

Workshop Abstracts

Environmental Health Disparities & Environmental Justice Meeting

Contents

Morning Workshops	2
Best Practices for Community-Engaged Research: Including Louisiana Coastal Communities in the Research Agenda.....	2
Community-Academic Engagement through Community Monitoring by Neighborhood Assessment Teams (“A” Teams) and Production of CBPR Manual.....	3
Cumulative Impacts and Children’s Environmental Health	4
Enhancing Engagement in Community Research with Theatre of the Oppressed.....	5
From Theory to Practice: Successful Communication Approaches That Build Trust.....	6
Macroepigenetics Research and Intervention Design in Action.....	7
Using Research Data to Educate, Advocate, and Organize: Community-Academic Collaboration as a Way to Enhance EJ Campaigns	8
Afternoon Workshops.....	10
Community Outreach and Collaboration with Philadelphia Inner City Neighborhoods Impacted by Former Lead Smelters.....	10
Creating, Collecting, and Telling Our Stories: Tools for Multi-Stakeholder Engagement.....	11
Environmental Health Research and Environmental Injustice: Do No Harm	12
Evaluating PEPH Activities.....	13
Methods to Collect and Organize Information for Community-Based Cumulative Risk Assessments...	14
Policy Advocacy Training to Promote Environmental Health	15

Morning Workshops

Best Practices for Community-Engaged Research: Including Louisiana Coastal Communities in the Research Agenda

Presenters: Tarase Carter (Tulane University)

Farah A. Arosemena (Tulane University)

Juana Crear

Topic: Community-Engaged Research

Abstract:

The training workshop will target how the Crescent Region Covering Kids & Families Coalition transitioned into a community-academic initiative and became the Crescent Region Collaborative Coalition. The integration of the coalition and the collaborative problem solving framework into the Tulane University Center for Environmental Health, Leadership, and Strategic Initiatives was an evolutionary step based upon the need for Global Environmental Health Sciences faculty to garner skills and knowledge relating to community engagement, community engaged research, and community based participatory research. As these skills are increasingly in demand at academic institutions, it was a natural transition to embed these essential components across funded projects. In 2012 representatives from five urban and rural Southeast Louisiana parish community-based groups participated in a coalition leadership team planning meeting designed to identify elements of an effective community-academic partnership to address health disparities more holistically, rather than from a silo driven approach. Realizing that stakeholder investment is maximized when community leaders and the academic investigative team commit to the benefits to be derived and contributions to be made by the partnership, the Crescent Region Collaborative was formed. Key elements of partnership building, social advocacy, and navigation to services by way of the Coalition have been closely explored to uncover programmatic facilitators and potential barriers that can significantly impact program sustainability and future planning.

Community-Academic Engagement through Community Monitoring by Neighborhood Assessment Teams (“A” Teams) and Production of CBPR Manual

Presenters: Andrea Hricko (University of Southern California)
Carla Truax (University of Southern California)
Jessica Tovar

Abstract:

Collaboratively with its community partners in THE Impact Project, USC has developed several neighborhood assessment teams, or A-Teams, which involve community/EJ group staff and volunteers (paid with stipends) to count traffic and measure ultrafine particles, following several training sessions by USC and UCLA scientists who are members of the NIEHS-funded Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center (Center). This “street science,” coupled with new USC and UCLA epidemiologic studies linking traffic exposures to higher levels of asthma and reduced lung function, as well as low birth weight and premature babies, helped build the science base for this work. The A-Team members have presented their findings to community members and policymakers. But perhaps more importantly, they have become empowered by their A-Team efforts because they report a deeper understanding of the science and are more comfortable sharing their results through public speaking. The EJ and community groups also have offered extensive training on environmental health and community organizing issues to the team members. Most of the members are Latinas, speak Spanish as their first language, are mothers of children with asthma, and some have only a high school education. They have become effective community leaders advocating for clean air policies through these community-academic collaborative efforts. The COEC and the community organizations have produced an instruction manual on community-based research, featuring case studies of their experiences. It is in English and Spanish, and intended to serve as a resource for other organizations.

Participants in this workshop will experience an A-Team training: they will handle the P-Trak portable air monitors (taking measurements outside), review field protocols and use them to count traffic (as displayed on a video monitor), record real-time P-trak measurements and see a demonstration of P-Trak graphing techniques, as well as review the instruction manual regarding CBPR techniques for investigating traffic pollution.

Cumulative Impacts and Children's Environmental Health

Presenter: Amy D Kyle (University of California – Berkeley)

Topics: Translation, Communication, Dissemination
Cumulative Risk Exposure

Abstract:

Objective: to examine cumulative impacts with children's environmental health.

Many children face disparities considered under the rubric of cumulative impacts: environmental exposures, interaction of environmental exposures with psychosocial factors, and effects at the individual and community level. In addition, children are often more susceptible to effects of such exposures, and early life exposures contribute to disease throughout the life course. Consequently, the most impacted populations may be children in environmental justice communities or other such contexts.

The session has four parts:

1. technical update on the evolution and current status of methods for assessing and addressing cumulative impacts/risks (20m presentation; 10m questions and comments)
2. technical update and discussion of current findings about the susceptibility of children to cumulative impacts (20m presentation; 10m questions and comments)
3. discussion of needs to better assess and address cumulative impacts and children's environmental health (20m)
4. identification of key next steps (10m)

This is based in part on a symposium in January 2013 in Sacramento involving the western children's environmental health research centers and pediatric environmental health specialty units.

Critical points are to incorporate additional needs of children and significance of early life exposure in approaches to cumulative impacts and health disparities. This conference would pose a great opportunity to get feedback and coalescence of thinking about best approaches.

A long term goal would be to bring together researchers and activists from the children's environmental health and the environmental justice/health disparities/cumulative impacts (and risks) communities for further collaboration and investigation in the future.

Enhancing Engagement in Community Research with Theatre of the Oppressed

Presenters: John Sullivan (University of Texas Medical Branch – Galveston)
Bryan Parras (T.E.J.A.S. – Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services)

Topics: Community-Engaged Research
Translation, Communication, Dissemination
Cumulative Risk Exposure

Abstract:

Workshop will offer overview of basic concepts / techniques used in applying Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) to Community Engaged Research, particularly with reference to Translation, Communication and Dissemination of research findings / environmental health guidelines, and implementation of major values and principles of CBPR within the community research social dynamic. Applied use of TO techniques will focus on creation of community ethnographies keyed to over-arching concepts of environmental justice, social determinants of health / health disparities and special vulnerabilities within populations. Ethnography building culminates in a "thick description" of cumulative risk from community perspective in terms of how multiple stressors bear on the life-ways of an EJ community. We will also unpack the social dynamic among researchers, community advocates and residents using Image Theatre (a special application of TO).

From Theory to Practice: Successful Communication Approaches That Build Trust

Presenters: Nancy Palate (California Department of Public Health)
Gabriele Windgasse (California Department of Public Health)

Topic: Translation, Communication, Dissemination

Abstract:

The purpose for this workshop is to provide participants with ideas for the practical application of standards such as the national standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in healthcare while conducting community outreach and education. These standards were published in 2001 by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health as a way to address the needs of racial, ethnic, and linguistic population groups that experience unequal access to healthcare services. The California Department of Public Health has implemented the principles of the CLAS standards in a number of projects that involve Environmental Justice communities.

During the workshop, one or more examples of CDPH's approaches will be presented and discussed. At the end of the workshop participants will be able to identify ways in which a message can be communicated, translated, and disseminated to make sure that the targeted communities are reached.

The workshop will consist of a 15 minute round of introductions and icebreaker, a 15 minute presentation, 30 minutes of an interactive small-group activity, and 30 minutes of a round table discussion/Q&A session where participants will be sharing information and their best-practices or examples in which their programs, agencies, and/or organizations have contributed to eliminate the racial and ethnic health or environmental disparities.

Macroepigenetics Research and Intervention Design in Action

Presenters: Renee Dufault (Food Ingredient and Health Research Institute)
Zara Berg (Fort Peck Community College)

Topics: Community-Engaged Research
Translation, Communication, Dissemination

Abstract

The objective of the workshop is to teach participants how to use a macroepigenetics research method to design community based studies and interventions to promote dietary changes and reductions in disease prevalence. Participants will be introduced to the concept of epigenetics through a 17 minute NOVA video clip. They will learn to access and utilize two important government databases to identify specific factors contributing to disease development via a small group exercise. They will see an example of the development of a successful macroepigenetic model to explain autism prevalence (Dufault et al., 2012). A handout will be provided which gives an example of a successful study and educational intervention to reduce pre-diabetes in a small Indian community using a macroepigenetic approach. Through discussion in their small groups, participants will plan a study and educational intervention to determine the role of at least one diet related factor in the development of one of the following dis-ease conditions autism, cardiovascular disease, ADHD, Type-2 diabetes.

Using Research Data to Educate, Advocate, and Organize: Community-Academic Collaboration as a Way to Enhance EJ Campaigns

Presenters: Beverly-Xaviera Watkins (Weill Cornell Medical College)

Damaris Reyes (Good Old Lower East Side)

David Shuffler (Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice)

Topics: Community-Engaged Research
Research Deserts

Abstract:

Failures in community-academic collaboration are largely related to four areas: *inequitable distribution of financial and intellectual resources* [increased and uncompensated time demand on the community partner]; *inequitable decision-making processes* [a lack of transparency in the process of planning and implementing, and dissemination of results that renders the community partners role in the research as advisory]; *inequitable distribution of risks and rewards* [inadequate disclosure of project specific community risks in research such as stigmatization, and potential community impact of remediation efforts—for example, the mandatory evacuation of housing after exposures are identified—and, or exclusion from the rewards of research such as data ownership, publication input and authorship]; *inequitable burdens* [failure of either the academic or community partner to fulfill its obligation to the partnership in particular bi-directional capacity building]. The objective of this interactive workshop is to examine a set of best practices that community-based organizations can use as a blueprint for engaging in environmental health research. Participants will learn strategies to ensure that: 1. The community drives the research conceptualization process from inception, in collaboration with the academic partner; 2. The community sets the research agenda based upon its needs, concerns and priorities 3. The academic partner provides adequate scientific expertise, assistance and support; 4. The research data collected can be used to educate, advocate and organize the community. **The workshop will be led by two local NYC community leaders currently engaged in building EJ campaigns using environmental health research data from the NIEHS-funded GoLES EJ Collaborative and NIMHD/EPA-funded Environmental Health Disparities Research Core at Weill Cornell Medical College.**

Skills Building:

Step 1: Deciding Whether to Partner with Researchers

Assess the benefits and risks of collaborating

- Evaluate the research partnership using the CACSH partnership self-assessment tool
- Collaboratively develop the research agenda in a theory of change logic model workshop
- Create a detailed work plan that outlines all of your project responsibilities and, the data and support you will receive from the research
- Ensure that you will have adequate financial and intellectual resources to complete the work

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Using Research Data to Educate, Advocate, and Organize (cont'd)

Step 2: Defining the Community's EJ Issues

Identify local environmental and health concerns

- Create an Environmental Health Community Profile that can be used to educate community members including elected officials
- Conduct interviews with community members and community and government leaders
- Rank environmental issues based on community concerns and priorities
- Gauge community mistrust and distrust of research

Step 3: Creating an EJ Campaign Work Plan

Determine what changes in policies, systems and power dynamics could address these issues

- Develop strategies to address identified community mistrust and distrust of research
- Select target environmental issues for the campaign
- Define the set of conditions that cause these issues
- Discuss potential opposition and barriers to change
- Set campaign goals, strategies and tactics
- Use research data to bolster campaign

Step 4: Building a Base through Community Outreach

Invest residents in the environmental justice campaign

- Conduct One on Ones to facilitate ownership of the issues
- Door knock and Phone Bank to build support and gauge resistance
- Hold community meetings to provide information and answer questions
- Foster the growth of residents as campaign leaders
- Engage local government leaders to support campaign and advocate for policy change

Step 5: Developing an Environmental Justice Campaign Toolbox

Capitalize on campaign success and failure

- Use the research data to educate community members and community and government leaders
- Conduct interviews to get community feedback on the campaign and the collaboration
- Identify campaign plan strengths and weaknesses
- Discuss and monitor resultant changes in policy, systems and power dynamics
- Develop a tracking system to identify emerging community environmental health concerns and threats
- Evaluate the research partnership using the CACSH partnership self-assessment tool

Afternoon Workshops

Community Outreach and Collaboration with Philadelphia Inner City Neighborhoods Impacted by Former Lead Smelters

Presenters: Barbara Allerton (Pennsylvania Department of Health)
Ana Pomales (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
Drew Serres (New Kensington Community Development Corporation)

Topics: Translation, Communication, Dissemination
Disease Outcomes

Abstract:

Former lead smelters pose a potential serious health risk for many children living near these former industrial sites, including the J.T. Lewis former lead smelter in inner city Philadelphia. This proposal describes various collaborative and complimentary approaches the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry conducted in collaboration with the New Kensington Community Development Corporation and other agencies to address this important public health problem. This workshop will demonstrate the community mapping and planning techniques used in conjunction with a soil kitchen where backyard soil samples are tested for lead and other metals. We will help prepare folks on running a Soil Kitchen-type workshop in their own communities, we will have participants break out into groups and analyze relevant case studies and develop responses. Also, we will brainstorm how to utilize community mapping to improve outreach to health professionals and community members who live and work in the footprint of the former smelter. For the last part of the workshop we will have participants create an action plan for their own event/program based on their own community dynamics. This will allow us to see where folks still have questions or issues. After completing these two activities we will have all the groups come back together and share what the main best practices they found to be useful (along with sharing our own).

Creating, Collecting, and Telling Our Stories: Tools for Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

Presenter: Ogonnaya Dotson Newman (WE ACT for Environmental Justice, Inc.)

Topics: Community-Engaged Research
Translation, Communication, Dissemination
Cumulative Risk Exposure
Research Deserts

Abstract:

You don't have to be a scientist or a researcher to find and use statistical info about your community. Harlem's WE ACT for Environmental Justice created an "Environmental Health Report Card" for advocacy and organizing. The Report Card combines health surveys, data from city, state and national agencies, and common sense. In this session, we'll examine how WE ACT developed and uses the Report Card. We will also explore what resources are out there to help you get started and what skills you might need to use these types of tools through a case study exercise.

Environmental Health Research and Environmental Injustice: Do No Harm

Presenters: Madeleine Kangsen Scammell (Boston University)

Naeema Muhammad

Steve Wing (University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill)

Topics: Epidemiology

Community-Engaged Research

Translation, Communication, Dissemination

Abstract:

The workshop objectives are threefold: 1) Demonstrate a tool and a process for working with communities (i.e., potential community partners on CBPR) so that they are informed as to the risks of conducting research which may not answer their questions, may be a substantial drain on economic and human resources, and may produce data that could be used against them; 2) Engage conference participants in the evaluation of this tool and process; 3) This workshop will be held in an eastern North Carolina community where the tool is being used for the first time.

We will use modules from a recently released publication, “IS A HEALTH STUDY THE ANSWER FOR YOUR COMMUNITY? A GUIDE FOR MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS.” The Health Studies Guide is meant to assist community groups and individuals who think that some form of environmental health investigation or health study may be useful or necessary in their community. However, health studies may not help resolve a community's environmental problems, and they can delay action or distract from essential community organizing. Participants are encouraged to define their goals and consider how a health study might help or hurt these goals. Several health study designs and goals will be reviewed, and their potential for supporting or undermining community participation will be considered. The guide and workshop are designed to help people who want a health study to avoid frustration and maximize benefits of research. The Health Studies Guide was created with contributions from numerous individuals and environmental health organizations, with funding from NIEHS.

Evaluating PEPH Activities

Presenters: Christie Drew (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences)
Kristi Pettibone (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences)

Topic: Translation, Communication, Dissemination

Abstract:

Identifying, evaluating and reporting on activities, outputs and impacts can be crucial in making the case for program success, however measuring these kinds of activities and impacts presents several challenges. Grantees may struggle with knowing when to evaluate, or with obtaining appropriate data. Other challenges may include storing, maintaining, and formatting data for analysis. Grantees may also be concerned with issues related to the attribution or contribution of their projects to an impact.

The purpose of this workshop is to provide grantees with an opportunity to obtain input and guidance on evaluating their work. Christie Drew, the Program Analysis Branch (PAB) Chief, and Kristi Pettibone, an evaluator in PAB will conduct a training on evaluating PEPH work, using the PEPH Metrics Manual as a framework. We invite grantees to bring a specific project they are working on to this hands-on training. Examples might include challenging activities such as evaluating work related to advocacy, engagement and policy. We will provide opportunities to discuss the projects in small groups and staff from the program analysis branch will facilitate discussions at the small groups and will provide tailored technical assistance. Towards the end of the training, groups will report out on the strategies, metrics and approaches identified.

Grantees who select to participate in this workshop are encouraged to contact Kristi Pettibone at pettibonekg@niehs.nih.gov prior to the meeting to describe your project and your questions or challenges so that we can identify resources that may be helpful to you.

Methods to Collect and Organize Information for Community-Based Cumulative Risk Assessments

Presenter: Tim Barzyk (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)

Topic: Cumulative Risk Exposure

Abstract:

The objective of the workshop is to present the beta-version of a novel method and computerized tool to organize and interpret information related to community-based cumulative risk assessments. The skill-building activity will be to work with the group to work through sort of "mock" cumulative risk assessment -- from building a participant partnership, to consideration of any and all types of stressors, to determination of which stressors pose the biggest risk, to determination of feasible risk management solutions. All of this will be worked within a beta-version computerized tool that has been developed with extensive stakeholder feedback, and is a strongly user-centric tool with analytic as well as deliberative aspects.

Policy Advocacy Training to Promote Environmental Health

Presenters: Amy J. Schulz (University of Michigan)

Donele Wilkins

Topics: Translation, Communication, Dissemination
Cumulative Risk Exposure¹⁰

Abstract:

Translation of research findings related to the impact of environmental exposures on health involves communication of those findings to policy and other decision makers (e.g., public health decision makers). Promoting new, and enforcing existing, policies that protect public health and promote environmental justice requires sustained attention, including education and effective advocacy. In this workshop, we will describe the design and implementation of policy advocacy trainings intended to build skills, leadership and community capacity more broadly to advocate for policy changes to address environmental exposures, with a particular focus on building capacity among residents who experience disproportionate exposure to toxic environments. Specifically, we will describe the adaptation of policy advocacy training workshops initially developed by the Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center that are being offered to community groups and organizations actively addressing issues of environmental justice in Detroit through the Community Outreach and Education Core of the University of Michigan Lifetime Exposure and Adult Disease Core Center. We will describe the design and implementation of the workshops, the process of tailoring them to local groups' priority environmental issues, preliminary evaluation results, and lessons learned to date. The structure of the workshop will include presentation, demonstration, interactive discussion and skill building through experiential learning activities. Finally, we will situate this work in the broader context of efforts to reduce lifetime exposures and promote health, with a particular focus on achieving environmental justice and health equity.