

Public Health Nutrition: Translating Research into Practice.

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Public health nutrition is a unique, multifaceted discipline that includes a wide range of experts in the research, policy, and programming sectors.¹ A goal of the SNEB Public Health Nutrition Division is to help translate public health nutrition research into practice and policies. This translation process is essential to ensure practitioners have the tools to implement effective, evidence-based interventions that have demonstrated improvements in nutrition-related behaviors and health outcomes of the target audiences.^{2,3} Furthermore, collaboration between researchers and practitioners is necessary to ensure that researchers are testing interventions that can feasibly be implemented in public health settings.³

The need for translating research into practice is certainly not new to the field of public health nutrition.³ However, as nutrition education programs continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of the population, the dissemination of information between practitioners, policy-makers, and researchers will remain important.³ Many nutrition programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed), have expanded their programming to include strategies that influence food and physical activity environments.⁴ Such program expansion can be made more effective and cost-efficient through the sharing of evidence-based interventions that target individual behaviors, environmental factors, and related policies.^{2,3,4} Additionally, utilizing evidence-based programming and evaluation instruments can be helpful for practitioners when obtaining initial funding and providing evidence of programmatic impact to secure continued funding.² Furthermore, close collaboration between researchers and practitioners is necessary to generate evidence to help establish or advance local, state, and national level nutrition-related policies.³

Several resources are available to assist researchers and practitioners throughout the translation process. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Knowledge to Action (K2A) Framework is a tool to support collaborative efforts between researchers and

practitioners.² Through the K2A Framework, specific guidance is provided on researching, implementing, and evaluating interventions that are feasible and replicable for practitioners.² Additionally, the National Cancer Institute and National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research have extensive collections of individual and environmental level diet and physical activity measures that researchers and practitioners can adopt.^{5, 6} Lastly, the SNAP-Ed Toolkit is an example of how interventions can be made available for professionals to use in practice. This toolkit includes interventions, curricula, and evaluation instruments that are either research- or practice-tested and determined to be appropriate for SNAP-Ed implementing agencies.⁷ Continued contribution to these and similar resources by both researchers and practitioners will help facilitate the essential task of translating research into useful public health interventions.

References

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