J Nutr Food Sci 2017, 7:6 (Suppl)
DOI: 10.4172/2155-9600-C1-051

17th Global Dieticians and Nutritionists Annual Meeting

Improving nutritional outcomes: An implementation science approach

Anil Krishna
SRM University, India

Implementation Science (IS) has been emerged recently focuses the study of methods to improve the uptake, implementation and translation of research findings into routine practices. The essential component of IS in public health is translating evidence-based interventions into widely used programs and policies in public health to improve population health. There are ample evidences available in addressing nutritional status of children among vulnerable communities. What is missing is the knowledge about how to identify and implement the evidences to the population who really in need. This is primarily because of IS research area is less popular and many researchers are not adequately trained in this area. The implementation science scientists systematically study the effectiveness of strategies designed to encourage the implementation of evidence-based interventions to better understand implementation outcomes, service delivery outcomes and individual outcomes. The researchers currently working in the areas of nutrition need to start thinking on IS research methods that use epidemiological and other social science methods to identify programmatically relevant opportunities and challenges. IS should go beyond simply identifying issues; however, it should also provide approaches and methods that would be generalizable in the population and eventually support the implementers in resolving the identified problem. The organizations that are interested in IS should work in collaboration with academic institutions, research and implementing organizations for identifying and implementing evidences for improvement in nutritional outcomes of the population. Further, more financial resources should be directed to encourage such institutional arrangements and provide longer term sustainability. Many evidence-based nutritional interventions fail to produce results when transferred to large population primarily in developing countries across the world, largely because their implementation process is not adequately tested, not suitable for the population chosen or incomplete interventions. When a researcher along with the implementers identifies appropriate evidence suitable for the population could resolve this. This can also create a culture for learning and research and for using research to make informed decisions about nutrition programs. As we enter the sustainable development goals era and scaling up moves from evidence to action, implementation science will become indispensable in improving nutritional outcomes.

assoc.dean.sph@ktr.srmuniv.ac.in

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