

Report 6: How Can NIEHS better Disseminate Information

Convener: John Morawetz

Brief History: There is a lack of tools available to distribute information appropriate to the community.

Discussion Highlights:

Electronic Information

- Information overload
- Access
- Credibility!
- Communication strategies
- Research focus
- Local authorities
- Plain language: 30 second sound bites
- Communication about hazards
- GIS
- “Communication-research”
 - how to package
 - evaluate effectiveness

Recommendations:

****Make It a Priority: Strategy Goal

- Training of communicator (funding)
- PR in the science communication
 - why it is relevant
 - how to use information
- Define “dissemination” of EHS information
- Add requirement for communication dissemination to grant funding/DIR
- EH Communication program
 - resources and staff
 - training to communicate with public
 - media training
 - tailor information to audience
 - link to community organizations
- Link with sister agencies, local government, union, etc.
- Role for NTP (interagency)
- Training programs (T32) to include communication science information
- “Mandate” outreach
- Capacity building to develop and communicate clear messages and how to use information
- “Go to” website on how to communicate information
- Develop resources to be able to communicate science information in context; Internal/Extramural to NIEHS (lay summary)
- Develop surrogates (Worker training, community based = appropriate audience)

- Guidance on what is appropriate
 - guidance to researcher in developing message
 - guidance on audience to target and how that group can best receive the information
- New Tools to communicate (Tool Kits)
- Evaluate tools used
- Develop relationship with media community (local, national)
 - Questions/answers section
- EHP maximize “front” section
 - evaluate effectiveness
 - science education
 - market/pitch (news section)
 - MD offices
 - local papers

Why Topic is Important

- Fiscally-constrained times to promote continued funding: build support
- Results of research/understanding is often hard to convey
- Lack of emphasis on communication at NIEHS

Who to Involve

- Media
- Communities
- Healthcare providers (translation)
- Researchers
- Policy makers
- Health departments (WIC)
- Professional societies
- EHS educators
- Workers

Discussion Participants:

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Report 7: Create a global focal point for online environmental health databases, and seek means of linking and integrating their contents.

Convener: Philip Wexler

Brief History:

Health studies that contain environmental data are scattered worldwide. The databases use disparate methods for describing exposures and doses. The research therein tends not to be well characterized and there is no overarching ontology.

Discussion Highlights:

It would be good to look at successful models, e.g. 1. NCI Cohort Consortium – a model of pooling data from disparate epidemiology studies, 2. Comparative Toxicogenomics Database -uses a controlled ontology, although there is still a need to build the exposure portion. There is a need for environmentally relevant ontologies

Recommendation:

Convene a recurring workshop to create an inventory of databases, technologies, and environmental health relevant ontologies with the goal of integrating environmental health data and making it publicly available across studies.

Seek ways to facilitate integration. This would provide an increased ability to pool data and to analyze diverse data.

Recommend the National Library of Medicine (NLM) as a focal point from which environmental health resources can be accessed. NLM already has certain structural components in place and the ultimate structures developed could become standard.

Discussion Participants: John Bucher, Allen Dearry, Stephanie Holmgren, Carolyn Mattingly, Jennifer Sass, Kristina Thayer, Philip Wexler, Deborah Winn