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Abstract Information

Title: How do advisory councils mobilize knowledge to inform strategic planning and action through integrated knowledge translation?

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this research is to understand the value and outcomes of an integrated knowledge translation (IKT) strategy initiated by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (HSFC) to inform organizational strategic planning and action. Six Mission Critical Area (MCA) councils composed of researchers, clinicians, and persons with lived experience of disease were formed to co-construct knowledge and provide advisory input to the HSFC. Councils were co-led by a community member and researcher/clinician.

Methods: In year two of the MCA councils' two-year mandate, we conducted focus groups with council cochairs (n=12) and HSFC team members (n=4), and interviews with key informants (n=2) to elicit their perspectives of the value of MCA councils, knowledge exchange activities, processes and outcomes. Qualitative data were analyzed using framework analysis.

Results: Preliminary analysis demonstrated that in year two confidence in the process evolved which resulted in more open dialogue, a greater understanding of the lived experience of disease and a shift in language that reflected a team rather than them versus us mentality. Early outcomes

included the determination of concrete strategic directions, creation of a patient support website led by a council member, leveraging funding of over 15 million dollars, and the signing of a memorandum of understanding with Brain Canada on the heart-brain connection.

Conclusion: The resultant outcomes of this IKT initiative enhances the credibility of the co-led advisory council structure and the importance of skilled facilitation so that scientific view is not suppressed when faced with real life stories of disease.