

Applying the RE-AIM Framework in International Mental Health Implementation Research

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Background: There is often a significant time gap between establishing empirical support for interventions and their actual uptake in clinical practice. As an emerging field, Implementation Science (IS) is the study of processes and conditions that facilitate or impede the adoption and integration of evidence-based interventions into policy and practice in real-world settings. The use of explicit theoretical frameworks to guide implementation is critical in international cross-cultural collaboration.

Aims: To identify factors that facilitate and impede international collaboration, adaptation, and adoption of an evidence-informed intervention, Acceptance and Commitment to Empowerment – Linking Youths 'N 'Xin' (heart) (ACE-LYNX), to decrease stigma and promote mental health among university students in China.

Methods: This presentation focuses on the use of the RE-AIM framework to facilitate the goal of our Canada-China collaboration to implement ACE-LYNX. The framework systematically (1) examines the “Reach” of the target populations by the intervention; (2) evaluates the intervention’s “Effectiveness”; (3) gauges support for the intervention’s “Adoption”; (4) evaluates the fidelity of the intervention’s “Implementation”; and (5) documents the “Maintenance” of changed behaviours. The framework guides all phases of the project, from contextual analysis, to contextualization, training, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination.

Results: Using the RE-AIM framework, metrics can be developed to track the training and roll-out of the intervention as well as its impact, the end-goal of creating an effective mental health promotional network for university students. Measurement tools include psychometric scales, qualitative interviews and focus groups, intervention fidelity checklists, service statistics, behavioral logs, and social network analyses. However, cultural, sociopolitical, and pragmatic considerations needed to be accounted for in each phase of the project, each domain of the framework, as well as all measurement tools.

Discussion: The RE-AIM framework offers a systematic way to study implementation and provides clear guidance for cross-cultural collaboration, particularly in an international context.

Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss the use of an implementation science (IS) framework to guide the study of cross-cultural collaboration, adaptation, and adoption of evidence-based practices
2. Identify the modifications needed to the IS framework and its metrics to facilitate cross-cultural collaboration and implementation

References:

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