Does Participatory Research with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities Enhance Participation in Health Promotion Interventions?

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There is a growing recognition by health promotion practitioners of the need to engage culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in the complete health promotion cycle (planning, implementation, and evaluation) to enable meaningful participation by these communities in health promotion actions. Participatory research is considered as one tool that may facilitate this process. The purpose of this study was to explore whether participation by CALD communities in health promotion interventions generated through a participatory research process was enhanced due to the application of a participatory research approach in health promotion.

A systematic literature review of qualitative studies using meta-analysis techniques was undertaken to address the study question.

None of the 20 articles reviewed directly addressed the review question posed; therefore it could not be ascertained whether participatory research ensures CALD community participation in subsequent health promotion interventions. Consistent themes across the articles reviewed relating to the positive outcomes of the participatory research process were however identified. These outcomes include increased community empowerment and enhanced cultural sensitivity of interventions generated from the research.

Based on the results of the review, it is argued that if the positive outcomes of participatory research are attained then there is an increased assurance that participatory research can enhance participation by CALD communities in health promotion interventions. It is recommended that further research be undertaken to explore the direct link between the outcomes of participatory research and subsequent participation by CALD communities in health promotion initiatives.