

Theme 2: Systems and structures to support high quality implementation

Impact of a national Knowledge translation and Exchange platform to support community based obesity prevention implementation

A range of community-based interventions (CBI) are being implemented to prevent obesity and NCDs. Evidence-informed implementation, and rigorous evaluation, is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of these investments. Emerging evidence suggests that Knowledge Translation and Exchange (KTE) may facilitate evidence-informed practice, and a national approach may be necessary to support individuals and organisations at multiple levels. The Collaboration of Community-based Obesity Prevention Sites (CO-OPS) is a national KTE platform supporting a network of professionals in community based obesity prevention.

A logic model guides implementation and evaluation of CO-OPS KTE activities. A mixed-methods process and impact evaluation aims to determine reach, quality and effectiveness of the CO-OPS KTE platform. Methods include needs assessment consultations, process database, communications data, event records, pre- and post- event questionnaires, member interviews, a national survey, social network analysis, case studies, and tracer searches.

Currently 1750 individuals are voluntary CO-OPS members and strategic links have been formed with national, state-based and local agencies. Nearly 500 new members joined in 2013 compared to an annual average of 330 in previous years (2009-13). At Professional development (PD) and networking events, 40% of attendees were new to CO-OPS, indicating extended reach. Targeted communications are disseminated at least monthly with 1 in 3 members clicking to read. Nearly 180 individuals were engaged in needs assessment consultations in 2013 across a range of sectors. Access and downloads of website resources doubled from the start to the end of 2013, and more than 80 support requests seeking advice/opinion, access to tools or research evidence or for a referral were received and responded to by the knowledge brokers. PD and networking events were well attended and participant evaluations (n=336) reported sessions as mostly/completely relevant (87%), very good/excellent quality (84%) and very good/excellent usefulness (76%). Improvements in practice are apparent following increased practitioner knowledge, confidence and attitudes as measured in pre and post PD evaluations.

Preliminary data suggest that CO-OPS has reached new and existing practitioners, delivering quality activities that have contributed to individuals' practice. The evaluation will improve understanding of the process of implementing a national KTE platform and its impact on improving quality, reach and effectiveness of CBI for obesity prevention.