Caitlin Davey

Caitlin is a Ph.D. student in Psychology (Clinical Stream) at Ryerson University. Ms. Davey recently completed her M.A. in Psychology (Clinical Stream). During this time, she was also a research assistant with Connections – Knowledge Exchange for Agencies Serving Women with Substance Use Issues through McMaster University, where she helped develop and carry out the study described below. Ms. Davey is First Nations herself, and is interested in learning more about her culture and the current issues faced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations. She works in the field to help give back to her community.

Project Title:

Predictors of research use among staff in Aboriginal addiction treatment programs serving women

Team members:

Caitlin Davey, Ryerson University
Allison Niccols, McMaster University
Joanna Henderson, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Maureen Dobbins, McMaster University

Wendy Sword, McMaster University
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Tammie Wylie, Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre
Ernest Suave, White Buffalo Treatment Centre

What predicts research use among staff serving Aboriginal women in Addictions Treatment programs?

A complementary study from the project, Connections – Knowledge Exchange for Agencies Serving Women with Substance Use Issues, conducted at McMaster University and funded by CIHR, answers exactly this question. The goals were to understand what predicts research use among service providers of Addictions Treatment programs serving Aboriginal women, and to see if the predictive factors of the Theory of Planned Behaviour framework apply to this context. The theory assumes that certain factors predict behaviour such as evidence informed decision-making. Such factors include: (1) Attitudes; (2) Subjective Norms; (3) Perceived Behavioural Control; and (4) Intent to Use Research. Caitlin proposes having an understanding of how this theory may relates to service providers targeting Aboriginal women, this may better inform culturally specific knowledge translation strategies with these contexts when needed.
The project used existing survey data from phase 1 of the Connections project to look at the predictors of research use among service providers across Canada. More specifically, the data were collected and coded to see if the Theory of Planned Behaviour would apply to service providers in Aboriginal-specific programs serving women with substance use issues. Twenty-six programs targeting Aboriginal women across Canada were included in the study, and data were collected from about eighty-nine service providers from such programs. Two service providers from the sample of programs were recruited and accepted the invitation to participate in reviewing and interpreting the final results with the team. The inclusion of service providers is fitting with the Guidelines for Conducting Health Research with Aboriginal People as put forth by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and, since many of the authors are not working in Aboriginal addiction programs or are Aboriginal themselves, it was important to capture this viewpoint.

Caitlin’s main responsibilities on the project included:

- Conducting literature reviews
- Developing and refining the research question
- Coding, and analyzing data from the existing dataset of the Connections project
- Organizing team meetings
- Recruiting service providers from addiction treatment programs serving Aboriginal women to help interpret results and review the manuscript
- Writing the final manuscript and collating all feedback
- Presenting at the Issue of Substance (IOS) conference in Vancouver (November 2011)

The present study examining predictors of research use among service providers targeting Aboriginal women with addictions began in 2010 and took approximately one and a half years to complete. The project has just recently been completed. The results showed that:

**PRELIMINARY FINDINGS:**

- Theory of Planned Behaviour may apply to Aboriginal programs serving women with substance use issues;
- Attitudes, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioural Control, and Intent to Use Research may predict research use among service providers serving Aboriginal women with substance use issues; and,
- Some factors, such as Barriers to Translating Research into Practice (e.g., time and access to research), may be especially important as predictors (i.e., as barriers increase, the use of research may decrease)
The next steps for the study include finalizing the manuscript and publishing in peer-reviewed journals.

Caitlin hopes that, as a result of the findings, more specific knowledge translation strategies for service providers working with Aboriginal people in the context of mental health will be developed. She hopes that interest in developing a more culturally specific framework may stem from this study. Since the Theory of Planned Behaviour is a “Western” model, some key predictors were likely missed (e.g., community level factors) and may not apply as well to those programs that are heavily grounded in Aboriginal worldviews. She also hopes that this study will lead to further interest in the area of knowledge translation in mental health and Aboriginal contexts, and that such research will be done ethically through collaboration with communities of interest while keeping community needs and capacity building a top priority.

What’s next for Caitlin?

Caitlin will continue to work on her PhD dissertation, which looks at developing a culturally specific program for Métis people with severe mental illnesses.

For more information about the study and to obtain further detailed results, please contact Caitlin Davey at cdavey@psych.ryerson.ca.

Author: Angela Yip, February 2012