

Issues

Community-Based Research Facilitators (CBRFs) represent a unique component of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research (CBR) Program. Facilitators help build research capacity by working in their regions with community organizations, academics, and people living with HIV by assisting in HIV/AIDS CBR project development. One critical role of the CBRFs is the advancement of a greater understanding and uptake of the community-based research process among academic researchers.

Description

CBRF representatives from across Canada act as broker in the process of building relationships between stakeholders in both academic and non-academic settings. Particular attention is given to the challenges of this role including: ensuring scientific rigour when utilizing CBR methodology while also allowing for an organic community process within an established research framework; increasing the pool of CBR-informed academic researchers available to participate in community-driven initiatives; and defining the role of CBRFs for academic researchers as a broker in establishing the partnership between community and academia while ensuring adherence to CBR principles. There is a demonstrated need to build bridges of communication between the academic and community milieus that take into account the differences between them.

Partnerships

- T.R. Howard** BC Persons With AIDS Society, Vancouver, Canada
- P. Migliardi** Nine Circles Community Health Centre, Winnipeg, Canada
- L. Narciso** Ontario AIDS Network, Toronto, Canada
- M. Bernier** COCQ-SIDA, Montreal, Canada
- F. Shafiq** Alberta Community Council on HIV, Edmonton, Canada
- M. Amirault** Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, West and East Canada
- F. Andersen** Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, West and East Canada

Building

between

Lessons learned

The CBRF facilitates the ongoing relationships from the development of a research question through the funding process, project delivery and, finally, the results dissemination while simultaneously protecting community interests and ensuring scientific rigour in the results. The field of HIV/AIDS research benefits by developing a pool of informed, available academic researchers that can be matched with community groups interested in conducting research within their community.

Community Organizations

Next steps

Developing inroads into academic institutions and with individual academic researchers is a critical, ongoing role of CBRFs and continues to be a priority for their HIV/AIDS CBR efforts. Case studies and best practice guidelines will be developed by CBRFs in collaboration with other CBR stakeholders and then shared among CBR practitioners. There is a need for ongoing promotion of the value and rigour of CBR, and for new (and opportunistic) ways to engage community organizations, academic institutions and individual academic researchers to strengthen the research and practice outcomes in the field of HIV.



Academic Researchers

A Critical Role for Community-Based Research Facilitators in Canada