Improving Access to Public Health Information: A Study of Information Needs in a State Health Department

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Evidence-Based Practice for Public Health Project

- Evidence-based public health
  - Informed decisions for practice
- Information must be accessible
- What are the information needs and accessing preferences of the public health workforce?
Qualitative Study Methods

Study Sample:
19 Professionals at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health
• 12 - Bureau of Communicable Disease Control
• 7 – Division of Community Health Promotion

Data Collection & Analysis
• Tape/transcribed key informant interviews & focus groups
• Thematic analysis of data; comparison across groups
Questions Asked

- Type of work tasks performed requiring access to information?
- Information sources currently used?
- Current limitations to information access?
- Preferred format and features for information access?
**Evidence-based Information Continuum**

**Different information sources for different needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>1. Early alerts &amp; reports</th>
<th>Email, news media</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Emerging &amp; promising practices</td>
<td>Conferences, listservs, informal networks</td>
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<td>3. Evaluated practices &amp; interventions</td>
<td>Reports, websites, conferences</td>
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<td>4. Reference Information</td>
<td>Books, websites</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Published research &amp; systematic reviews</td>
<td>PubMed, journals, article summaries</td>
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<td>6. Evidence-based guidelines</td>
<td>AHRQ, Institute of Medicine</td>
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</table>
Raising Healthy Kids
Public Health - See what CDC is doing to promote healthy communities...
▶ more

Pandemic Flu
Pandemic Flu resources...
▶ more

Child Abuse
Child abuse and neglect can lead to health problems throughout life...
▶ more

Autism and Vaccines
Learn more about Research on Vaccines & Autism ...
▶ more

Autism Spectrum Disorders
Learn more about Autism ...
▶ more

Avian Influenza
Latest information on bird flu ...
▶ more

CDC Partnerships
A new portal with information and resources for CDC’s partners ...
▶ more

Spring Break Guide to Staying Safe and Healthy
Make your spring break memorable by having fun and helping yourself, your friends, and others stay safe and healthy...

Programs & Campaigns
National Diabetes Education Program
Partners work together to improve the treatment and outcomes of diabetes.

Family History Initiative
This evaluates how family history can assess common diseases risk and influence early detection and prevention strategies.
Challenges & limitations to public health information access

Strategies to meet the needs of the public health workforce
Challenge:
- Too many sources to search efficiently
- Too much irrelevant information

Need:
- One portal access to PH information
- Mediated searching & article retrieval services
- Training on accessing and selecting PH resources
Diabetes

Search by Focus Area | About this Project | Tips on Searching | Give Us Feedback | Contributors

Click the button to run the search in PubMed.

Link to the complete Healthy People 2010 Chapter.

Prevent Diabetes. (Objective 05-02)

Increase the proportion of adults with diabetes whose condition has been diagnosed. (Objective 05-04)

Reduce diabetes-related deaths among persons with diabetes. (Objective 05-06)

Decrease the proportion of pregnant women with gestational diabetes. (Objective 05-08)

Reduce the frequency of foot ulcers in persons with diabetes. (Objective 05-09)

Increase the proportion of adults with diabetes who perform self-blood-glucose-monitoring at least once daily. (Objective 05-17)

Related Resources

- Guide to Community Preventive Services, TCPICS: Diabetes and Physical Activity
- MEDLINEplus - Diabetes
- MEDLINEplus - Diabetes and Pregnancy
- MEDLINEplus - Diabetic Diet
- MEDLINEplus - Diabetic Foot
- Screening for Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. Guide to Clinical Preventive Services, 3rd ed.
Challenge:
- Gaps in public health information
- Difficulty accessing information beyond biomedical field – beyond PubMed

Need:
- Access to information from multiple disciplines
Challenge - limited access to:
- Full-text journals
- Unpublished research
- Systematic reviews and summaries with practice recommendations

Need access to:
- Free full-text journals
- Grey literature & conference proceedings
- Systematic reviews and evidence-based guidelines related to public health
In The Spotlight:

The Guide to Community Preventive Services is now available in book form.
Get your copy at a 15% discount.
Or read individual chapters here

America’s Health: State Health Rankings – 2004 Edition

The Community Guide at a Glance

Recommendations by Topic

Changing Health Risk Behaviors
- Physical Activity
- Tobacco Product Use
- Nutrition
- Sexual Behavior
- Alcohol Abuse

Addressing Specific Health Conditions
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Mental Health
- Motor Vehicle Occupant Injury
- Obesity
- Oral Health
- Vaccine Preventable Diseases
- Violence

Información en Español
Evidence-Based Practice for Public Health Project Web Site:
http://library.umassmed.edu/ebpph

Evidence-Based Practice for Public Health Project

Overview

There are numerous clinically based models for finding the "best evidence" for the diagnosis and treatment of disease. This process is called Evidence-based Medicine or EBM, which has been defined as "the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients. The practice of evidence-based medicine means integrating individual clinical expertise with the best available external clinical evidence from systematic research" (Sackett DL, Rosenberg WMC, Gray JAM, Haynes RB, Richardson WS. Evidence-based medicine: what it is and what it isn’t. BMJ 1996, 312: 71-2). Within the EBM models, there is no or little attention paid to the "best practices" for population-based (public) health. The purpose of this project is to examine the clinical EBM models and assess their effectiveness to the public health literature. The project will also identify any existing evidence-based projects in public health and assess their effectiveness. The outcomes of the project will be:

1. An Evidence-based Public Health website;
2. An electronic publication or database based on the preferred models(s);
3. A training program for public health practitioners introducing them to evidence-based public health practice and literature retrieval methods.

Funding

The Evidence-Based Practice for Public Health Project is funded by an award from the Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine / Centers of Disease Control and Prevention Cooperative Agreement to the Lamar Soutter Library at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

Objectives

- Identify the knowledge domains of public health and their corresponding literature.
- Identify at least three models of evidence-based literature approaches to clinical medicine, and review their applicability to the literature of public health.
EBPPH Project Web Site: 
http://library.umassmed.edu/ebpph

Evidence-Based Resources for Public Health Practice Available for Free Online Access

Evidence-based Guidelines

- United States
  - CDC Recommends: The Prevention Guidelines System (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
  - Guide to Clinical Preventive Services (U.S. Preventive Services Task Force)
  - Guide to Community Preventive Services (Task Force on Community Preventive Services)
  - MMWR Recommendations and Reports (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
  - National Guideline Clearinghouse (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality)

Systematic Reviews

- United States
  - PubMed Systematic Reviews (National Library of Medicine)
  - Healthy Aging Initiative - Evidence Reports (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services)

- International
  - Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Abstracts (Cochrane Collaboration)
  - Cochrane Reviews of Relevance to Health Promotion and Public Health (Cochrane Health Promotion and Public Health Field)
  - DARE (Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects) (Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, University of York, UK)
  - The Effective Public Health Practice Project (Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the City of Hamilton, Public Health and Community Services)
  - EPPI (Evidence for Practice and Policy Information) Centre (Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, UK)
  - Evidence Based Health Promotion (Victorian State Government, Department of Human Services, Australia)
  - Health Development Agency Evidence Base (Health Development Agency, UK)
  - Health Evidence Bulletins Wales (Duthie Library, University of Wales College of Medicine, Cardiff, UK)
  - Health-Evidence.ca (Canadian Institutes of Health Research)

Pre-formulated and Filtered Searches of Published Research Studies

- United States
  - Healthy People 2010 Information Access Project (National Library of Medicine and the Public Health Foundation)
  - PubMed Clinical Queries (National Library of Medicine)
  - PubMed Health Services Research (HSR) Queries (National Library of Medicine)

Best Practices (Experience-Based)

- United States
Responding to the Need

- Expert searching and article retrieval services
- One portal access to:
  - Free public health journals
  - Free public health bibliographic databases
  - Evidence-based public health resources
- Training on finding resources for EBPH
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Evidence-Based Practice for Public Health
http://library.umassmed.edu/ebpph

Published Paper: