

enhance the dialogue between these three groups to create wise decision making toward improvements in the health system.

METHODS:

A structured questionnaire was prepared to examine environmental responsibility, focusing on hospital contours. The questionnaire was distributed among three groups to be completed anonymously: hospital employees (physicians and medical managers), professionals from the field of architecture and the general public. The distribution was via the internet and to the general public through a social network using the “snowball” mechanism.

RESULTS:

Distribution of the survey raised debates on the subject. We compared the views of 178 respondents (80 healthcare professionals, 47 from the field of architecture and 51 from the general public). Demographic and other criteria included age, gender, profession, priority setting, concepts of environmental responsibility and social values. Physicians prioritized economic factors as the main barrier (more than architects or the general public) and marked internal incentives as key factors. Environmental responsibility correlated with high quality of care and service among healthcare workers.

CONCLUSIONS:

Logistics and physical infrastructure interventions can enhance economic effectiveness. Moreover, they can initiate social and environmental responsibility and increase the level of confidentiality regarding the accountability of their managers towards quality-targeted work surroundings.

REFERENCES:

1. Sadler BL, Joseph A, Keller A, Rostenberg B. Using Evidence-Based Environmental Design to Enhance Safety and Quality. IHI Innovation Series white paper. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute for Healthcare Improvement; 2009. Available on www.IHI.org

VP109 Identifying Priorities For A National Health Research Funder

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INTRODUCTION:

It is vitally important that research questions posed are important and that funded research meets a research need or a gap in evidence; these needs may be observed at a local, national or international level. Identifying such research priorities for a national research funder can be challenging, particularly for complex health problems such as health inequalities, where there is a need to consult a large number of experts with a range of expertise. Many methods are used in the identification of such research priorities, however, these can be resource intensive, costly, and logistically challenging particularly where large numbers of people are required and geographical distances are great.

METHODS:

This study investigated the use of Delphi type survey methods in identifying important research priorities related to health inequalities. Public health professionals with an interest in health inequalities were asked to identify research priorities, these research priorities were subsequently compared to those identified using different methods.

RESULTS:

Fifty-two public health professionals agreed to take part, the response rates were high, (69 percent, 50 percent and 40 percent) across three survey rounds; which indicated that participants were receptive to the methodology and motivated to respond. The themes identified as encompassing the most important research priorities were: mental health, environmental issues and health behaviours. Within these themes, topic areas which emerged most strongly included: community interventions for prevention of mental

health problems, and the food and alcohol environment.

CONCLUSIONS:

Delphi type survey methods are effective as a means of obtaining opinions from a wide number of relevant experts identifying potential priority topic areas where there is a need for research evidence. Opinions may be sought at local and national levels in order to inform national research priorities.

VP110 Building Capacity In Health Technology Assessment Through Plain Language

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INTRODUCTION:

Health Technology Assessments (HTAs) and policy papers are generally written in academic style using industry jargon — pharmaceutical, medical, or scientific terminology — with a generous use of abbreviations. Transforming technical or biomedical data into easily understandable text is a necessity and a challenge for all of us if our goal is to facilitate HTA collaboration beyond borders and integrate HTA into healthcare practice. Many countries have legislated for plain language (PL), and organizations globally are beginning to recognize how it helps in the uptake of information, whether geared to healthcare professionals and all those interested in HTA, or the lay public.

METHODS:

A preliminary, informal online search for legislative and supporting guidance on PL was conducted, and a query sent out to forty-eight International Network of Agencies for Health Technology Assessment (INAHTA) members.

RESULTS:

- The United States *Plain Writing Act* of 2010 has legislated that federal agencies use “clear Government communication that the public can understand and use” (1). Of the twenty-one respondents from INAHTA Listserv, seven use plain language in either their knowledge transfer tools (such as executive and research summaries, booklets and fact sheets, and patient or lay material).
- The Government of Canada promotes plain language in all of its communications (2).
- McMaster University’s 2014 Health Forum on strengthening public and patient engagement in HTA in Ontario supported “clarity and consistency in the use of public- and patient-engagement terminology” in HTAs.
- A growing number of international health-related and HTA organizations promote PL in their reports and HTAs to help with their health literacy.
- Many pharmaceutical companies encourage PL communication in their writing (3).
- Of the eighteen INAHTA responses received, eight reported that they use PL in their report summaries, knowledge transfer materials, and/or patient education tools.

CONCLUSIONS:

Adopting the practice of clear, straightforward writing and editing in all biomedical communication — including HTAs and journal articles — encourages interaction and engagement among patient, public, and healthcare stakeholders invested in HTAs, and their desire to have measured decision making based on comprehensive, informed, and easily understandable information. However, it remains to be seen if PL will be embraced by organizations worldwide. This preliminary, informal inquiry as to its use suggests that the adoption of PL by governments, HTA organizations, and the scientific community worldwide has not yet been fully embraced.

REFERENCES:

1. Public Law 111–274. 111th Congress: 124 Stat. 2861. “Plain Writing Act of 2010” [Internet]. Washington (DC):