

Collaborative strategies for knowledge translation: the African-German CEBHA+ research network

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Background:

The Collaboration for Evidence-based Healthcare and Public Health in Africa (CEBHA+) is an NCD research consortium that seeks to engage policy-makers and practitioners throughout the research process in order to build lasting relationships, enhance evidence uptake and build long-term capacity among partner institutions in Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda. This integrated knowledge translation (IKT) approach includes the formal development and implementation of country-specific engagement strategies.

Methods:

An early-stage evaluation is taking place in Mid-2020. Online surveys and qualitative interviews with researchers and policy-and-practice partners will inform adaptation of country-specific strategies, advance the initial programme theory and contribute to the science of IKT.

Results:

We present three pertinent observations based on the development and implementation of an overarching CEBHA+ IKT approach and five country-specific strategies over the last two years: Despite being informed by an overarching IKT programme theory, the site-specific strategies and resulting partnerships vary markedly, representing the whole continuum of integrated knowledge translation.

The diversity of approaches is due to different understandings of IKT, discontinuity of staff, lack of IKT training, and

perceptions of usefulness (compared to ongoing research activities) among CEBHA+ researchers.

The individual, dynamic and often pre-existing relationships of researchers and partners from policy and practice are central to IKT, but capturing these within the programme theory and monitoring them remains challenging.

Conclusions:

These observations are useful to guide further evaluation and cross-country comparison. Close examination of relationships and conceptualisation of IKT as a continuum may provide valuable insights into the circumstances that make IKT efforts worthwhile.

Key messages:

- Translating evidence into policy and practice is reliant on partnerships between researchers and policy-and-practice partners.
- These can be formalised but the relationships remain complex and dynamic.