

Knowledge Exchange at a Policy Forum:

Findings from an Evaluation of the International Policy Forum on Family Violence



The Policy Forum

Exposure to family violence is a reality for Canadians. In 2004, 7% of women and 6% of men in Canada (representing approximately 653,000 women and 546,000 men) reported spousal violence within the last five years.¹ Of these, a third reported that children saw or heard the violence. To identify practical next steps in the prevention of family violence using existing evidence, Alberta Children's Services hosted an International Policy Forum on Family Violence in Calgary, Alberta on November 1 and 2, 2006. Alberta Children's Services invited experts in the area of family violence, particularly with respect to policy, service, and research, to attend the event.

¹Statistics Canada. (2005). *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile* (Catalogue No. 85-224-XIE). Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

The Survey

The Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research developed a survey to assess the degree to which the policy forum achieved its intended outcomes, the degree to which knowledge exchange occurred, and factors that may have impacted knowledge exchange. Each of the 100 attendees was invited to complete a questionnaire. The response rate was 58%.

What Did We Learn?

- ✦ There was a good combination of perspectives at the policy forum that appeared to be equally valued by participants.
- ✦ Overall, participants at the forum felt they came away with more knowledge about the next steps for best practices, policy and research. Based on this finding, it appears that knowledge exchange did occur at the forum.
- ✦ The next step beyond simply exchanging information is actually using that information to inform future activities and decisions. Participants did indicate that they were more likely to engage in evidence-based practice after the event, and many researchers already appeared to be engaged in outcome-oriented research before the forum.
- ✦ Almost all people intended to contact someone they met at the event following the forum.
- ✦ Many participants formed relationships with someone in the same role as themselves (~70%), and many also formed relationships with someone in a different role (~70%). Those who had been in their role for a longer period of time tended to establish relationships only with others in the same role.
- ✦ Almost a third of participants indicated that after attending the event, they intended to increase collaboration or build more or broader relationships.
- ✦ In a follow up survey in the coming year, we will focus on actual behaviour change, rather than intention to change, to determine the contribution of these events to knowledge, behaviour, and relationships over time.

A full report is available online at www.research4children.com.

If you have questions or comments about this project, please contact:
Monica Jack, monica.jack@calgaryhealthregion.ca or 403-955-7568.