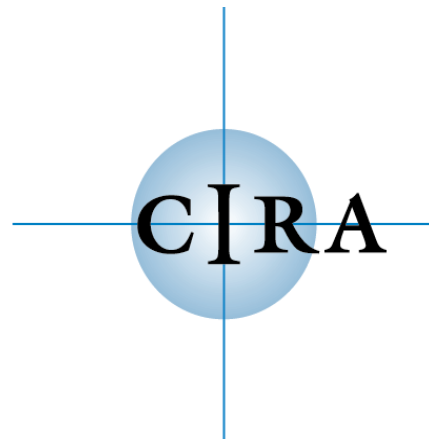

STRATEGIES FOR DISSEMINATING RESEARCH FINDINGS



Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS
Community Research Core

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION

Often a neglected afterthought in busy research schedules, the dissemination of key findings upon project completion is a crucial step in community-based research. In an effort to increase the ease and efficiency of undertaking such measures, this document provides key strategies for dissemination, including templates and contact information wherever possible to streamline the dissemination process. Through such distribution channels, CIRA's Community Research Core hopes to distribute salient findings to affected communities, participant agencies, health departments, researchers, policy makers, and HIV advocacy groups.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The first priority in any dissemination plan is returning results to study participants. All other dissemination strategies to any other group must take place *following* such feedback. Therefore, investigators should pay particular attention to dissemination methods listed on p. 5 of this document, targeting study participants.

I. HOW TO DEVELOP A DISSEMINATION PLAN

To be effective, dissemination strategies must be incorporated into the earliest planning stages of a research study. In fact, the most successful dissemination processes are typically designed prior to the start of a project.

In creating a dissemination plan, researchers should consider several key questions:

- **Goal:** What are the goals and objectives of the dissemination effort? What effect is the dissemination plan aimed at producing?
- **Audience:** Who is affected most by this research? Who would be interested in learning about the study findings?
- **Medium:** What is the most effective way to reach each audience? Which resources does each group typically access?
- **Execution:** When should each aspect of the dissemination plan occur (e.g. at which points during the study and afterwards)? Who will be responsible for dissemination activities?

When answering the above questions, researchers should keep in mind some of the key characteristics of effective dissemination plans, listed on the following page.¹

¹ NIDRR. *Developing an Effective Dissemination Plan*. January 2001. <http://www.ncddr.org/du/products/dissplan.html>

Key Characteristics of an Effective Dissemination Plan

1. Oriented toward the needs of the user, e.g. relying on appropriate language and information level
2. Include various dissemination methods such as written, graphical, electronic, and/or verbal mediums
3. Draw upon existing resources, relationships, and networks as much as possible

Further information on this topic may be found in [Developing an Effective Dissemination Plan](#).

For guidance in developing a dissemination plan, feel free to contact the Assistant Director of the Community Research, Leif Mitchell, at leif.mitchell@yale.edu.

II. GENERAL WRITING GUIDELINES

Key Characteristics of Effective Dissemination Materials

1. **Concise** – Make it short and to the point. Make it easy to find information.
2. **Pull out key points** – Make a bulleted list, with one finding or conclusion per bullet.
3. **Interesting** – Take the time to sort through all of your findings, and present and discuss those that are new and compelling.
4. **Responsive** – Consider your target audiences and the type of document you are writing. Keep these in mind while writing.
5. **Useful** – Write clear conclusions and recommendations. They are more usable. If the reader knows what to do with the information, they will be more likely to do it.
6. **Attractive** – Spend a small portion of your budget to print documents in color to distribute to your important target audiences. If this is not possible, then post it to a website and distribute the link to it broadly.

LANGUAGE AND DESIGN TIPS FOR EASY READING

- Make sure language is clear and understandable; use simple words and plain language.
- Make sure the points progress in a logical order.
- If you need to use advanced terminology, be sure to define it clearly using plain language.
- Use a clear, readable, and large font. Some good suggestions are Times New Roman, Arial, Palatino, Garamond, and Tahoma.
- Develop clear, uniform heading formats in bold, italic, or underline.
- Limit the amount of text, graphics, and bullet points; leave plenty of “white space” between content.
- Include page numbers if longer than 2 sides.

GET COMMUNITY INPUT AND MAKE THE NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS

- Community residents, community groups, and community leaders should always be your primary audience, so be sure to report the findings to them first and incorporate their feedback into the document.
- Multiple perspectives and feedback always benefit your final product, by ensuring that everything is correct and verified.

II. STRATEGIES FOR DISSEMINATION BY TYPE

RESEARCH SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The central component of the dissemination strategy, the research summary document clearly and concisely summarizes the key conclusions from every research initiative. Whether combining several studies performed by the same investigator, or a single study, the document should be organized by topic area and include the following components:

- a) Key points: approximately 7-10 bullet points on key findings for the topic, each guiding readers to a related fact sheet for further information
- b) Fact sheets: for each bullet point, provides further discussion (approximately half page in length) preferably with a graphical image

For further guidance, please refer to past [Research Summaries](#).

PRESS RELEASES

Press releases offer one of the most efficient and effective ways to disseminate information, particularly to the media and other organizations.

In particular, Yale's Office of Public Affairs (OPA) would like to encourage faculty to contact the science and medicine public affairs officers: Karen Peart (karen.peart@yale.edu), Bill Hathaway (william.hathaway@yale.edu), or Helen Dodson (helen.dodson@yale.edu) with stories that might be appropriate for broad dissemination. Manuscripts that have been accepted for publication in the highest ranked journals, such as *Nature*, *Cell*, *Science* and the *New England Journal of Medicine*, should be considered for submission to OPA. In addition, manuscripts accepted by other journals that describe significant results that are likely to attract broad interest might also be appropriate for OPA. Similarly, the award of a large grant or contract might also be newsworthy.

The timing of press releases must be carefully orchestrated. Because most journals do not permit release of a manuscript's content in advance of the journal's publication, it is important to contact OPA immediately after a manuscript is accepted to permit a press release to be prepared and released at the opportune time. Timely information about newsworthy material will also enable OPA to disseminate your research more widely, which will increase the likelihood that a story will be written.

For further details, please refer to the [Press Release Template](#).

MEDIA COVERAGE

Media coverage is an inexpensive and easy way to get results out to as many people as possible. There are countless media resources potentially interested in HIV/AIDS-related stories. Many of the most likely resources to find CIRA research of interest, such as local newsletters, listservs, daily or weekly newspapers, magazines, radio or TV stations, are listed in *Disseminating Research Findings: Media Resources* available through the CR Core.

YALE PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES

The School of Medicine's Office of Institutional Planning and Communications oversees the school's website and publishes *Yale Medicine* magazine, the bimonthly newsletter *Medicine@Yale*, the clinician-focused monthly newsletter *Yale Practice* and various other publications that are potential outlets for dissemination of research findings. Contact Director of Communications Michael Fitzsosa (michael.fitzsosa@yale.edu) when you have results being published.

FLYERS, POSTERS, AND BROCHURES

Creating flyers, posters, or brochures about research projects and findings offers a concise and visually-appealing way to disseminate information to broad audiences. While these formats requires extensive simplification of information due to limited space, much of the information created through the research process includes visuals like graphs and tables, which are particularly adaptable for this format. For an example of a brochure used to disseminate information about a women's health intervention, please refer to the Sample Brochure available through the CR Core.

LETTER OF THANKS TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS

If possible, thanking study participants for their involvement is one of the most essential components of any research protocol. Letters may take many forms and could include research findings, if appropriate or applicable. For a simple template, please refer to Sample Letter of Thanks to Study Participants.

STUDY NEWSLETTERS

Distributing a regular newsletter summarizing study findings is the ideal way to update study participants and participating agencies. While such newsletters can involve a fair amount of work, the dissemination benefits are well worth the effort. For sample newsletters, which may serve as examples, please refer to the [Sample Newsletter](#) available through the CR Core.

LOCAL HIV/AIDS EVENTS OR CONFERENCES

For extensive lists of relevant events both locally and internationally, refer to [CIRA Bulletin](#).

SEMINARS

Hosting or attending seminars, conferences, community forums and/or health fairs are common methods for informing others about research findings. Regular seminars and events are listed in the [CIRA Bulletin](#), [Yale School of Medicine Events Calendar](#), and the [Yale School of Public Health Calendar](#). To advertise an independent seminar or community meeting, simply contact CIRA staff to request that a notice be added to the CIRA Bulletin.

III. STRATEGIES FOR DISSEMINATION BY POPULATION

Note: A summary document can be distributed to all constituencies, but the focus (e.g. policy, practical application) may vary.

CONSTITUENCY	DISSEMINATION METHODS
Study participants and participating agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute flyers, brochures & research briefs in health centers, clinics, agencies and neighborhoods • Send a regular newsletter summarizing research in progress • Host or attend seminars • Send (anonymous or targeted) letter of thanks detailing findings • Host community forums to discuss the research
New Haven & Connecticut communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and distribute flyers or posters in health centers, clinics, neighborhoods • Host or attend seminars • Host community forums to discuss the research • Appeal for articles in local media sources • Participate in local HIV/AIDS events or conferences • Submit a brief summary to the CIRA Bulletin
Yale scientists and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a brief summary to the CIRA bulletin & CIRA Notes • Request a posting on the CIRA website • Appeal for submissions in various Yale newsletters • Create and distribute posters throughout Yale's campus • Host or attend seminars
Other universities' scientists and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a brief summary to the CIRA bulletin & CIRA Notes • Request a posting on the CIRA website • Host or attend seminars • Create and distribute posters or flyers
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send press releases to journals, magazines, and electronic publications • Post on listservs and HIV/AIDS websites
Public health departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send press releases
Connecticut policymakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute summary document • Draft and send policy position statements • Send press releases
HIV/AIDS advocacy groups and NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute flyers, brochures & research briefs in health centers, clinics, agencies and neighborhoods • Participate in local HIV/AIDS events or conferences • Host or attend seminars • Host community forums to discuss the research • Ask agencies to feature the research project in their newsletters & websites

IV. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR EACH TARGET POPULATION

MEDIA

Contact information for local media sources may be found in [Disseminating Research Findings: Media Resources](#) available through the CR Core.

YALE PUBLICATIONS

Contact Institutional Planning and Communications regarding articles in *Yale Medicine*, *Medicine @Yale* and *Yale Practice*. Director of Communications Michael Fitzsosa can be reached at michael.fitzsosa@yale.edu or 203-785-5824.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

A list of Connecticut public health department contact information, including pre-made mailing labels, is available at https://www.han.ct.gov/local_health/localmap.asp

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

A list of Connecticut community health centers, including contact information is available at https://www.han.ct.gov/local_health/

NEW HAVEN AND CONNECTICUT POLICYMAKERS

Contact information for the New Haven Board of Alderman is available at: <http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/Aldermen/index.asp>

Contact information for Connecticut policymakers is available from the following sources:

- Connecticut General Assembly: finding local legislators
<http://www.cga.ct.gov/maps/townlist.asp>
- Connecticut General Assembly: determining committee members
<http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/Committees.asp>
- Connecticut Legislative Guide: provides general information on CT's legislative process and related contact information <http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/citizen.asp>

LOCAL HIV/AIDS ORGANIZATIONS

Contact information for many local organizations may be found on the Connecticut Department of Public Health's website (<http://www.ct.gov/dph/site/default.asp>) as well as the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' (<http://www.ct.gov/DMHAS/site/default.asp>). The United Way of Connecticut Infoline (<http://www.infoline.org/> or 2-1-1) provides free state-wide community service information, including agency contact information and issue-specific information. Call 2-1-1 to get information.

IV. SAMPLE DISSEMINATION DOCUMENTS

- 1. Dissemination Plan Template**
- 2. Author Briefing Form**
- 3. Sample Research Brief**
- 4. Press Release Template**
- 5. Letter of Thanks Example**

Dissemination Plan Template*

This form is designed to assist study teams with the identification of key stakeholders and the development of a project specific dissemination plan before the project actually begins. Activities identified and documented on this form should be incorporated into the project work plan and timelines.

Today's date:

Project title (full name):

Project start date:

Project end date:

Project Coordinator:

Provide a very brief summary of projects and goals:

Conduct a stakeholder inventory. These should also be listed in the matrix below.

Project funding agency:

University partners:

Other organizational partners:

Other individual collaborators:

Research participants (describe who they are and approximate #):

Are there any budgetary implications based on your dissemination plan not included in your current budget? If so, describe them here and estimate costs for additional dissemination activities.

If findings are positive, how can you influence implementations/change/sustainability?

Using the matrix below, indicate the date(s) and mechanisms used to disseminate on-going and end of project information to your multiple stakeholders.

Author Briefing Form for Writing a Press Release

Name and degrees:
Affiliation:
Address:
Email:
Fax:

Name of publication:

Expected publication date:

1. What are the three most important findings of your research in relationship to their significance in the field?

(1)

(2)

(3)

2. Explain the topic in lay-person's language (keep in mind how you would explain it in basic terms to your next-door neighbor).

3. Please indicate if your research affects:

Healthcare

Changes in Clinical Practice

Insurance

Health Policy/Government

Pharmaceutical

Further Research and Grants

Regular individuals going to their doctor Other:

4. Do you have any media contacts that would be interested in your article? If so, please list them here.

5. Should a journalist require more information from which to write an article, do you wish to be interviewed?

6. How would you like to be contacted?

Phone: _____ Best time: _____

Email: _____

7. Does a research partner institution have a press office? If so, please provide a contact:

Thank you for your participation. Through this publicity program, we hope to raise awareness of your valuable research.

CARE Research Briefs

Connecticut Women's Health Project:

Window of opportunity to improve sexual health



The Connecticut Women's Health Project (CWHP) at the Yale School of Public Health has conducted collaborative, community-based research among pregnant teens and young women and those at risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) since 1989. In partnership with community health centers, hospital clinics, public health departments, and other community organizations, the mission of CWHP is to serve women and their families through research that informs health care and health policy.

Connecticut Women's Health Project
135 College Street, Suite 323
New Haven, CT 06510
203-764-9835
Director: Jeannette Ickovics, PhD
Associate Director: Jessica Lewis, LMFT



Yale Center for
Clinical Investigation

CARE: Community Alliance for Research and Engagement



2 Church Street South
New Haven, CT 06519

203-785-3482

CARE@yale.edu

www.ycci.yale.edu/outreach

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CARE Research Briefs

Connecticut Women's Health Project: *Window of opportunity to improve sexual health*



Led by Yale School of Public Health professor Jeannette Ickovics, PhD and Jessica Lewis, LMFT, the Connecticut Women's Health Project (CWHP) has learned a lot about teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). What puts teens at risk for pregnancy also puts them at risk for STIs and HIV. CWHP conducted interviews and STI testing every 6 months for an 18-month period with 203 pregnant and 208 non-pregnant teens from urban health centers in New Haven, Hartford, Bridgeport, and Stamford. Here are some findings:

TEENS ENGAGE IN RISKY SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND CONTRACT STI's

- Teens who were diagnosed with an STI did not change their behaviors or attitudes as a result of the diagnosis.
- Pregnant teens were 2 times more likely to have an STI one year after pregnancy than non-pregnant teens.
- Young teens age 14 to 16, those who started having sex at age 14 or younger, and those who used alcohol/drugs before sex were also at higher risk for STIs.

TEENS DO NOT SEE THEIR OWN RISK FOR SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS, HIV AND PREGANCY

- 81% who tested positive for STIs thought they had little or no chance of getting an STI.
- Only 30% of teens thought they were at risk for both pregnancy and STIs over the next year, even though 75% had sex within the past month.

Bottom Line

- Reproductive health services are needed before and after pregnancy—to enhance the physical health, mental health, and social well-being of young women and their children.
- Schools, churches, and communities must further educate young women about pregnancy, STI, HIV risks, and what young women can do to protect themselves.

CARE: Community Alliance for Research and Engagement is committed to improving health in New Haven. One goal is to share important research findings in our community so that they are easily accessible to all—to educate, inform, and spur action. Yale investigators thank the women, men and children of New Haven who participated in research projects designed to improve health. We value your participation and recognize that you are central to these efforts. We hope that you can use this information to prevent disease and promote good health in your family and in our community.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Author's Name, Title

School/Department

Address

Phone

Fax

Email

One-Line Attention-Getting Title

(City, STATE) Date of Distribution– This is a sample press release. Every release should begin with a short (25 words or less), one-line paragraph that hooks the reader's interest.

The purpose of a press release is to provide newsworthy information to the media. "Newsworthy" means that the information is **(1)** timely (i.e., has some immediate impact on readers); **(2)** novel (e.g., the first, the best, etc.); **(3)** consequential (i.e., a development that will have significant impact on readers); **(4)** dramatic (i.e., reveals something quirky or colorful about the human condition or character); **(5)** prominent (i.e., relates to a public figure/organization); or **(6)** proximate (i.e., affects people living in an area). Contrary to popular belief, newspapers and television stations are not sitting around with empty space to fill, nor do they feel a moral responsibility to write about PSU.

The press release should be a concise (no more than two double-spaced pages), factual, informative, and straightforward piece of writing that describes what you want the public to know. The most important and indispensable information (**who, what, when, where, etc.**) is located at the beginning of the story; the most expendable is at the end. Make every paragraph, sentence, and word count.

Text in all press releases should be typed in the font "Tahoma, size 10." If you don't have Tahoma, use Palatino, Helvetica, or Times Roman.

If you are unable to stick to the preferred one-page format, end page one with:

(more)

And, add the following heading at the top of page two:

Page 2—Key Words From Title

Otherwise, end the press release with the following symbol:

###

If you are announcing an event, be sure to include accurate information about the time, date, location (including street address and room number), and cost. Proofread, proofread, and proofread. Most media require at least 2-3 weeks lead time to publish your event.

If you use a quote, and it's recommended that you do, give it its own paragraph so that the reporter can easily pick it out.

At the end, add this boilerplate text about CIRA: The Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS (CIRA) was established in 1997 and is currently New England's only National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) funded AIDS research center. CIRA brings together scientists from 20 different disciplines and two institutions including [Yale University](#) and [The Institute for Community Research](#), located in Hartford, CT.

CIRA, Yale University
135 College Street, Suite 200
New Haven, CT 06510-2483

Phone (203) 764-4333
Fax (203) 764-4353

#



Dear [INSERT PARTICIPANT'S NAME],

I would like to thank you for your participation in the [INSERT STUDY NAME]. The data collected will contribute to a better understanding of [INSERT PURPOSE].

Please remember that any data pertaining to you, as an individual participant, will be kept confidential. Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, we plan on sharing this information through [INSERT DISSEMINATION METHODS (e.g. newspaper articles, seminars, conferences, presentations, journal articles, etc)]

If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study, or if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact [INSERT CONTACT NAME] at [INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS]. In particular, if you would like a summary of the results, please let us know by providing your email address or alternate contact information.

Sincerely,

[INSERT PI NAME]