

Effective Programs to Treat Depression in Older Adults: Implementation Strategies for Community Agencies  
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# Bridging Science and Policy for Depression in Older Adults: Challenges and Opportunities

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## Policy: A Missing Link Between Depression Science and Practice

- There is a well-documented gap between research and practice for depression care
- The problem is partly due to a gap between research and policy.
- How can researchers and communities work to bridge this divide?

## Depression Policy Challenges

- Medicare: Differential co-payments, no coverage of collaborative care
- Medicaid: Lack of funding; restriction on same day billing for PCP and MH
- State Agencies: Siloed funding streams
- The growing number of uninsured

## Translating Between the Languages of Science and Policy

- Evidence
- Significance
- Adoption

## Evidence

	Researchers	Policymakers
<b>What determines the value of evidence?</b>	Internal validity (EBM Working Group, 1992)	Utility (Amer. Heritage Dictionary 2000)
<b>What evidence is most trusted?</b>	Peer-reviewed (Rennie 1998)	Locally grown (Caplan 1975)

## Significance and Timeliness

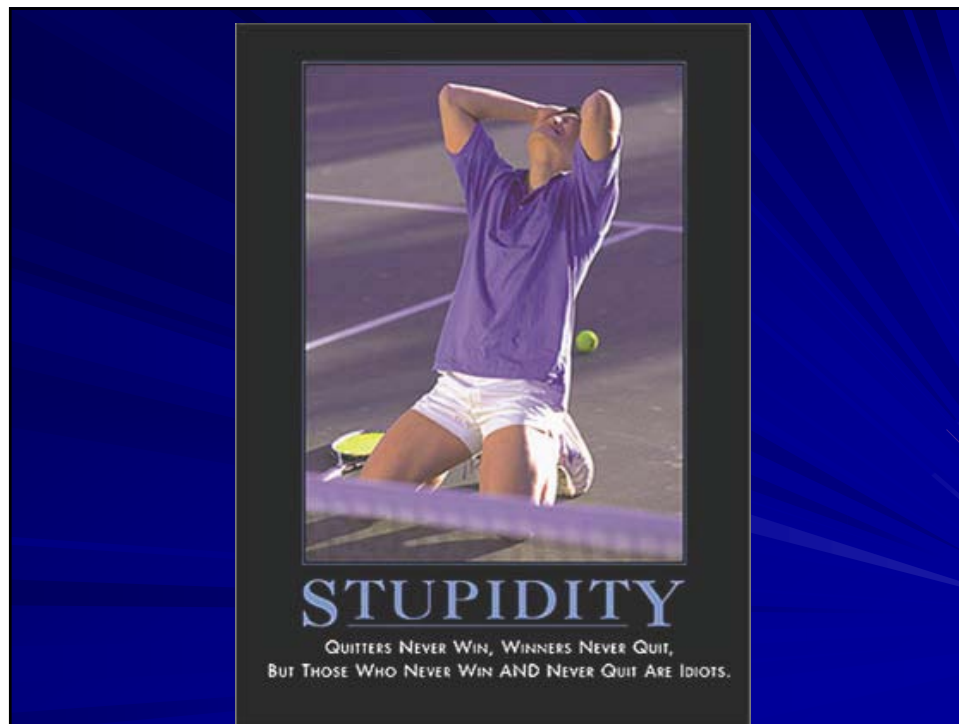
	Researchers	Policymakers
<b>What is the threshold for significance?</b>	$p < 0.05$ (Fisher, 1925)	$p < 0.5$ (Iaccoca, 1984)
<b>What is the threshold for timeliness?</b>	<17 years (Balas 2000)	Right Now (Soriano, 2002)

## Adoption

	Researchers	Policymakers
How should evidence influence action?	Necessary and Sufficient (IOM 2007)	One of multiple "triggers" (Kersch 2002)
How should innovations spread from research to practice?	Fidelity (Moncher 1991)	Reinvention (Rogers 1995)

## How Can We Bridge the Gap Between Science and Mental Health Policy?

- What probably won't work
- What might work



## What Probably Won't Work

- Telling policymakers what to do (Miller 1991)
- Sending out article reprints (Gilbody 2003)

## What Researchers Can Do

- Develop personal relationships (Innvaer 2002)
- Ask the right questions (Minkler 2002)
- Be timely and concise (Sorian, 2002)
- Think about costs (Leatherman 2003)
- Empower policymakers to generate their own evidence (Duan, 2002)

## An Example: NIMH State Laboratories

- NIMH is currently funding a project through the NRI to develop partnerships between states and researchers
- States identify key questions and work with researchers to try to answer them
- Maine and South Carolina are looking to understand and reduce unnecessary ER use for persons with depression and other conditions.

## What Community Agencies Can Do

- Learn and use evidence
- Act locally: Develop personal relationships with community leaders, legislators
- Think globally: Work through advocacy groups to address state and national issues

## How Community Agencies and Researchers Can Work Together

- Community agencies can help researchers ask the right questions
- Researchers can help community agencies get the right evidence
- Community agencies and researchers can work together to bring about policy changes

## Examples of Research/Community Partnerships to Improve Policy

- IMPACT dissemination
- DIAMOND study in Minnesota
- RWJ Depression in primary care in Georgia FQHCs

## Current National Policy Initiatives

- Mental Health Parity passed 3/2008
- Medicaid: Preserving the safety net
- Medicare
  - Mental Health Modernization Act of 2007
  - Medical Home Demonstration projects
- November 4, 2008