

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION AIC 2016: #63

1. Title:

Evaluation findings from a National knowledge translation and exchange platform for obesity prevention in Australia

2. Authors:

Tahna Pettman, Rebecca Armstrong, Shae Johnson, Penny Love, Steve Allender, Tim Gill, John Coveney, Boyd Swinburn, Elizabeth Waters

3. Key words:

Evaluation, Practitioners, obesity prevention, knowledge translation

4. Abstract text:

a. Background

Obesity prevention requires implementation across multiple levels. Effective implementation, evaluation, and knowledge translation and exchange (KTE) depends upon collaboration between practice, policy and research. A national KTE network of members working in community-based obesity prevention, the Collaboration of Community-based obesity prevention sites (CO-OPS) was implemented and evaluated from 2013-15.

b. Methods

A mixed methods evaluation examined process (reach, delivery, uptake, quality, cost, use of tools/resources) and impact (networking, practice improvements) of CO-OPS, using communications and website data, knowledge brokering database, pre- and post-event questionnaires, and interviews.

c. Results

Main findings included (1) network growth following dedicated KTE (tailored communications, stakeholder engagement, knowledge brokering, and professional development (PD) and networking events); 2) high website usage with sustained increase in unique visitors, and access to networking and PD event information and best practice guidelines; 3) Different and strong preferences in ways to engage with CO-OPS, but higher uptake of face-to-face interactive strategies (e.g. workshops) than online (e.g. Knowledge Broker service); and higher uptake of passive (e.g. website resources) than interactive strategies (e.g. workshops); 4) High perceived value of the central coordinating KTE function of CO-OPS as part of the obesity prevention implementation 'system'.

d. Conclusion

These findings demonstrate a potentially important role for a central coordinating platform to engage prevention professionals in KTE. Both simple and intensive strategies were important for network engagement. Evaluation of CO-OPS' impact upon practice is challenged by limited methods and an under-resourced obesity prevention environment. Findings are applicable to other information-sharing networks where professionals work to address complex public health problems.