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An RCT comparing 3 communication strategies on knowledge use.

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Abstract

This paper summarizes the methodology and results of an intervention study to examine *the relative effects of three approaches to communicating new knowledge from researchers* to members of five different stakeholder groups: researchers, clinicians, brokers, consumers and manufacturers. The randomized controlled trial involved three experimental conditions: 1) Control group representing the passive diffusion of knowledge assumed to occur after formal publication; 2) Targeted dissemination group received a copy of the formal publication but independently determined its relevance; 3) Tailored translation group received the publication along with a detailed description of the finding's value to their interests, followed by access to a web-based training program explaining how to apply the knowledge in their particular context. Results showed a significant difference in level of knowledge use from pre to post-tests for both treatment conditions. Thus while both methods were effective, the additional effort to tailor the knowledge and present it in multiple formats did not add to the effect. While researchers can extend additional effort to deliver their findings to stakeholders – thereby increasing awareness or interest – it is the recipient stakeholders who decide whether or not to apply the findings. Closing the gap between knowledge creation and application requires engaging stakeholders prior to initiating studies.

Summary

The paper describes a randomized controlled trial to test the relative effectiveness of three strategies for increasing knowledge use among various stakeholders. Results show researchers actions can increase awareness and interest to greater extent, and increase use to a lesser extent. Regardless of the communication strategy, the stakeholders themselves ultimately decide on whether or not to apply research findings in practice.