

Report 22: Research translation/communication

Convener: Tracey Woodruff/Amy Kostant

Brief History: There is a need to communicate the value and goals of NIEHS, and NIEHS should be a leader in conveying simple messages about environmental chemicals and public health.

Discussion Highlights:

- NIEHS should be the leader in raising visibility of environmental chemicals as a preventable risk factor.
- Tricky to communicate uncertainty in science, risk assessment, and anything that might provoke pushback. Scientists need training and support to do this well.
- Can NIEHS do a better job providing succinct messages about environmental chemicals to become a resource for the public? Can NIEHS choose key topics for messaging and communications/public education outreach?
- Explore partnerships: interagency, stakeholders, NGOs
- Studies released one at a time – in a vacuum. It would be important to integrate results into a body of evidence.

Recommendations:

- NIEHS should have a communications strategy focused on public health outcomes, prevention and alternatives.
- NIEHS should apply or fund communications research – focus groups, polls, etc., to understand how different groups learn and perceive environmental health messages.
- NIEHS should adapt the NTP model for integrating and synthesizing research, and designate funds to apply it to extramural research. The goal is to simplify and unify messages about the knowledge and areas of action, i.e. what people should do.
- Proposal should include plans and funding for communication of outcomes and public health application, which may also include external partnerships to assist with communications.
- NIEHS should continue and increase support for community based participatory research and communication.
- Provide resources for communication across disciplines. For example, green chemistry and toxicology.
- Fund partnerships between environmental health and behavioral and social sciences to broaden usefulness of results, and to better understand how the public uses public health research
- Study the effectiveness of different communications interventions.

Discussion Participants:

Brody, Claudio, Collman, Dawson, Drew, Gray, Johnson, Kostant, Kwok, Lucier, Madrigal, Morawetz, Newschaffer, O'Brien, Rosenthal, Russ, Schroeder, Stroebel, Thigpen Tart, Wolfe, Woodruff