

A Research Partnership Utilizing American Indian Wisdom to Address Tobacco Misuse Among Urban American Indians



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National Conference on Tobacco or Health

May 2005 - Chicago, IL

AICTP Steering Council



Linda Azure - Assiniboine/Nakota/Anishinabe

Jean Forster - University of Minnesota

Audrey Fuller - Dakota

Julie Green - Anishinabe

Jennifer Irving - Oglala Lakota

Julia Littlewolf - Anishinabe

John Poupart - Anishinabe - American Indian Policy Ctr.

Loretta Rivera - Seneca

Kris Rhodes - Anishinabe - University of Minnesota

Patty Thompson - Ho Chunk/Dakota

Hope Flanagan - Six Nations

BACKGROUND

- There is very little useful information on:
 - Why American Indians smoke more
 - American Indian-specific prevention
- Methodological and conceptual flaws limit usefulness of existing research
- Historical distrust between university researchers and American Indian community

CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF THIS PARTNERSHIP:

- Based on the elements of Community Based Participatory Research CBPR (Israel, 1998) and Reality-Based Research RBR (Poupart, 2000)
- The Steering Council is predominantly American Indian
- The Steering Council has final decision-making authority on all aspects of the research
- Monthly working meetings:
 - Plan research protocols and instruments
 - Review project progress and fiscal issues
- Opportunities for all SC members to participate in data collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination activities
- Financial resources shared among partners
- Identified the benefits and barriers to participation for each partner and built solutions into the partnership

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To gather evidence to develop tobacco addiction prevention strategies that are grounded in the culture and values of the American Indian people in the Twin Cities

Step 1: What are the cultural strengths of the American Indian community in the Twin Cities?

Step 2: What are the tobacco-specific issues of the American Indian community here?

Step 3: How do or could the cultural strengths relate to and address the tobacco-specific issues?

MISSION STATEMENT

"Determine as a group, what we need to know, how we can learn it, and how to use what we learn to reduce tobacco abuse among young, urban American Indian people."

PARTNERSHIP TIMELINE

June 2000: Ginew/ Golden Eagle staff & University of MN School of Public Health staff discussed the possibility of a partnership

Dec. 2000: Funding to develop a community-academic research partnership

Jan. - March 2000: One-on-one interviews (n=96) to identify issues and members of the Steering Council

May 2001: Steering Council (SC) formed

PARTNERSHIP TIMELINE

June 2001 - Nov. 2003: Monthly Steering Council meetings

- SC developed a working mission statement
- SC examined different research methodologies
- SC examined the many different traditional uses of tobacco among different tribes
- SC developed research questions for research

PARTNERSHIP TIMELINE

Summer 2003: Elder interviews (n=50)

June 2004: Funding to do the planned research

Summer 2004: Elder talking circles(4 groups)

Oct. 2004: “Honoring Traditional Tobacco” community event

January 2005: Adult tobacco interviews (n=300)

AICTP RESEARCH TO DATE

- Elder interviews (n=50) on traditional tobacco use, commercial use and views of the community's use of each.
- Elder talking circles (4 groups, 18 participants) on traditional tobacco use, commercial use and views of the community's use of each. Elders were selected based on their knowledge of traditions.
- Adult tobacco interviews (n=300) Measured attitudes toward secondhand smoke, prevalence of different types of tobacco use and exposure, and ideas to prevent tobacco addiction among American Indian youth.

CONCLUSIONS

Developing a community-university partnership to conduct research that fits the reality of American Indians involves a great deal of time, effort, and trust on behalf of all partners.

We believe it is necessary to follow a CBPR/RBR model to collect and synthesize community knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about both recreational tobacco misuse and spiritual tobacco use, determine community readiness to address the issue and identify community strengths that can be applied to reduce tobacco misuse.

Research on the American Indian community must be done in partnership with the American Indian community to develop appropriate research questions, strategies and interpretation of the results.