

RTNA Conference Report

Why is KT important to your organization? What is my role/interest in KT?

As a gerontological nurse and new investigator in the Faculty of Nursing I am interested in optimizing the value of my research. In particular I am hopeful that the findings my research will be useful to improving the well-being of frail older adults. For this reason I have invested 1.75 years in a postdoctoral fellowship experience with my mentor, Dr Carole Estabrooks, the Canada Research Chair in Knowledge Translation. I am particularly interested in developing partnerships with decision-makers, identifying knowledge translation interventions that facilitate the adoption of innovations in long-term care settings, and enhancing the sustainability of interventions to support the functional abilities of older adults.

Context – Overview of Conference, the intended audience, and the theme.

The conference entitled, *Improving Health Care & Health Systems with Knowledge Translation*, targeted an international group of KT researchers, policy makers and other decision-makers working in health systems. The conference themes were several: integrated knowledge translation, the challenges and rewards of building multidisciplinary research collaborations and programs, the challenges and rewards of forming sustainable researcher-decision-maker partnerships, and the need for knowledge translation theory and frameworks. The conference used a variety of methods to engage an exchange of ideas of amongst participants and illustrated creative ways of influencing behaviour using social networking and music!

Session Overview – Keynote Monday June 7

The workshop lead by Gail MacKean and Janice Popp of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) was a memorable session for me. In it they illustrated how they hoped to influence social change by emphasizing the engagement of researchers and community stakeholders with the MHCC and its Advisory Committees. It was a good example of integrated knowledge translation research which complemented some of what I have learned about integrated knowledge translation with my mentor Dr Estabrooks. Some of the key messages in this session included:

The value of positioning the MHCC as a “knowledge mobilizer”

By integrating the stakeholders into the research process it is anticipated that the dissemination of the research findings will be a natural process that happens concurrently with the project rather than at the end of the grant. It is also anticipated that the change that takes place will be sustained beyond the life of the research project.

The dilemmas and challenges of integrated knowledge translation

1. Universities set up barriers for researchers to participate in research projects with organizations such as MHCC because they take a percentage of the research funds for infrastructure expenses.
2. Contract negotiation with university lawyers involves the negotiation of intellectual property.
3. Integrated knowledge translation is time consuming.

Knowledge exchange is a social process

The coproduction of knowledge that is useful is more likely to make a difference in the settings where the knowledge was generated. Research uptake is integrated into the process.

Key Lessons

One key lesson that I gained from this conference is that I am not alone in my interest in the sustainability of adopted innovations. The issue was raised in several sessions *and* I came across a very useful poster entitled “*A Closer Look at the Concept of Sustainability*” which has pointed me to the literature in this specialized area. This issue of sustainability has arisen with my postdoctoral research: as I prepare to end my research and plan for closure, the two long-term care facilities where I have introduced a mobility innovation as part of my research are asking for support to sustain the innovation.

What I will change in my KT practice as a result of this conference.

Because of this conference I have made some connections that I expect will be beneficial for my career. In particular I was able to approach one individual who has agreed to review a grant application that I am currently writing. Integrated knowledge translation is a complex endeavor. As a new investigator it is not appropriate for me to begin with an integrated knowledge translation research project however I am fairly certain that this is the direction I will be going in a few years. I plan to follow-up on the sustainability literature that I noted from a poster and integrate this into a research report and a grant application that I am writing.