Cancer Information Service: An Essential Component of Cancer Control

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The National Cancer Institute’s Cancer Information Service (CIS), one of the premiere cancer information programs in the United States, has become a nationally recognized collaborator in cancer communication research.

- Numerous special issue journal publications and monographs devoted to CIS-based research:
  - *Monogr Natl Cancer Inst*, 1993
  - *Preventive Medicine*, 1998
  - *Journal of Cancer Education*, 2007

- Over 140 peer-reviewed publications in cancer communication research
“If the CIS were an academically based organization conducting health communications research, this [record of peer-review publications] would, by any standard, be a noteworthy accomplishment. The fact that the CIS is, first and foremost, a service program in cancer communications only serves to underscore this remarkable achievement” (Marcus, et al, 2005).
Why has the CIS collaborated in cancer communication research?

Consistent with the overall mission of the NCI:
- Reduce cancer mortality and morbidity through research
- Research provides a mechanism for enhancing the CIS service program, with an emphasis on:
  - Testing new and innovative interventions that can improve service
  - Testing interventions within the usual service environment of the CIS to maximize dissemination
Successfully tested behavioral counseling and informed decision-making interventions *to respond to* the caller’s main reason for calling the CIS 1-800-4-CANCER telephone number

- Smoking cessation (Orleans et al, 1998)
- Genetic testing for breast cancer (Miller et al, 2005)

Successfully tested *proactive* behavioral counseling by telephone appended to usual service calls to the CIS 1-800-4-CANCER telephone number

- Screening mammography (Marcus et al, 1993)
- Diet/nutrition (Marcus et al, 1998)
Successfully tested proactive outcalls to underserved geographically defined neighborhoods to promote screening mammography (Crane et al, 1998)

Successfully tested paid media campaigns to extend the reach of the CIS in promoting smoking cessation (Cummings et al, 1993; Boyd et al, 1998)

Successfully tested tailored print materials mailed to callers following their usual service call the CIS

  - Diet/nutrition (Latimer et al, 2005; Heimendinger et al, 2005)
  - Cancer screening (Latimer et al, 2005; Marcus et al, 2005)

Successfully tested clinical trials print material (booklet) that has subsequently been used internationally as a model for providing information about clinical trials (Davis et al, 1993)
Typical Research Design Embedded within Usual Service Calls to the CIS Telephone Program

Following Usual Service, Information Specialist Determines Eligibility (ECRF and/or a few eligibility questions)

Describe Study, Informed Consent, Complete Baseline Interview

Randomization On-Site at Contact Centers

Usual Service/Minimal Intervention

Experimental Intervention

Follow-Up Assessments for Efficacy/Program Evaluation
The CIS Model for Collaborative Research
(Marcus et al, 2005)

- Research studies should provide the CIS with an opportunity to improve service as well as contribute to science.
- Research studies must not compromise the service mandate of the CIS.
- Research studies should be designed in full partnership with the CIS.
- Intervention/research protocols must be carefully pre-tested before wide-scale implementation among CIS clients.
  - Service mandate cannot be compromised.
Training of CIS staff to conduct the research should respect the existing train-the-trainer program of the CIS

- CIS Training Coordinators

Monitoring adherence to research protocols by CIS staff should likewise respect the existing quality control infrastructure of the CIS

- CIS Service Managers/Supervisors

CIS leadership and management staff should be involved as full partners in data interpretation and publication of results
“If the CIS, with its complex organizational structure and long-standing tradition of service, can mount a successful program of research, are there other health communication systems and programs that are also willing to form similar partnerships in research?” (Marcus, et al, 2005).
References


Marcus et al, 1998. Increasing Fruit and Vegetable Consumption among Callers to the CIS: Results From a Randomized Trial. Preventive Medicine Vol 27: No.5; S16-S28.
