South Texas Oral Health Network
Co-Director: Rahma Mungia, DDS, MSc

Overview

- What is Practice-Based Research Network (PBRN)?
- Benefits of Participating in a PBRN
- How to Engage Community Dentists in Research?
- What is South Texas Oral Health Network?
- Resources Available

What is a Practice-Based Research Network?

- A group of practices devoted primarily to the care of patients, but also committed to collaboratively studying and improving care, with a representative governance structure that exists beyond the needs of a single project
- Tool for transforming the relationship between community clinicians and academic researchers

What is a practice?

- Practice is defined as any clinical setting that provides comprehensive primary care services (acute or chronic illness and primary care)
- The setting can be private or public, community-based, or institutionally based

What is translational research?

- Aims to determine whether research findings from homogenous populations and settings are generalizable to more diverse ones such as those encountered in “real world” practices
- Increases external validity

What are the “Blue Highways” on the NIH Roadmaps?

What are the benefits of participation with a PBRN?

- Access to large amounts of “real world” data
- Access to large numbers of patients
- Strengthens grant applications with pilot data
- Strong track record exists of funded PBRN projects

Why do research in practices?

- Sutton's Law: “that’s where the majority of patients and problems are!”
- Practices are the best place to study the prevention of health problems
- Practices are a good place to study problems over time
- Patients in practices are more representative of any clinical problem than those seen in hospitals

Dental Research

- Dental research is continually discovering improved treatment methods and therapies
- Dentists must stay current with changing therapies
- Evidence-based practice has been shown to keep dentists up to date in order to provide the best care to their patients

“"If we want more evidence-based practice, we need more practice-based evidence.”

- Green LW and R. Glasgow, 2006
Why build research partnerships with community dentists?

- Creation of practice-based evidence
- Quick solutions to health problems
- The current biomedical research engine is designed primarily to drive the academic tenure/promotion system
- It takes an average of 17 years for 14% of new discoveries to be incorporated into practice

What are the steps of collaborative research I should know about?

- Groundwork for Partnership
- Identify research area
- Generate study questions
- Design and implement study
- Analyze and interpret data
- Implement results
- Disseminate findings

How to generate a research question?

- *I wonder if ____ is related to ____?*
- *Why do patients with ____ usually present with ____ symptom?*
- *Are patients with ______ condition more likely to have/develop/present with ___________?*
- *How common is __________ in my patient population?*

What might I need to know about community dentist and the community setting?

- Leadership of the clinic (clinic directors, staff supervisor, etc.)
- Site visit with clinicians and staff are essential for the success of the project
- Human Subjects Protection training requirement

What are the challenges of collaboration I should think about as I consider research collaborated with community dentists?

- Funding to build relationships with clinicians
- Time needed for collaborative planning
- Negotiating between your own research agenda and the clinicians’ needs
What do I need to know to obtain funding for collaborative research?

- Funding is scarce for relationship building
- Start with a small pilot study and use the preliminary data in a grant application for a more ambitious study
- NIH and AHRQ recognize the importance of PBRNs and are now requiring that you meaningfully engage the community

South Texas Oral Health Network

- Goal: Is to develop the research infrastructure for generating practical, timely information that can be used by dental practitioners to enhance the quality and efficacy of oral health care.
- Mission: “Generate evidence that matters in dentistry”

What is STOHN?

- South Texas Oral Health Network (Formed 2008)
- Co-Directors: Rahma Mungia Thomas Oates
- 20 members
- 14 practices
- 4 new clinics

Size and Diversity of the Patient Population in STOHN

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What kinds of studies take place in community dental settings?

- Descriptive and observational studies
- Intervention studies
- Qualitative and mixed methods studies
  - Focus groups or in-depth interviews

What are some examples of STOHN Studies

- Completed studies:
  - Prevalence of Undiagnosed Diabetes in Dental Offices
  - Health Literacy Card Study
- Ongoing studies:
  - Barriers to Tobacco Cessation Counseling Services
  - Oral Cancer Screening Study
  - Diabetes Card Study
What options for research partnerships with community-based dentists should I know about?

- Participatory Engagement
  - Clinician serves as co-investigator
- Supportive Engagement
  - Gain input from clinicians on research question, study designs and implementation protocols
- Minimal Engagement
  - Contact clinicians to assist in recruiting of patients for a fully designed and funded study with little input from clinicians

What are the next steps?

- Apply for CTSA pilot funds to conduct a small research project (no more than 3 month project) in STOHN
- Use the PBRN as your primary care laboratory

What administrative mechanisms should I know about when setting up a research partnership with community clinicians?

- Use the PBRN Resource Center housed at the UT Health Science Center to assist you with:
  - Recruitment of primary care sites
  - Human Subjects Protection Training
  - Training of clinicians and staff
  - Letters of support/MOU's
  - Marketing

How do I learn More?

- To become a STOHN member contact Dr. Rahma Mungia at 210–567–7809 or email at mun gia@uthscsa.edu
- Visit our website to complete a brief survey. http://iims.uthscsa.edu/community_pbrn_sto hn.html