

Knowledge Translation: Information Sheet

What is Knowledge Translation?

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) defines knowledge translation (KT) as a dynamic and iterative process that includes synthesis, dissemination, exchange, and ethically-sound application of knowledge to improve the health of Canadians, provide more effective health services and products, and strengthen the health care system¹.

More simply, **KT is getting research into the hands of the people who can use it. These people are referred to as knowledge users.** Knowledge users are individuals who can use research findings to make informed decisions about policies, programs, and/or practices¹. Some examples of knowledge users include but are not limited to health and social care practitioners, educators, decision-makers, government staff, health care administrators, community leaders, members of the public, patients, private sector or not-for-profit organizations, and media outlets.

Why is KT Important?

KT is a new field that has emerged to aid with synthesizing large amounts of data and translating this information into a form that is usable for knowledge users, such as a presentation for decision-makers or an infographic for a public audience.

Currently, the flow of information from basic research to clinical science to clinical practice and decision-making is extremely slow:

It takes **17** years to turn **14%** of original research into an outcome that can benefit patient care².

KT makes knowledge gained from research more accessible and relevant to knowledge users, helping to reduce the gap between knowledge discovery and implementation.

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What is the Goal of KT?

The goal of KT is to use knowledge to **improve health systems and outcomes**. This involves using the information we have (e.g., available evidence) to inform what we do.

What is End-of-Grant KT?

End-of-grant KT is the sharing of results when the project is finished¹. End-of-grant KT products traditionally included peer-reviewed journal articles and conference presentations and posters. End-of-grant KT now often includes more public-facing materials, such as infographics, media stories, etc.

What is Integrated KT?

In integrated KT (iKT), stakeholders and other knowledge users are engaged throughout the entire research process, from developing the study question to disseminating the results¹. When conducting iKT, a key consideration is that not all knowledge users want to be engaged in the same way or at the same level. Throughout the iKT planning process, researchers must work with knowledge users (e.g., stakeholders, public and patient partners, etc.) to determine how and when they want to be engaged. Different knowledge users can be engaged at different times, meaning that the same knowledge users do not need to be engaged at every step of the project. To learn more about the levels of engagement, please refer to the [International Association for Public Participation \(IAP2\) Spectrum of Public Participation](#). Although this spectrum focuses on patient engagement, knowledge user engagement may be considered in the same way. By involving knowledge users throughout the project, the research project and its findings are more likely to be relevant to and used by knowledge users.



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What is a KT Plan?

A KT plan is a set of steps that help researchers design and implement methods of knowledge dissemination. A KT plan is ideally created alongside the research proposal to help guide the researcher in selecting who needs to be informed of their findings and subsequently the impact that sharing these findings can have on societal systems and other important sectors. In addition, having a KT plan helps the researcher ensure that funds are allocated to the development and dissemination of KT products. The [SickKids KT Planning Template](#) is a tool designed to help researchers develop a KT plan.

Examples of KT Products

- Summary briefings to stakeholders
- Interactive educational sessions
- Infographics
- Social media posts and campaigns
- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Grey literature publications
- Media interviews
- Reports
- Newsletters
- Presentations
- Musicals, plays, videos, and films
- Paintings
- Commercialization of scientific discoveries



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List of Resources

- [Canadian Knowledge Transfer and Exchange Community of Practice \(KTECOP\)](#)
- [A scoping review of full-spectrum knowledge translation theories, models, and frameworks](#)
- [CIHR Knowledge Translation](#)
- [CIHR Knowledge Translation Resources and Training Tools](#)
- [Knowledge translation approaches and practices in Indigenous health research: A systematic review](#)
- [Knowledge Translation Planner](#)
- [KT Canada](#)
- [KT Connects](#)
- [Plain Language Writing Checklist](#)
- [SickKids Knowledge Translation Training and Resources](#)
- [Writing and Testing Plain Language](#)

References

1. Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). (2016). Knowledge mobilization. <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29418.html>
2. Balas, E. A., Weingarten, S., Garb, C. T., Blumenthal, D., Boren, S. A., & Brown, G. D. (2000). Improving preventive care by prompting physicians. *Archives of internal medicine*, 160(3), 301-308. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archinte.160.3.301>

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