

Helping Basic Scientists Engage with Community Partners to Enrich and Accelerate Translational Research

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Thematic Area Innovative Methods of Community Engagement

Abstract

In 2009, The Rockefeller University Center for Clinical and Translational Science partnered with Clinical Directors Network (CDN), a practice-based research network (PBRN) serving low income and minority populations, to create a community-engaged research navigation (CEnR-Nav) program to foster research that pairs basic science and community-driven scientific aims. The CEnR-Nav program is led by one academic Navigator and one PBRN Navigator, and supported by a community engagement specialist. Through a series of collaborative meetings and joint activities, the program facilitates the development of basic science-community partnerships and jointly authored research protocols. Community or academic stakeholders may initiate a CEnR-Nav project. Optimally CEnR-Nav starts early in project development, but can accommodate a project at any stage. Under the guidance of the Navigators, the academic (e.g. Principal Investigator) and community stakeholders move sequentially through the stages of building a partnership, aligning aims, jointly developing protocols and funding applications, conducting the study, analyzing and disseminating the results, and preparing applications for additional funding to sustain the partnership into subsequent projects. The number and duration of the CEnR-Nav meetings for each project depends on the complexity of the project; projects may be categorized as brief (1-3 meetings), moderate (4-10 meetings), or extended (>10 meetings).

From 2009-2014, projects were initiated by the community organizers or clinicians (3), students/trainees (10), academic investigators (7), or the Navigators/facilitators (5). 25 CEnR-Navigated projects were incorporated into 23 clinical translational protocols and 2 embedded sub-studies; 19/25 (76%) identified community partners, and 9/19 (47%) named them as co-investigators; 9/25 protocols (36%) included a T3 or T4 translational aim. 7/25 protocols (28%) secured external funding, 11/25 (44%) have disseminated results through presentations or publications, and 5/7 (71%) projects published results that included a community partner as a co-author. Longer navigations were associated with incorporation of T3 or T4 aims (9/19, 47%) and securing external funding (7/19, 37%).

Learning lab attendees will divide into groups and be assigned roles (e.g. community partner, basic scientist, patient) and participate in several of the stages of CEnR-Nav (e.g. engaging with stakeholders, aligning aims, protocol development, and operational problem-solving during study conduct). Groups will be provided with project context and details, and will CEnR-Navigate the project. Navigators will facilitate discussions; groups will reconvene to share progress, experiences and lessons learned. Acquired skills will be broadly applicable to diverse groups of stakeholders, including clinicians, patients, and hard to reach communities.

Measurable Objectives

- 1) Use active learning and participation to attain the key skills of each operational stage of the CEnR-Nav model.
- 2) Understand how CEnR-Nav can be used to develop and strengthen collaborations among academic and community stakeholders in order to create protocols that address mutual interests.
- 3) Identify the best practices and factors that are essential to the successful implementation of CEnR-Nav modeled programs at other institutions.

Schedule

- 1) Introduction to CEnR-Navigation - 15 min
- 2) Project and role assignments for CenR-Nav exercise – 10 min
- 3) Activity: CEnR-Nav of projects- 30 min
- 4) CEnR-Nav: Lessons learned, Barriers, Facilitators – 20 min
- 5) Generalizability, and Q&A – 15 min

Relevance Statement

Bringing together community members and basic scientists to jointly design and conduct translational research can enhance its relevance to the community. The CEnR-Nav program facilitates partnerships among community and academic stakeholders resulting in work that spans the translational science spectrum, and accelerates translation into improved population health.