

# Community-Based Participatory Research Methods (CBPR)



# CBPR Definition

- **Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)** - "a partnership approach to research that equitably involves, for example, community members, organizational representatives, and researchers in all aspects of the research process" (Israel et al., 2003)

# Another CBPR Definition

- A collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings".--W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2001)

# What is CBPR?

- An orientation to research that alters researcher-community relationships
- CBPR is NOT:
  - “Community-placed” research
  - Sporadic or symbolic inclusion of communities
  - Basic research

# Why CBPR?

- Growing recognition that “traditional” research approaches have failed to solve complex health problems
- Community demands for research addressing locally identified needs

# Traditional Research as Compared to CBPR

## Traditional Research

- Community is a passive subject of study
- Research Design – done a priori by academic institution
- Needs assessment, data collection, implementation, and evaluation – academic institution's responsibility
- Usually sustainability plan is not included

## CBPR

- Involves the community being studied in the research
- Research Design –done with representatives from community & academic institution
- Needs assessment, data collection, implementation, & evaluation – everyone's responsibility
- Sustainability is priority that begins at program's inception

# Core Values of CBPR

- Participation, influence, and control of non-academics in the process of generating knowledge and change
- Sharing in decision making
- “Mutual ownership” of the processes and products of research
- Co-learning by researchers and community collaborators and “mutual transfer” of expertise and insights

# Conceptual and Historical Roots

- Action Research (1940's, Social Psychology): Bridging gap between theory and practice by involving stakeholders within organizations
- Participatory Research and Participatory Action Research (1960's, Sociology, Anthropology, Community Planning): Involving citizens in research and community development process with an explicit community/social change focus
- Feminist Theory: promoting increased voice for women often marginalized by research
- Community Organizing: recognizing ordinary citizens' ability to promote community change
- Community-Oriented Primary Care: health professionals and community members working together to diagnose and treat a community



# Present Status of CBPR

- CBPR becoming inclusive phrase to characterize participatory research approaches with an explicit social change focus
- CBPR taking place in Public Health, Medicine, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Urban Planning, and other disciplines
- Increase in:
  - 1.Public and private funding for CBPR
  - 2.Academic institutions practicing and promoting CBPR
  - 3.Non-academic institutions promoting CBPR

# Rationale for CBPR

1. Improves the quality and validity of research
2. Enhances the relevance and usefulness of research data for all partners
3. Joins together partners with diverse skills, knowledge, and expertise
4. Strengthens the research and program development capacity of partners

# Rationale for CBPR (cont.)

- 5. Increases possibility of overcoming distrust of research
- 6. Provides additional funds and possible employment opportunities for community partners<sup>7</sup>
- 7. Aims to improve health and well-being of communities, both directly through examining identified needs, and indirectly through increasing control of research process—

Isreal, Schulz, Parker, & Becker (1998)

# CBPR Example: HIV and HPV risk and prevention among Pacific Islander young adults in Southern California

- A mixed-method CBPR study
- Collaboration among a university and two community-based organizations (CBOs) :
  - Tongan Community Service Center (TCSC)
  - Guam Communications Network (GCN)
- A Community advisory board (CAB) guided the study
- CBO member roles:
  - Lead recruitment of young adults, parents, community leaders, and health care providers for FGs and IDIs
  - Conduct FGs and IDs
  - Coding and analysis of qualitative data (in partnership with univ)
  - Interpretation of findings and development of recommendations

# Initiating a CBPR Research Project: Key Steps

1. Select the community with which to work
2. Select key community partners
3. Create joint ownership of study
4. Determine research question(s)
5. Design research study
6. Insert sustainability and action steps

# 1. Select the Community With Which to Work

- Initial step in CBPR
- Community is characterized by “a sense of identification and emotional connection to other members...shared values and norms...common interests, and commitment to meeting shared needs”. [Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998]
- *Community is the unit of identity* (CBPR Principle)



## 2. Select Key Community Partners

- Identify stakeholders that need to be “at the table”
- Having the “water cooler conversation” with identified community stakeholders
- Discussing potential research without creating a university—community dichotomy
- *Builds on strengths and resources of community* (CBPR Principle)
- *Address health from an ecological perspective* (CBPR Principle)



### 3. Create Joint Ownership of the Study

- Determine roles and responsibilities of partners
- Discuss fiscal considerations
- Discuss ownership of data and process for interpreting data
- Create structures and processes for communication between university and community

## 4. Determine Research Question(s)

- “Those who are in control of problem definition are likely to control the entire research process”. [Selener, 1997]
- Generating questions based on both “expert” and “local/citizen” knowledge
- *Co-learning process as both parties learn about phenomena of interest* (CBPR Principle)
- Data collection can be used as a tool to help communities identify their strengths and assets, as well as problems or issues to address

# Data Collection Approaches To Identify Strengths/Assets and Problems/Issues

1. Walking and windshield tours
  - observing community on foot or by car and recording these observations
2. Interviews with key informants
  - formal and informal leaders as well as “ordinary citizens”
3. Guided discussions (e.g., focus groups)

# 5. Design Research Study

- CBPR does not limit choice of research design and/or methods (can be qual, quant, or mixed methods)
- Key consideration is: How are instruments decided upon and developed?
  - Valid, reliable instruments vs. tailoring to local context?
  - Do “researcher” concepts/constructs need to be reworded/rephrased?
  - Processes for creating instruments?
  - Who collects the data?

## 6. Insert Sustainability and Action Steps

- *Long-term commitment from all partners* (CBPR Principle)
- Long history of researchers promising, but not producing, data that will benefit communities!
- Money and/or infrastructure for sustainability and action can be established early in CBPR project
- Creation of clear mission/vision statement for CBPR project helps

# CBPR Example: The Healthy Beginnings Project in Istanbul, Turkey

Used a ten-step community participation process:

1. Situation analysis in local community
2. Establishment of the Community Design Team (CDT)
3. Review of data on maternal and child health
4. Identify priority needs and audience
5. Define and understand the target audience
6. Develop educational and behavioural objectives
7. Develop messages and strategies
8. Construct program plan
9. Implement plan
10. Evaluate and refine program

Turan et al., Health Promotion International, 2003

# CHALLENGES!

- All these steps require a variety of diverse skills and team members, and have **significant challenges!** A few:
  - Community distrust of academic institutions
  - A lot of time necessary to involve key partners and do CBPR
  - Unequal power dynamics may persist
  - Tight deadlines and requirements for grants
  - Divergent expectations and timelines for research products
  - Tension between scientific rigor vs. community acceptability
  - Staff turnover in community organizations
  - Community understanding of statistical analyses

# Community-Based Participatory Research: Action Orientation

Three components of CBPR:

1. Research (i.e., study of health issue)
2. Education (i.e., knowledge gained by researchers and community)
3. Action



# Ways that CBPR Can Count for the Community

- Helping document and/or sustain effective programs, services, and interventions
- Translating interventions (efficacy → effectiveness)
- Promoting public policy and advocacy
- Creating products to help keep community organizations viable, e.g., brochures, fliers, videos, newsletters
- Promoting individual- and community-level empowerment

# Processes to Ensure that CBPR Counts for the Community

1. Ongoing discussion with community about early analyses and emerging findings
2. Joint interpretation of research findings
3. Discussions at start of research project about research products

# CBPR at UAB

- CBPR program to reduce breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer disparities between African Americans and whites in Alabama and Mississippi (Scarinci et al., Eval Prog Plann 2009)
- Establishment of community and institutional capacity to promote gender-relevant tobacco control efforts among Brazilian women through CBPR and training ( Scarinci, NCI, <http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/grants/abstract.asp?ApplID=8133740> )

# Conclusions Regarding CBPR

- An extremely useful method for Maternal and Child Health research, as we aim to promote community health and need community buy-in
- Becoming highly respected and valued by the academic community and funders
- Requires that you have both research skills and community development skills and/or you build a research team that has all the requisite skills