete actions to improve these processes. The document describes the challenges identified and then outlines the top three recommended solutions put forward by each group. The solutions emerged along four overriding themes (as listed in the Executive Summary):

- Research funding bodies should take the lead to improve the environment for linkage and exchange.
- All parties should provide resources and/or recognition for the ‘overhead’ costs of linkage and exchange.
- Decision-makers need to commit time and effort to prepare for and receive research for decision-making.
- All parties need to build linkage and exchange infrastructure.

Type: Document (forum)

NHS Service Delivery and Organisation Programme

<http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk>

The Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) Programme is the United Kingdom’s national research programme dedicated to developing an evidence base on health care service organization, management and delivery. At the time of publication, they did not have specific material focused only on researcher – decision-maker collaborations, but their online publications included documents on change management for researchers and health managers. Their National SDO Conference also includes presentations of interest to decision-makers and researchers.

Appendix 1 Glossary

CBPR. Community-based participatory research – see section on CBPR in this Guide (pages 9-12) for full definition.

CHSRF. Canadian Health Services Research Foundation. A Canadian federal government administered foundation that seeks to promote evidence-based decision making in the Canadian healthcare system by facilitating the transfer of knowledge between researchers and healthcare managers and policymakers.

HTML. Hypertext Markup Language. A particular format for putting text and graphics onto the Internet. A regular Internet browser can display an HTML document without requiring any further downloads or installations.

Knowledge Purveyor. A source of evidence that tends to come in the form of a story. Sources include personal experience, anecdote, media, think tanks, commercial conferences. (CHSRF, 2000)

Knowledge Transfer. The processes by which a packet of knowledge or expertise that exists in one place is caused to exist in another place, for the purposes of contributing to the public good. This may be findings that researchers have discovered are transferred to decision-makers in a health care system, or it could be front-line knowledge that practitioners have that is transferred to academics for study. (Based on http://www.nerc.ac.uk/using/kt_def.shtml and Wikipedia definitions.)

Linkage and Exchange. "The reciprocal distribution of knowledge, involving both push and pull elements, but centered into a defined transaction." (Posting from Peter West to CRTN-Talk on November 25, 2003)

PDF. Portable Document Format. A particular format created by Adobe, and used widely on the Internet for word published documents. One must download and install an Adobe Acrobat reader, found at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>, to read articles in PDF.

Appendix 2 Selection Criteria

Print Document Selection Criteria

Criteria for article selection were as follows:

- Currency: Published within the last five years (since 1999).
- Countries of publication: Canada (primary focus), United States, UK, Australia.
- Field: Health services research (primary focus); some from other related disciplines.
- Accessibility: Where possible, free-access online publications were preferred. Those requiring publication subscriptions are indicated.

- Focus: Partnerships and collaboration between researchers and decision-makers in health services delivery.

Databases searched included: *PubMed*, *University of Toronto (CME) Research & Development Resource Base*, and *Academic Search Premier*.

Web Link Selection Criteria:

Criteria for link selection were as follows:

- Currency: Updated in 2004 or 2005.
- Reliability and authority: Not-for-profit sites; purpose of site clear.
- Offers resources (such as conference announcements) useful to researchers and/or decision-makers.

Primer Selection Criteria

- Perspectives of both researchers and decision-makers are presented.
- Lessons learned are included.
- Focus on communication and relational experience.
- Clear, concise, and succinct.