



Poster 26 – 2018 Nordic Implementation Conference **Sustaining Implementation, Implementing sustainability or both?**

Presenter: Thandie Hara, University of Exeter, U.K.

Background

This poster presentation is extracted from some of the results of a PhD, which investigated a) the nature of the implementation process of community based public health programmes, and b) how such programmes are sustained after their trial.

Project aim

To understand the nature and character of the processes of successfully implemented community based public health programmes, and with reference to a school-based peer to peer smoking prevention programme in the UK, understand how the programmes are sustained over time. Sustainability was defined as ongoing implementation of an evidence-based programme for at least 2 years after its original trial.

Project methods

These results relate to a synthesis of findings from four linked studies of implementation and sustainability of community based public health programmes. Study I, was a Systematic Review (SR) of Reviews of implementation studies, Study II, involved interviews with 14 individuals involved in the implementation process of the school programme, Study III was observations of the implementation process in three schools and Study IV was a retrospective analysis of 163 questionnaires that the children fill in after receiving their peer to peer training.

Project results

Initially implementation was perceived as sequential and staged. The SR identified 5 stages; 1) pre-implementation, 2) adoption, 3) implementation, 4) adaptation, and 5) sustainability. However, the findings rejected the idea that the stages were sequential, but rather, they were a chain system. Adaptation could happen before, or during implementation, implementation could trigger adaptations, and sustainability could encourage/discourage more implementation. Thus, sustainability is not a stage, but it is embodied in implementation processes and its factors were traceable across the chain.

Preliminary or final conclusions/discussion

Factors of sustainability were traced to the trial's dissemination point, and in the entire implementation chain. The paucity of sustainability studies is well documented, but this could be due to prevailing notions that sustainability is a distinct post-implementation stage. These results suggest that the way programmes are sustained is intertwined with how they are implemented. There is need for evaluation frameworks that will enhance understanding of these as intertwined conceptual entities.