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Building a Pipeline of Community-Engaged Researchers

There are few ways for early career researchers, such as TL1 trainees, to develop skills in community-engaged research and there are limited opportunities for Community research advisory councils (C-RACs) members to influence early career researchers.

Developed a novel training collaboration between Hopkins C-RAC and TL1 trainees.

Introduced all TL1 trainees to the principles of community and stakeholder engaged research with at least 3 virtual sessions with the C-RAC and TL1 trainees.

- TL1 trainees observed a C-RAC meeting
- Presented their research projects to C-RAC members who provided feedback.
- At the end of the academic year, TL1 trainees prepared brief results presentations to practice disseminating research findings to the community.

15 TL1 trainees successfully presented to the C-RAC on their research and each trainee received verbal and written feedback on their work from the C-RAC.

Program evaluation revealed satisfaction and important ways to improve experiences for the 2021-22 cohort.

We published the findings of this initial experience.¹

**Issue Being Addressed:** The Johns Hopkins Institute for Clinical and Translational Research Community research advisory councils (C-RACs) bring together community members with interest in research to support design, evaluation and dissemination of research in the communities they represent. However, there are few ways for early career researchers, such as TL1 trainees, to develop skills in community-engaged research and there are limited opportunities for C-RAC members to influence early career researchers. C-RAC members may be particularly interested in engaging with early career researchers because there is potential to not only contribute to the full trajectory of their studies from inception to dissemination, but also to influence the researchers' future interest in community collaboration. In turn, trainees may be eager for community insight on their studies, but be insufficiently equipped to engage community leaders.

**Approach:** We developed a novel training collaboration between our C-RAC and our TL1 trainees. In the beginning of the academic year, we introduced all TL1 trainees to the principles of community and stakeholder engaged research and followed that with at least 3 'live' (virtual for 2020-21) sessions with the C-RAC and TL1 trainees. First, we asked all TL1 trainees to observe a C-RAC meeting and then (2) present their research projects to C-RAC members who provided feedback. At the end of the academic year, we then had all TL1 trainees prepare brief presentations of their results to practice giving research findings back to the community.

**Outcome Measures:** We measured program engagement with participation rates and participant satisfaction using closed and open-ended questions.

**Results:** Each of the 15 TL1 trainees successfully presented to the C-RAC on their research and each trainee received verbal and written feedback on their work from the C-RAC. Trainees adhered to the ten-minute presentation guidelines. In some cases, they were not able to complete their full presentations because C-RAC members asked questions or engaged in discussion before the completion of the presentations. All 15 trainees completed the TL1 mid-year program evaluation. Twelve strongly agreed or agreed that presenting to C-RAC enhanced their research experience, and three were neutral. In their qualitative responses, trainees commented that benefits included gaining insight on methods from community stakeholders, practicing presenting on their work to a lay audience, hearing community members' recruitment ideas (and, in some cases, specific contacts), and reflecting on the potential impact of their research. One trainee wrote, "Presenting to C-RAC made me stop to reflect about the ultimate goal of my research and how it can translate to a positive impact on the greater community. It allowed me to think about how to present information effectively." We published the findings of this initial experience.

**Lessons Learned:** Trainees provided constructive feedback including: 1) the presentation time be lengthened to allow trainees to provide context for their studies, 2) program leadership should provide a sample presentation and 3) program leadership should clarify expectations for next steps following the presentations. One trainee suggested, "It would be helpful for trainees to see examples of previous presentations and a bit more direction of what is expected in the C-RAC presentation beforehand."

**References:**