

Community Engaged Research in the University of Minnesota Program in Health Disparities Research

Michele Allen, MD, MS

Department of Family Medicine and
PHDR

Many Faces of Community Health Conference

October 22, 2009



Program in Health Disparities Research



- Housed in the University of Minnesota Medical School
- Interdisciplinary group of researchers
- Mission is to eliminate health inequities among minority and other underserved populations through interdisciplinary research, education, and community partnership

Program in Health Disparities Research Community Engagement

- Community Dialogue Series – faculty are invited by community to engage in discussion and share information on topic chosen by community.
- Planning Grants – Designed to encourage community-initiated research and foster community-University collaborative projects addressing health disparities.

Why engage the community?

- Since 1994, NIH has required that all research involving human subjects include a plan for enrolling minority racial/ethnic groups, but recruitment rates remain low
- Suspicion of research is common
- There has been poor uptake of research knowledge and evidence based programming

Gaps in Applying “Best Practices”

- Between efficacy in research studies & effectiveness with underserved groups
- Between research and appropriate adaptation for underserved groups
- Between success in achieving behavior change in affluent/educated and those less so
- Between research and local relevance

* Green, LW , Am J Health Behavior, 2001

Need New Methods to Address:

- Low recruitment and participation of diverse ethnic groups in research
- Application of research findings that make a difference for population health especially in vulnerable communities

Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR)

CBPR is a partnership approach to research that equitably involves all participants in all aspects of the research process where each person shares his/her expertise in order to enhance knowledge and develop interventions that will benefit the whole community.*

* Israel et al 1998.

The Spectrum of Research



- Community selects priorities and research question
- Power and decision making is shared equally
- There is a co-learning and co-production of knowledge
- Empowerment and capacity building is core

- Researcher selects research question
- Power and decision making is in the hands of the researcher
- The researcher is the expert
- Knowledge production is primary

CBPR Definition of Community

- Community as a unit of identity characterized by:
 - Identification with and emotional connection to other members
 - Common symbol systems
 - Shared values and norms
 - Mutual (but not necessarily equal) influence
 - Common interests
 - Joint commitment to meeting shared needs
- May be geographical or group with a sense of common identity and shared fate
- CBPR attempts to identify existing communities and strengthen this sense of community through collective engagement

* Israel et al, 2008

CBPR Assumptions

- Potential to create more relevant, sustainable research outcomes
- Interventions strengthened by community participation, insight and theories
- Translation of interventions to diverse settings enhanced and made more sustainable by CBPR
- Added health value from participation

Key Principles of CBPR

1. Focuses on community
2. Builds on community strengths and resources
3. Facilitates collaborative partnerships
4. Integrates knowledge and action
5. Promotes a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequities
6. Involves a cyclical and iterative process
7. Disseminates findings and knowledge gained to all partners

To Become Involved

1. Join the Program in Health Disparities Research
2. Apply for a Planning Grant (letters of intent are generally due in the late summer)
3. Talk with one of our faculty about your research interests
4. www.healthdisparities.umn.edu/home.html
5. Contact: Michael Golden, program coordinator
mgolden@umn.edu 612-626-9192

References

- Community-Campus Partnership for Health. The Examining Community-Institutional Partnerships for Prevention Research Group. *Developing and Sustaining Community-Based Participatory Partnerships: A Skill Building Curriculum*. 2006.
- Israel, Schulz, Parker, Becker, Allan, Guzman. "Critical issues in developing and following CBPR principles." Minkler and Wallerstein, editors. *Community-Based Participatory Research for Health: From Process to Outcomes*. Second Edition. 2008.