Assessing Process and Outcomes: Evaluating Community-Based Participatory Research

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What Is the Purpose of this Study?

• To determine the relationship, if any, between the collaborative process of conducting the community research collaboration projects and the reported outcomes.

What Is the Problem?

• Although the application of community-based participatory research (CBPR) is advancing, accomplishing collaborative research has been challenging. Until recently, there has been relatively little research on the process or outcomes of CBPR. A better understanding of the process and outcomes of CBPR, and their possible relationship, could lead to improvements in the field.

What Are the Findings?

• Although the projects varied in the measures of the partnership process, the three teams that had the highest outcome scores also had the highest scores for the partnership process.
• In the area of process, teams had the most difficulty conducting the data analysis collaboratively, sharing power, and managing the impact of turnover.
• In the area of outcomes, teams were most effective at improving the quality of research methodology, providing benefits to the participating community agency, and answering questions important to the communities involved.

Who Should Care Most?

• CBPR team members.
• Community-based organizations that participate in or sponsor CBPR projects.
• Funders of CBPR.

Recommendations for Action

• The finding that teams that collaborate more fully also produced more robust research outcomes suggests that interventions aimed at enhancing partnerships could lead to increased outcomes.
• Concrete recommendations to funders and research teams can be made.
  • Signed agreements should be expected among all parties that incorporate elements such as data ownership, turnover, and conflict resolution plans.
  • Agreements should address whether the community organization is responsible for ensuring a competent replacement, if the community’s lead investigator leaves the project, so that the project stays with the community organization.
• By encouraging broader involvement of the lay community, and members of the board and staff, funders can help to ensure that projects are truly CBPR as evidenced by a deep sense of ownership of the project by the broader community and community organization.