

Community Health Risk Factor Management Research Project

Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity
"Research that makes a difference"

October 2007

This exciting and innovative project is a partnership between the Health Promotion Strategies and Settings Branch, NSW Department of Health; Centre for Primary Health Care & Equity, UNSW; and Hunter New England and South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Area Health Services.

Project Aims:

The CHRFM Project aims to increase the capacity of community health services to address chronic disease risk factors as part of their normal clinical work. The project is focusing on following lifestyle risk factors for chronic diseases:

Smoking
Nutrition
Alcohol
Physical Activity

Project Stages:

Background: AHS expression of interest and project planning (2005)

Stage 1: Needs assessment in teams/services (February-May 2006)

Stage 2: Development and testing of approaches to risk factor management (June 2006 – May 2007)

Stage 3: Evaluation and review (June- October 2007)

Stage 4: Dissemination and recommendations (November 2007 –February 2008)

Wider Implementation: The project will move from a pilot phase to a wider implementation phase in early 2008.

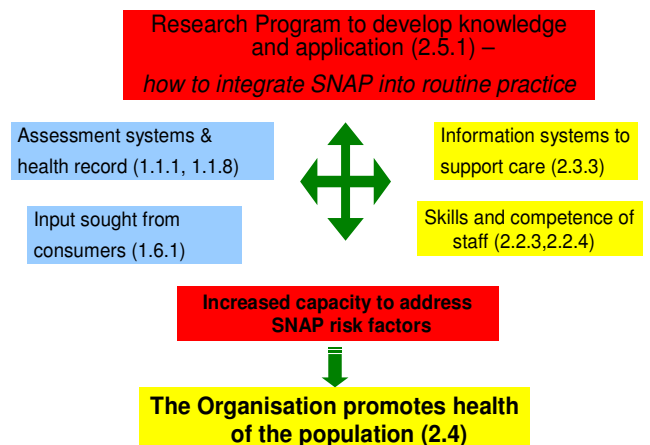
Project Update:

The project is moving towards completion of the stage 3, evaluation and review. The evaluation has involved undertaking risk factor surveys and audits to assess any changes in clinician risk factor practices from baseline. Interviews have also been conducted with 31 staff members to explore the feasibility of implementing the risk factor management models in practice, barriers, facilitators and implications for sustainability and transferability to other teams. Key findings will be discussed with participating teams and stakeholders in November and December and a final report available in February.

Project Helps Services Meet Accreditation Standards

In addition to linking with national and state health plans and initiatives, the project has also helped pilot services meet the Australian Council of Health Standards (ACHS) accreditation criteria. The research project promotes the **development of knowledge and its application in the health care setting (criteria 2.5.1)**. By addressing how to integrate SNAP into routine practice and increase the capacity to address SNAP risk factors, **the organisation promotes health of the population (criteria 2.4)**. The support systems, workforce development and resources provided as part of the project also help services meet a number of other accreditation standards shown below:

ACHS EQuIP Criteria



Heart Foundation 'Prevention in Practice' Project

The Heart Foundation **Prevention in Practice** project is an integrated approach to implementing lifestyle risk factor assessment and prescription within **General Practice**. The project, which is funded by NSW Health and managed by the Heart Foundation, aims to increase the awareness of the benefits of addressing the lifestyle risk factors of smoking, poor nutrition, excessive alcohol consumption, physical inactivity and unhealthy bodyweight (SNAPO) and support effective interventions within General Practice. To ensure maximum reach, the project is designed towards increasing the capacity of Divisions of General Practice (DGPs) within NSW in their work to support chronic disease prevention within the General Practice setting.

Key achievements to date:

- Direct engagement of 117 GPs, 84 practice nurses(PN) in lifestyle risk factor management (through practice visits or training workshops), representing ~17% and 27% of the total GP and practice nurse membership respectively (in the funded DGPs.)
- The development of an online education and training package (in collaboration with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' gplearning team) for GPs and PNs on smoking cessation (with Physical Activity, Nutrition, Alcohol, and Unhealthy Bodyweight training packages to be developed and released by early 2008).

Project direction for 2008 – 2009:

1. Maximising opportunities in preventative care – further engaging practice teams in preventative care activities and increasing use of preventative MBS items such as the 45 year old health check and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health check.
2. Increased focus upon nursing in preventive general practice activities, emphasising a whole of practice approach.
3. Integration of support activities across community health and general practice (see opposite).

Contact Information

For further information please contact Scott Dunn, Prevention in Practice Coordinator on Ph: (02) 9219 2458, email: scott.dunn@heartfoundation.org.au

'Prevention in Practice' in Community Health Services

The Community Health Risk Factor Management Research Project will move from a pilot phase to a wider implementation phase called "Prevention in Practice (PIP) in Community Health Services" in early 2008. Area Health Services will have the opportunity to express interest in participating in the PIP Program.

The Program will provide funding to support service development activities within demonstration Area Health Services to embed risk factor management into routine practice within selected community health teams. Centralised support, resources and evaluation will be provided through the Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity, UNSW.

Opportunities for collaboration to promote "Prevention in Practice"

Through the two 'prevention in practice' programs in Community Health Services and general practice, there will be opportunities for integration of support activities across these primary health care settings. This may include:

- Joint training sessions for community health and general practice staff;
- Working together to build linkages with existing referral services and advocate for new services where required;
- Collaborating in the maintenance of local referral directories;
- Local committees to encourage partnerships between Community Health Services, Divisions of General Practice, Population Health and referral services to support preventative practices.

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