

Executive Report

2015 Food for Health Workshop – Knowledge Translation in Public-Private Partnerships

Canadian Nutrition Society and ILSI North America

Thursday, May 28, 2015

BACKGROUND

This one-day workshop was the 5th in a series intended to advance health through solutions oriented food-based strategies by advocating and raising awareness of the importance of food and nutrition for health, being a catalyst for change, and facilitating connections and partnerships. Previous workshops in the series focused on building collaborations, tackling regulatory and conflict of interest barriers, communicating messages, and principles of partnerships to support food-health research.

One of the seven key learnings from the Food for Health workshops is the recognition of gap in Knowledge Translation (KT) of food-health research, which stalls progress of the food for health agenda. This realization, paired with the acknowledgement that research is evolving towards increased collaborations with multiple stakeholders and government support of these partnerships, lead to the selected focus of this workshop: ***translation of knowledge generated from food-health based public-private partnerships (PPP)***. 2015 workshop participants included representation from academia, food and agriculture industries, government, and healthcare providers.

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

Workshop speakers represented several sectors within the food-health continuum, including:

- Basic research (University of Manitoba, University of Guelph)
- Health care (Canadian Malnutrition Task Force)
- Retail (Loblaw Brands)
- Not for profit organizations (Heart and Stroke Foundation Canada)
- Media (National Geographic Magazine)
- Communications (Centre for Food Integrity)
- Government funding agencies (Networks of Centres of Excellence)

Speakers discussed their organizations approaches to translation of knowledge and challenges encountered, particularly stemming from collaborations and PPPs. The day was kicked off by a keynote presentation from Dennis Dimick (National Geographic Magazine), which highlighted the importance of food, agriculture and nutrition in health, issues impacting these sectors, and the need to engage the general population to evoke change. National Geographic Magazine's 'Why Food Now' series is an excellent example of a KT tool used to disseminate food-health information.

Need for effective KT from PPPs

Throughout the presentations, and reflected in the pre-workshop survey, several key factors were highlighted as being necessary for effective KT stemming from food-health PPPs. The most commonly cited factor was **trust of the public**. As such, it was recognized that there is a need to generate interest in the topic and engagement of the public, and to provide consistent and simple messages to a wide, diverse

audience. In addition, it is important to be transparent with the message and the partnerships, and to evolve and change the message and communication vehicles as needed.

Challenges and Strategies for KT from PPPs

Although PPPs create many opportunities for KT of food-health messages, they face several challenges – including, and most commonly, **public mistrust**. Other challenges include regulatory limitations, complicated and conflicting messages, diverse needs and strengths of PPP stakeholders, varying timing expectations (research is slow, industry and public want fast turnover), and ownership of intellectual property and KT responsibilities within PPPs.

Strategies to overcome these challenges include:

- Connecting with consumers on values and being transparent to build trust
- Engaging with government agencies to work through regulatory barriers,
- PPP stakeholders set and follow agreed upon guidelines and policies:
 - Clear measurable goals that benefit all parties and the public
 - Well defined ownership and responsibilities for stakeholders
 - Agreed upon timelines
 - Flexibility within these policies to accommodate all parties
- Being mindful of length, consistency and simplicity of messages.

Tools to translate food-health knowledge stemming from PPPs

There are many KT tools available for food-health PPPs to communicate messages. Several highlighted throughout the workshop include:

- Print and electronic media (magazines, websites)
- Social media (Facebook, twitter, blogs)
- Nutrition information at the point-of-purchase (retail rating systems, front-of-pack logos)
- Healthcare providers
- Food reformulations and launching of healthier products.

When developing and implementing tools to disseminate information generated from PPPs, KT models can be used that address some of the challenges facing food-health PPPs. One model discussed was the Center for Food Integrity's Trust Model, which advises to communicate information derived from PPPs by first building trust in your audience through listening for the values driving concerns, asking questions to invite dialogue and clarify, and explain your perspective through shared values.

Key Learnings and Moving Forward

This workshop highlighted the value and need for collaboration and cooperation between all sectors in the food-health continuum in order to drive uptake of the food for health agenda and improve the health of our population through food, nutrition and agriculture. In order for these PPPs to be successful and evoke change, effective translation of knowledge is essential, and this requires public and stakeholder trust. Food-health PPPs must be transparent and communication must be consistent, simple, applicable and of interest to diverse groups, and must evolve with the changing environment. Broad, credible nutrition education remains an important component in chronic disease prevention and management, and represents a potential area of focus for food-health PPPs. Challenges to be addressed include who should do the educating and what are the best vehicles for education.

Moving forward, the Food for Health workshop series aims to continue working with key stakeholders to provide a platform for connectivity and develop go forward strategies to advance the food for health agenda.