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

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

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Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine; Project #TS-0734
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>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Early alerts &amp; reports</td>
<td>➤ Email, news media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Emerging &amp; promising practices</td>
<td>➤ Conferences, listservs, informal networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Evaluated practices &amp; interventions</td>
<td>➤ Reports, websites, conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reference Information</td>
<td>➤ Books, websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Published research &amp; systematic reviews</td>
<td>➤ PubMed, journals, article summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Evidence-based guidelines</td>
<td>➤ AHRQ, Institute of Medicine</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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
Our Mission
Helping the public health workforce find and use information effectively to improve and protect the public's health

Main Topics:
- Health Promotion and Health Education
- Literature and Guidelines
- Health Data Tools and Statistics
- Grants and Funding
- Education and Training
- Legislation and Policy
- Conferences and Meetings
- Finding People
- Discussion and E-mail Lists
- Jobs and Careers

What's New on PHPartners.org?
Subscribe to the weekly announcement-only list of new resources

Public Health Information and Data:
- Tutorial
- Training Manual

Research is just a click away...

Resource Guide for Public Health Preparedness

Role of Information Services for Emergency Preparedness and Response Symposium MLA05: CE 860

Presentations and Resource links

Latest News
Dr. Paul E. Jarris Named ASTHO Executive Director

Rate of Pneumococcal Disease in Young Infants Drops After Introduction of Pneumococcal Vaccine for Older Infants

Bills Would Tighten Ban on Junk Food in Schools

Hurricane Katrina:
Links to Health Information

Partners:
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, TOPICS: 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.
My NCBI: Sign In

Sign in here or register for an account.

User Name
Password

☐ Keep me signed in unless I sign out
Leave unchecked on public computers

I forgot my password
About automatic sign in

Sign In

What is My NCBI?

My NCBI is a central place to customize NCBI Web services. To use it, you must first register, and your browser must accept cookies.

You can use My NCBI to:

- Save searches
- Set up e-mail alerts for new content
- Display links to Web resources (LinkOut)
- Choose filters that group search results

Like all NCBI resources, My NCBI is free. For more information, read My NCBI Help. You may also read about your privacy.
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.
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
Contact
Hathy.Simpson@umassmed.edu

Evidence-Based Practice for Public Health
http://library.umassmed.edu/ebpph

Published Paper: