**Conducting High Impact Research**

**Small Group Activity 2 – DIRECTIONS**

**Formulating Meaningful Research Questions & Identifying Stakeholders**

To improve the relevance of research questions to the policy and program context, researchers should consider:

* The importance of the research question to local and international priorities
* The answerability of the research question, given available methodological approaches, cost, and time considerations
* Whether the expected results have a direct programmatic and/or policy application
* The potential public health impact resulting from the use of data

For the purpose of this exercise, participants will focus on ensuring that research results are relevant to program and policy needs (bullet 3 above). To do so, consider what additional study themes should be addressed by the research to inform the implementation of positive study results.

Directions

1. Select a reporter to record the group work on flip chart paper and report back to the larger group. Locate Exercise 2 worksheet.
2. For the research question assigned to your group, develop a hypothesis. The hypothesis is the provisional theory guiding the research (see Exercise 2 worksheet – part 1).
3. For the research question assigned to your group, identify the primary program or policy implication. The program implication will be the action undertaken if the hypothesis is supported by the data.
4. Assuming the hypothesis is correct, what additional questions need to be answered to implement the recommendation of the study effectively?
5. Assuming the hypothesis is *not* correct, what additional information would help to interpret the results?
6. Considering where the research falls in the program-policy continuum, what stakeholders need to be involved in the research activity? Use the Stakeholder Analysis Matrix to guide this discussion (see Exercise 2 worksheet – part 2). When filling out the Stakeholder Analysis Matrix, complete only columns 1–3 (stakeholder name, description, and role).

EXAMPLE

Question:  Does training nurses to do adherence counseling for antiretroviral therapy (ART) improve ART adherence rates? *(program formulation)*

Hypothesis: Adherence rates will be higher among clients seeing nurses who have had adherence counseling training.

Program implication: Train nurses to do ART adherence counseling.

What else would you need to know to implement a positive study finding? How long does a typical counseling session take? Is there a difference among the types of nurses administering the counseling and adherence rates? Do nurses perform better with supervision support? Does counseling need to be repeated to retain adherence rates? If so, how often?

Research Questions:

1. Can injectable contraception (DMPA) be provided safely by paramedical workers to increase contraceptive prevalence rates (CPR)?
2. Is HIV mortality,incidence, or prevalence improving in countries with the largest Global Fund (GF) programs, compared to control countries?
3. Is the completion rate for the recommended 4 ante-natal visits better in clinics in which there is a higher staff-to-client ratio?
4. Does marrying before age 15 result in higher levels of adolescent pregnancy and other negative health outcomes?
5. Are OVC programs improving the well-being of OVC and their families?
6. What is the status of health-care-seeking behavior among children under 5 years of age?

**Designing High Impact Research**

**Small Group Activity 2 – WORKSHEET 1**

**Formulating Meaningful Research Questions**

1. Research Question: Can injectable contraception (DMPA) be provided safely by paramedical workers to increase CPR?

Hypothesis:

Decision recommendation:

Additional questions to inform implementation of the study findings:

1. Research Question: Is HIV mortality,incidence, or prevalence improving in countries with the largest GF programs, compared to control countries?

Hypothesis:

Decision recommendation:

Additional questions to inform implementation of the study findings:

1. Research Question: Is the completion rate for the recommended 4 ante-natal visits better in clinics in which there is a higher staff-to-client ratio?

Hypothesis:

Decision recommendation:

Additional questions to inform implementation of the study findings:

1. Research Question: Does marrying before age 15 result in higher levels of adolescent pregnancy and other negative health outcomes?

Hypothesis:

Decision recommendation:

Additional questions to inform implementation of the study findings:

1. Research Question: Are OVC programs improving the well-being of OVC and their families?

Hypothesis:

Decision recommendation:

Additional questions to inform implementation of the study findings:

1. Research Question: What is the status of health-care-seeking behavior among children under 5 years of age?

Hypothesis:

Decision recommendation:

Additional questions to inform implementation of the study findings:

**WORKSHEET 2**

**Identifying Stakeholders**

**Research Question:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| **Name of Stakeholder Organization (and specific individual, if required)** | **Stakeholder Description** | **Potential Role in Research Activity and Use of Results** | **Level of Knowledge of Research Topic** | **Level of Commitment to Research Topic (positive and negative)** | **Constraints to Participate in Research Activity** | **When to Involve** |
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**Name of stakeholder:** Full name of organization, individual’s title. Indicate if national, regional, local focus/interests. **Stakeholder description:** Overview of organization’s purpose, primary scope of work. **Potential role:** Description of stakeholder’s potential role or vested interest in the research or application of findings. **Level of knowledge:** Identify specific areas of stakeholder’s expertise or knowledge relevant to research topic, or specific lack thereof. **Level of commitment:** Indicate if stakeholder supports or opposes potential outcomes of the research activity, and why. **Constraints:** List possible limitations that could constrain stakeholder from participating in activity. **When to involve:** Indicate if stakeholder is involved throughout the process or at selected phases of the activity – specify which phases.

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