



Integrating knowledge generation with knowledge diffusion and utilization: a case study analysis of the Consortium for Applied Research and Evaluation in Mental Health.

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Abstract:

Knowledge diffusion and utilization (KDU) have become a key focus in the health research community because of the limited success to date of research findings to inform health policies, programs and services. Yet, evidence indicates that successful KDU is often predicated on the early involvement of potential knowledge users in the conceptualization and conduct of the research and on the development of a "partnership culture". This study describes the integration of KDU theory with practice via a case study analysis of the Consortium for Applied Research and Evaluation in Mental Health (CAREMH).

This qualitative study, using a single-case design, included a number of data sources: proposals, meeting minutes, presentations, publications, reports and curricula vitae of CAREMH members.

CAREMH has adopted the following operational strategies to increase KDU capacity: 1) viewing research as a means and not as an end; 2) bringing the university and researcher to the community; 3) using participatory research methods; 4) embracing transdisciplinary research and interactions; and 5) using connectors. Examples of the iterative process between researchers and potential knowledge users in their contribution to knowledge generation, diffusion and utilization are provided.

This case study supports the importance of early and ongoing involvement of relevant potential knowledge users in research to enhance its utilization potential. It also highlights the need for re-thinking research funding approaches.

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