



Improving knowledge exchange in public health

Professor Rosemary Rushmer¹, Dr Emma Halliday², Dr Louise Lafortune³, Dr Callum Mattocks³, Dr Eszter Vamos⁴, Dr Dylan Kneale⁵, Professor Sarah Salway⁶, Dr Matt Egan⁷, Professor Frank de Vocht⁸, Kathryn Cassidy¹, Sarah Dinsdale¹ & Karen McCabe¹

1. Fuse, 2. LiLaC, 3. Cambridge Institute of Public Health, 4. Imperial College London, 5. University College London, 6. University of Sheffield, 7. LSHTM, 8. University of Bristol

About the research

Getting research evidence to inform practice and policy is neither straight-forward nor guaranteed. In clinical areas it is estimated that it can take 17 years for impact (IoM 2000, Morris 2011). In public health, it can take considerably longer – perhaps 70 years (Proctor 2012). The discipline of knowledge exchange focuses on reducing the knowledge-to-action gap.

Across the NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR) there are examples of good practice in working closely with policy and practice partners (PPPs) to create and share research to facilitate usefulness, uptake and impact. This reduces the knowledge-to-action gap.

The aim of this research was to co-create an agreed set of theoretically and empirically-informed knowledge sharing principles to inform the SPHR research programme with an aim of reducing the knowledge-to-action gap throughout SPHR.

Using an interactive approach, workshops brought together academics with PPPs to share 'what works' in sharing knowledge two-way across boundaries to create useable knowledge. Ultimately, a set of knowledge sharing principles was collectively established across participants.

About the School

The NIHR School for Public Health Research is a partnership between the Universities of Sheffield; Bristol; Cambridge; Imperial; and University College London; The London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM); LiLaC – a collaboration between the Universities of Liverpool and Lancaster; and Fuse - The Centre for Translational Research in Public Health a collaboration between Newcastle, Durham, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside Universities.

Website: sphr.nihr.ac.uk

Twitter: @NIHRSPHR

Email: sphr@ncl.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)191 208 3829

Policy implications

- The SPHR Knowledge Sharing Principles are a tool that can be used by researchers to help ensure they produce research that is useful, accessible and impactful for policy and practice.
- The principles encourage the co-creation of research that is fit for purpose, accessible and high quality.
- The principles are based on best practice and current evidence in sharing and creating research between academics and practice and policy partners.
- The six principles are:
 1. Clarify your purpose and knowledge sharing goals
 2. Identify knowledge users
 3. Design the research to incorporate the expertise of the knowledge users
 4. Agree Expectations
 5. Monitor, reflect and be responsive in sharing knowledge
 6. Leave a legacy

Further information

Further information can be found on the SPHR website here: [Improving knowledge exchange in public health](#).

A description of the Principles and further information on how to use them can be found here: [The 6 SPHR Knowledge Sharing Principles](#)

For more information, please contact the NIHR SPHR Knowledge Exchange Broker, Katie Appleby katie.appleby@ncl.ac.uk



Key findings

- Six knowledge exchange principles were produced. The principles are:
 1. Clarify your purpose and knowledge sharing goals
 2. Identify knowledge users
 3. Design the research to incorporate the expertise of the knowledge users
 4. Agree Expectations
 5. Monitor, reflect and be responsive in sharing knowledge
 6. Leave a legacy
- They were informed by: literature; examples of good practice; examples of principles from other funding bodies in the UK and internationally, views of academics, practice and policy partners and other stakeholders involved in sharing knowledge and working collaboratively across academic-policy boundaries in public health.
- Exactly 'what works' in creating and sharing useful and useable knowledge varies according to the topic, context and nature of the research. The principles are therefore 'high-level' to enable applicants to consider the issues, and decide what they mean, and how they apply, in any particular piece of research, whilst maintaining the integrity of that research.
- Research that takes account of end-users needs, knowledge and context is more likely to be considered relevant, useful, and used.
- Regular engagement with research end users and stakeholders enables research to remain relevant in a changing environment.
- Additionally, co-creation of research contributes to the democratisation of the research process and addresses impact and return-on-investment agendas.



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