

# “My job was already two jobs”: The impact of personnel changes on implementation of an evidence-based HIV prevention program

Presented by Virginia R. Mckay, M. Margaret Dolcini, &  
Joseph A. Catania

College of Public Health and Human Sciences  
Oregon State University

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# Disclosure

- Virginia McKay has no financial interests to disclose.

# Introduction

- Evidence-based interventions (EBIs) have been identified as a means to improve population health in many fields (IOM, 2001)
- EBIs are beneficial because they demonstrate effective outcomes for participants under research conditions
- But implementation of EBIs in practice remains a challenge

# Introduction

- One challenge for local agencies has been adequate capacity (i.e. fiscal, human, and physical resources) to implement EBIs as intended (Durlak and DuPre, 2008)
- EBIs often require competent, trained staff for implementation
- However, staff inevitably fluctuate over time (Butterfoss, Kegler & Francisco, 2008)
- The impact of these changes on implementation of EBIs is a gap in our scientific knowledge

# Research Aim

- Qualitatively explore the influence of staff changes on implementation of an EBI called RESPECT to understand:
  - Kinds of changes (e.g., increase, decrease, or turnover; position)
  - Influence of changes on implementation

\*RESPECT - counseling and testing program for HIV prevention.

# Data Collection Methods

- Translation into Practice Study - national mixed methods study of agencies delivering RESPECT ( $N = 30$ )
- Purposive sampling
- Two waves of data collection
- Qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted with agency staff
  - Asked questions about RESPECT implementation, adaptation and maintenance.

# Analysis

- Examined agencies with multiple staff dedicated to RESPECT (n=29, wave I; n 23, wave II)
- Examined subset of interviews conducted with executive directors of agencies and supervisors of RESPECT (n=53, wave I; n=37, wave II)
- Questions related to staff changes identified and coded
  - Categorical coding (increase, decrease, or turnover)
  - Thematic coding

# Principle Findings - Types of Staff Changes

## *Counts and Percentages of Agencies Reporting Staff Changes*

	Changes	Multiple Changes	Decrease	Increase	Turnover
Wave I Agencies (n=29)	20 (69%)	10 (34%)	11 (38%)	13 (45%)	12 (41%)
Wave II Agencies (n=23)	17 (74%)	8 (33%)	10 (43%)	5 (22%)	10 (43%)

*Note.* Agencies double coded if reporting multiple types of staff change.



# Principle Findings - Types of Staff Changes

## Changes in Clients Served

**“RESPECT is part of our counseling and testing program. Total numbers have gone from about 2,300 to about 1,700 tests every year. So you can see that we’ve lost some actual interface unfortunately, since I’ve lost about half of my staff...”** (Agency 120; downsize and turnover)

**“We hired specifically because we needed an increase in staff, and we also got the funding. So I think the client load was already there. We were just really struggling to meet it...”** (Agency 96; expansion)

# Principle Findings - Types of Staff Changes

## Changes in Workload for Remaining Employees

“A staff decrease means that the ones of us that are left are having to carry what they did, and so it just adds on to our workload...” (Agency 1; downsize)

“[Participant] There was a deputy director, and she left unexpectedly in July, and so we kind of combined some of her duties and I kept mine, so I just... [Interviewer] So you got a job and a half. [Participant] Yeah. Which my job was already two jobs (laughter).” (Agency 8; downsize)

# Principle Findings - Types of Staff Changes

## Changes in Skill and Knowledge

**“Some of those who left had a whole bunch of experience, and then you have to train somebody new. So that’s been a challenge.”** (Agency 87; downsize and turnover)

**“...And we have a very low turnover (such) that all those people that started with us (at) implementation, they’re still with us, so they require less observation and less supervision.”** (Agency 149; expansion)

# Principle Findings - Types of Staff Changes

## Gaps in Replacement and Training

“Interviewer: So what was the reason for that loss of the supervisor?  
Executive Director: Resignation. However, she was with us for about five years.

Interviewer: And you are currently in the process of hiring a new supervisor?

Executive Director: Correct” (Agency 148; turnover)

“The old full-time clinician relocated, so we had to hire a new staff member, and it was slow because the training...I think she was here four months before she was actually trained for RESPECT.” (Agency 30; turnover and expansion)

# Principle Findings - Types of Staff Changes

## Innovative Approaches to Downsizing

“Since we’ve implemented RESPECT, we actually lost a person and a half. That’s how we got a **volunteer** though.” (Agency 5; turnover)

“We’ve got fewer staff, but we’re forming **more collaborative partnerships**, so we’re going to be able to reach a **broader spectrum of the higher-risk population than we have in the last couple of years.**” (Agency 5; downsize)

# Conclusions

- Staff changes were common
- Highlights potential negative influences that impact the ability to implement EBIs, especially:
  - increased work burden on staff that remain,
  - the skill level of staff at the agency.
- Also highlights potential ways to circumvent negative influences

# Implications for Policy and Practice

- Implementation efforts will benefit from focus on
  - employee retention
  - collaboration efforts
  - ongoing training have the potential mitigate influences staff changes
- Designing with the end in mind

# Contact Information

Virginia McKay (Ginger)

[Email: Virginia.mckay@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Virginia.mckay@oregonstate.edu)



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