Translation Issues in Prevention and Treatment Research

As witnessed by the National Institutes of Health designation as a major Roadmap initiative, the funding for which is projected to reach a half billion dollars by 2012, the systematic translation of evidence-based research findings, tools, and information into practice is destined to become an increasingly crucial component of the research agenda of every health field. In recognition of this fact, Evaluation & The Health Professions is increasing its emphasis of the Journal to focus on the translation research process.

The first step in this transition for the journal involves a two part special issue edited by Dr. Steve Sussman entitled Translation Issues in Prevention and Treatment Research. In the March 2006 issue, the opening article by editor and lead author, Steve Sussman, provides a brief history of the concept including conceptual frameworks that have been used to guide the translation research efforts. The authors also discuss ongoing issues related to personnel, transdisciplinary communication, barriers to improving the translation of evidence-based research into practice, and needed research in the area. The second article by Bruce Simons-Morton and Flaura Winston provides excellent examples of translating research into legislated policies focusing on child and adolescent transportation safety. The following article by Feifer and colleagues present a large-scale translation effort currently under way involving physicians treating patients under “real-world” conditions. This case study describes a successful multimethod intervention designed to increase adherence to clinical practice guidelines in a nationwide network of primary care practices that use a common electronic medical care system.

Generally, it is accepted that translation research will sometimes require the use of different methodologies than conventional studies and one such strategy is reviewed by Chad Werch and his coauthors: time-limited or brief interventions, one manifestation of which is an extremely limited personalized contact time between a health professional delivering a preventative and/or disease management message and his or her clients.

At the heart of translation research, Green and Glasgow argue persuasively that one of the barriers to translating academically based research into clinically and socially relevant practice resides in the current imbalance between internal and external validity.

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### TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Translation Research: Introduction to the Special Issue**  
*R. Barker Bausell*

**Translation In the Health Profession: Converting Science Into Action**  
*Steve Sussman, Thomas, W. Valente, Louise A. Rohrbach, Silvana Skara, and Mary Ann Pentz*

**Translational Research in Child and Adolescent Transportation Safety**  
*Bruce G. Simons-Morton, Flaura Koplin Winston*

**The Logic Behind a Multimethod Intervention to Improve Adherence to Clinical Practice Guidelines in a Nationwide Network of Primary Care Practices**  
*Chris Feifer, Steven M. Ornstein, Ruth G. Jenkins, Andrea Wessel, Susan T. Corley, Lynne S. Nemeth, Loraine Roylance, Paul J. Nietert, and Heather Liszka*

**Translation as a Function of Modality: The Potential of Brief Interventions**  
*Chudley Werch, Jerry L. Grenard, JeanPaul Burnett, Julia A. Watkins, Steve Ames, and Edessa Jobli*

**Evaluating the Relevance, Generalization, and Applicability of Research: Issues in External Validation and Translation Methodology**  
*Lawrence W. Green and Russell E. Glasgow*

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**Methodological Issues Related to QOL Measurement (June, 2005: David Cella, Editor)**

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