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Title

Community engagement as Infinite Game through Finite Games of 'research', 'community organizing', & 'knowledge mobilization'

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Community based participatory research

Presenters

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Abstract

Context:

Meaningful community engagement process involves focusing on the community needs, building community capacity, and employing culturally-tailored and community-specific strategies. In current practices of community-engaged health and wellness research, generally, community engagement activities commence with the beginning of a particular research project on a specific topic and end with the completion of the project. The outcomes of the community engagement including the trust, partnership, and contribution of the community to the research, thus remain limited to that specific project and are not generally transferred and fostered further to the following project on a different topic.

Objective :

In this article, we discussed a philosophical approach to community engagement that proposes to juxtapose community engagement for the specific short-term research project and the overarching long-term program of research with the finite game and infinite game concepts, respectively.

Design :

Our community engaged program of research focuses on equitable primary care access for immigrant/ethnic-minority communities in Canada. Community research is closely tied to self-reflection

and reflective practice. While conducting the research during the last seven years, we summarized our reflective learning in this article.

Results:

A finite game is a concept of a game where the players are known, rules are fixed and when the agreed-upon goal is achieved, the game ends. On the other hand, in infinite games, the players may be both known and unknown, have no externally fixed rules, and have the objective of continuing the game beyond a particular research project. We believe community engagement needs to be conducted as an infinite game i.e., at the program of research level, where the goal of the respective activities is not to complete a research project but to successfully engage the community itself is the goal. While conducting various research projects i.e., finite games, the researchers need to keep an infinite game mindset throughout, which includes working with the community for a just cause, building trust and community capacity to maximize their contribution to research, prioritizing community needs, and having the courage to lead the community if need be.

Conclusion:

We point out the need for community engagement blue print for a program of research instead of limiting it to one project.