

Communication Research

Date: May 23, 2013

Time: 12:30-2:00 p.m. ET

Please register at: http://bit.ly/PEPH_COMM

(registration required)

Description: Communication research has moved beyond the development of educational materials to examinations of the factors involved in communicating complex risk, how information is received, the role of media in (mis)characterizing scientific news, and the social and behavioral aspects of trust and trusted sources of information. In public health settings, communication research also can touch upon disparities in risk communication based on literacy and primary language, variance in risk information seeking and processing based on cultural and occupational contexts, and the characterization of uncertainty such as in hazard mapping of public health risks. Communication research can begin to answer questions about specific audience/cultural needs around communicating risk and/or provide more insight into how information is received, understood, and applied.

The Need for Research Evaluating the Effectiveness of Health Communication Programs

Gary Kreps, Ph.D., George Mason University



Health communication programs have developed as essential and ubiquitous tools in the delivery of care and promotion of health in the modern health care system. Yet, while the use of health communication programs has proliferated, we are not always well informed about the influences these important communication programs are having on the different key audiences they are designed to help. Too often health communication programs can evoke differential responses from diverse audiences, unintended influences, and even negative (iatrogenic) effects on health outcomes. It is critically important to conduct regular, ongoing, and strategic evaluations of health communication intervention programs to assess their effectiveness in achieving primary program goals. Evaluation data should guide program refinements and strategic planning. This presentation examines several key strategies for conducting meaningful evaluation research for guiding the development, implementation, refinement, and institutionalization of effective health communication programs.

Introducing MIYO: A Practical Tool for Health Communication to Diverse Audiences

Matthew Kreuter, Ph.D., Washington University in St. Louis



Make It Your Own, or MIYO, is an online tool that helps users create their own versions of evidence-based health communication materials for the specific populations they serve. Users “build” these materials by choosing from a menu of evidence-based approaches recommended by the Community Guide to Preventive Services, then customize them by choosing from a library of images, messages, and graphic designs. MIYO then renders their creations into electronic documents that can be printed, e-mailed, texted, used online, or distributed in other ways to target audiences. This presentation will introduce MIYO and report data from 513 state and local health agency representatives from 47 states who have used MIYO to create small media and client reminders that promote cancer screening.

Making Environmental Exposure Information Meaningful

Brian Zikmund-Fisher, Ph.D., University of Michigan



Communications about environmental exposures can be simultaneously accurate yet meaningless to the recipients. Poor numeracy skills and a lack of contextual knowledge can impede people’s ability to draw meaning from the data we provide. Furthermore, effective risk management often depends more on qualitative understandings (i.e., people’s “mental models” of the risk) than on their understanding of quantitative data regarding exposure levels. However, communications that seek to correct misconceptions in people’s mental models, match information format to users’ needs, and provide relevant contextual frames of reference for any provided data have the potential to support meaningful understanding of environmental exposure risk.



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PEPH Webinar Series

The Partnerships for Environmental Public Health (PEPH) program established the PEPH Webinar Series to promote interactions among PEPH grantees and to increase awareness of common issues and approaches. The webinars facilitate consideration of emerging issues. While the primary audience is grantees within the PEPH network, anyone interested in environmental public health is welcome to register.

If you have any questions about this webinar or future webinars, please contact Liam O’Fallon (ofallon@niehs.nih.gov, 919-541-7733).

Individuals with disabilities who need accommodation to participate in this event should contact Liam O’Fallon (ofallon@niehs.nih.gov, 919-541-7733). TTY users should contact the Federal TTY Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Requests should be made at least 5 business days in advance of the event.

Upcoming Webinar Topics:

- Oceans and Human Health: Harmful Effects and Potential Therapeutics (June)
- Addressing Historical Inequities: Environmental Justice for Native Americans (July)

