

Global Perspectives on Health Promotion Effectiveness

Global Perspectives on Health Promotion Effectiveness

Edited by

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About the Editors

David V. McQueen is Senior Biomedical Research Scientist and Associate Director for Global Health Promotion at the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP), at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia. Before joining the Office of the Director, he was Director of the Division of Adult and Community Health at NCCDPHP. From 1983 to 1992, he was Professor and Director of the Research Unit in Health and Behavioral Change at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland and, prior to that, Associate Professor of Behavioral Sciences at the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health in Baltimore, USA. He has also served as Director of WHO Collaborating Centers as well as a technical consultant with the World Bank.

Over the past 30 years, he has maintained an active interest in health promotion. In the 1980s, he chaired the WHO (EURO) committee that developed the document on the “Concepts and Principles of Health Promotion”; organized and participated in many conferences and meetings concerned with the fostering of health promotion in Europe; actively participated in the development of the Ottawa Charter; and established a collaborating center with EURO concerned with the evaluation of health promotion, healthy cities, and other health promoting activities. During the 1990s his concerns focused on (1) the challenges raised by the efforts to promote an evidence-based health promotion; (2) the efforts to build health behavior monitoring systems to establish a public health infrastructure for health promotion globally; and (3) the development of a broad theoretical base for health promotion.

Since 2001, he has served on the IUHPE Board of Trustees as an elected global member with two consecutive terms as Vice-President for Scientific and Technical Development. It is in this capacity, in addition to his recognized expertise and passion for the subject area, that he has provided leadership and guidance for the Global Programme on Health Promotion Effectiveness.

Catherine M. Jones, a graduate of the American University of Paris with a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs and a minor in Philosophy, has been a staff member at the IUHPE Headquarters for over 7 years and a resident of Paris

since 1995. She has served the IUHPE in a number of roles where her duties included membership development, communications, and project management. She also acted as the Managing Editor of the IUHPE's quarterly multi-lingual journal, *Promotion & Education*, from the end of the year 2000 to the middle of 2006. In her present capacity as the Programme Director, she is responsible for the design, development, implementation, supervision, and evaluation of the IUHPE's main programmatic areas, including a diverse range of global and regional projects, many of which are carried out in close collaboration with key IUHPE member organizations across the world.

Since early 2003, she has been accountable for the coordination of the Global Programme on Health Promotion Effectiveness (GPHPE). She carries out this role, capitalizing on her experience with the network and having a global perspective of the IUHPE's activities in all regions, independently from the GPHPE, in order to be able to create direct links forging partnerships when opportunities emerge, and having a comprehensive knowledge of the GPHPE, of the relationships with its partners, and of the key people involved.

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Foreword

The issue of effectiveness in health promotion became a concern in Europe in the late 1980's, spread to other developed countries in the 90's and has become global in the early years of the 21st Century. Key milestones marking the development and escalation of this concern were the first European conference on health promotion quality and effectiveness in 1989, the establishment of the WHO-EURO Working Group on Health Promotion Evaluation in 1995, the first International Symposium on Health Promotion Effectiveness in 1996, the initiation of the IUHPE project on the evidence of health promotion effectiveness in 1998 and the IUHPE Global Program on Health Promotion Effectiveness in 2001.

This interest in the effectiveness of health promotion interventions is not just a casual one but rather, is critical to the future of health promotion and is likely to continue and grow in the decades ahead. This is due to the fact that governments throughout the world are increasingly demanding evidence that their investments are worthwhile and that they pay both financial and social dividends. In addition, people working in the field of health promotion are increasingly interested in knowing if their efforts are effective and efficient and how they might be made better. These demands are not going to disappear in the foreseeable future and therefore organizations and individuals working in health promotion are going to need to address them with increasing effort, rigor, resources and imagination.

The IUHPE Global Program on Health Promotion Effectiveness has a critical role to play in improving and sustaining our efforts to provide credible evidence on the effectiveness of health promotion interventions. One of the reasons why this is the case is that health promotion is a unique enterprise which requires unique and appropriate evaluation approaches. It has become abundantly clear over the past couple of decades, that the RCT has only limited relevance in the evaluation of health promotion interventions and that we need to give credibility to a whole range of other approaches including quasi-experimental designs, observational studies and even story-telling. This means that these approaches will need to be carried out as rigorously as possible and that our capacity needs to be enhanced in order to do so. It also means that we need to find better ways to synthesize the knowledge that we obtain through the use of multiple approaches. In all of these efforts, the IUHPE is in a position to facilitate the

exchanges of information and international collaboration that is needed to further develop and sustain this work around the world.

This volume is tangible evidence of the IUHPE's ability to do so. It reflects work of people from a wide range of countries, both developed and less developed, as well as from a variety of disciplines necessary for appropriate evaluations of health promotion interventions. I would personally like to thank the IUHPE for all the work that it has done to develop the foundations for sound evaluations of health promotion work and to provide the critical information required by those who are on the ground to do their work in the most effective and efficient way possible. I look forward to discussing these issues further at the 19th IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education in Vancouver in June 2007 and hope to see you there helping the IUHPE in furthering these important efforts to make health promotion more effective.

Irving Rootman
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
December 2006

Preface

During the past decade, the demand for evidence-based practice in medicine has influenced health policy, practice and research in profound ways. Health promotion has also been affected, through calls for evidence-based practice and increased attention to quality and effectiveness in all we do. Much of the funding that supports health promotion research comes from bio-medical funding programmes, and there has been an understandable, but inappropriate tendency to apply bio-medical standards in the evaluation of health promotion research. Therefore, a core project for health promotion is to decide what research standards are appropriate, to conduct quality research in accordance with those standards, and to disseminate evidence of what works to practitioners and policymakers.

The International Union for Health Promotion and Education's contribution to this work has been to stimulate dialogue about what types of knowledge are most meaningful in evaluating the effectiveness of planned health promotion actions. Because health promotion engages in action spanning individual-level to policy-level interventions, the standards of any single discipline are too narrow to provide a single framework for judging the quality of health promotion research and evidence. This book makes an important contribution to the dialogue, but it is not intended as a summary or an authoritative position on the question of what constitutes effective health promotion.

To the contrary, the IUHPE is committed to continue the work of the Global Programme for Health Promotion Effectiveness, as a permanent and core activity of the organisation. Readers may anticipate with confidence future publications in a series, of which this volume is the first. Readers' reactions to this volume will have important consequences for the way the IUHPE carries the work forward. We envisage that IUHPE conferences in the regions and the triennial world conferences will be discussion arenas where a wide range of ideas will be exchanged, about the future directions of the Global Programme for Health Promotion Effectiveness. In addition to our conferences, the IUHPE print and online journals and our web site enable health promoters from around the world to engage in discussion about the critical questions that lie at the heart of this volume: what health promotion actions are effective and why? How can the quality

and effectiveness of health promotion be improved? How can we communicate convincingly with decision-makers, so that they support effective health promotion? How can the interplay of practice, policy and research be managed, to produce better health outcomes for all?

Maurice B. Mittelmark
IUHPE President
Bergen, Norway
December 2006

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