Knowledge Translation

Knowledge Translation involves the process by which research findings are created and translated into practice for the purpose of improving healthcare. It takes an average of 17 years for research findings to be incorporated into practice. Moreover, only 14% of research findings ever reach widespread adoption (Ammerman et al., 2014; Morris et al., 2011). Thus, there is a need to bridge the gap between what research has shown to be effective and what we currently do in practice.

Knowledge translation (KT) is the process by which knowledge or research is created and translated into practice for the purpose of improving healthcare. KT includes the following activities (CIHR, n.d.):

- **Synthesis**: The aggregation of research findings from multiple studies on a specific topic
- **Dissemination**: The process of spreading research findings through messages that are tailored to specific audiences
- **Exchange**: The multi-directional flow of information between researchers and knowledge users (e.g., decision makers, practitioners, patients)
- **Application**: The iterative process by which research findings are put into practice

The two types of KT are (CIHR, n.d.):

- **End of grant KT**: The researcher develops and implements a plan for making knowledge users aware of the research findings from a project
- **Integrated KT**: Knowledge users are engaged as equal partners with researchers throughout the research process
Implementation Science

Implementation science (IS) is “the scientific study of methods to promote the systematic uptake of research findings and other evidence-based practices into routine practice, and, hence, to improve the quality and effectiveness of health services” (Eccles & Mittman, 2006).

IS examines the factors, processes and strategies that influence successful integration of evidence-based interventions into practice. The four stages of IS are (National Implementation Research Network, n.d.):

- **Exploration**
  - Assess needs and capacity to implement (e.g., people, setting)
  - Identify barriers and facilitators to implementation

- **Installation**
  - Plan and prepare for the implementation (e.g., acquire resources, prepare staff)

- **Initial implementation**
  - Initial implementation and testing
  - Monitor and evaluate
  - Refine the implementation

- **Full implementation**
  - Sustain and scale the implementation across different settings

Because IS does not cover the entire spectrum of KT activities, it is not synonymous with KT.

Summary

Both KT and IS aim to bridge the gap between research and practice. KT is about ensuring that knowledge users are aware of and use research findings in their decision-making. IS is about studying the “black box” between research and practice to understand how evidence-based interventions can be successfully integrated into practice.

E.g., What are the barriers and facilitators? How sustainable is it?
Suggested Reading List

Knowledge Translation:


Implementation Science


References


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