

In this Issue: Community Engaged Research

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Not so long ago, communities were to be ‘studied’ and perhaps ‘worked with.’ We have fortunately entered an era where partnership with communities is much better understood and articulated. Community Engaged Research, CER (or sometimes CEnR) for short, considers and elevates the power of bringing- even welcoming- community partners into the traditional research process.

While CER is not the right fit for all research, it can be a powerful tool to better understand what is occurring in the social environment and with individual patients, with a view to determining better outcomes. In turn, CER can be an effective mechanism to cycle results back into the community with whom the research is being jointly investigated.

This issue is focused on CER, and the Academy/DPHA has been a proud partner in a CER partnership focused on Chronic Kidney Disease in Delaware. Through that partnership, we learned about what mattered to patients, and we developed a deeper level of compassion and understanding that traditional research might not have engendered.

CER doesn’t mean abandoning traditional research protocols and best practices, rather it adds dimension and perspective. During the CKD Stakeholder Engagement Initiative we had the good fortune to meet William “Bill” Murray. Bill died due to complications from heart disease toward the end of the official research protocol. Bill was a fighter, a champion, and an excellent man. He was a passionate advocate, a pillar of our group, and is sorely missed. We valued his ideas and how he was always energetic, and passionate - in other words, engaged.

Other CER studies in this issue focus on a range of topics, including: adolescent pregnancy, autism, curbing violence in the City of Wilmington, stroke reduction, community collective impact, LARC, and Hepatitis C.

We thank Heather Bittner Fagan, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.A.F.P. and Claudine Jurkovitz, M.D., M.P.H. for their guest editorship of this issue.

Since September of 2015, we have published this Journal and watched its readership grow. Along the way we’ve had the unintended but desirable consequence of bringing people and groups together around common themes who may otherwise never have collaborated. That is a good thing, and is now a part of our stated goal – collaboration on behalf of public health.

Every issue will likely feature articles which may not have an obvious context within the issue theme. The reality is that we want to elevate excellent work on behalf of our community when it occurs, rather than hold it back until a future issue where it would better “fit.” In keeping with peer-reviewed journals which feature theme issues with no more than half the articles of that theme, we will continue featuring the best of medicine and public health in each issue.

If you are engaged in the practice of public health education, prevention, or research please consider penning an article. To be sure, it is work on your part and on ours, but we engage together - as researchers, community members, practitioners - to improve the public’s health.

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