

Relevance to patients and consumers (650 characters, max)

Title: Training community research partners in evidence synthesis methods: A Pilot Study

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ABSTRACT (2400 characters/approx. 350 words)

Background: Conducting evidence synthesis research requires specific expertise but assessing the veracity and validity of “evidence-based” claims are crucial for all. As part of a community-engaged research project, we adapted an existing evidence synthesis training curriculum for a non-expert audience. The Rhode Island Arts & Health Advisory group project is a >25 member working group charged with developing integrated arts-based health care interventions into population health planning. Our Center served as an academic partner to facilitate the development of evidence-based recommendations and provided training and mentorship on evidence synthesis methods. Evidence synthesis training was delivered monthly with interactive sessions, which included didactic and hands-on components. Using web tutorials, mentoring and video conferencing, we worked collaboratively on all aspects of the evidence synthesis to ensure the participants were supported in the process.

Objectives: This pilot study evaluates whether our approaches increased: 1) motivation to participate 2) evidence synthesis skills and 2) the likelihood of participating in future research.

Methods: Participants were asked to respond to an anonymous survey. All members of the team (n=24) received an invitation to participate; (n=13, 54.2%) completed the survey and were analyzed.

Results: Most participants said they learned how to develop a research question (n=10, 76.9%), search the medical literature (n=10, 76.9%) and read a journal article (n=9, 69.2%). Strongest factors that motivated participation were helping patients receive better care (n=13, 100%), belief that participation can result in meaningful findings (11, 84.6%) receiving information on the research and how it is conducted (n=9, 69.2%). Almost all participants indicated that they are more likely to collaborate with researchers after this experience (n=12, 92.3%).

Conclusions: Our pilot study indicates that engaging community partners in evidence synthesis training promotes uptake of research methods and future engagement with research.

Patient or healthcare consumer involvement: This work is a model of community engaged evidence synthesis research. The group proposed the idea of measuring impact and the four-member steering committee (an artist, public health practitioner, a physician and a researcher) co-designed the survey.