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Research Priorities Identified by OTRU in Support of Ontario's Tobacco Control Strategy

With the help of many of our Investigators and Affiliates across the province, our Principal Investigator team began work in the summer of 2005 on a research plan to identify tobacco control questions and issues of priority that can be addressed through OTRU's intramural and extramural research programs over the next 3-5 years. Feedback from the 2005 Investigator Survey also informed this process. We encourage tobacco control investigators and students to consider these priorities when planning their research.

Theme: Smoke Free Ontario Campaign (SFOC)

1. What are the actual and potential impacts of SFOC legislation on smoking behaviours, productivity, health utilization and costs?
2. What are the options for a smoking cessation system in Ontario?
3. What is the impact of the SFOC within special populations (e.g., youth, elderly, Aboriginal communities, immigrant populations, northern Ontario)?
4. What is the capacity and reach of the Youth Action Alliances and what are the predictors of success with respect to activities, organization, intensity, etc.?

Theme: Measuring impact of interventions at an individual, community and school level

5. What is the impact of tobacco control measures and pro-tobacco influences on attitudes, behaviours, and acute health effects, using tracer communities/schools and natural experiments?
6. How do different interventions interact and what is their impact on protection, prevention, cessation and unintended consequences?
7. How can we best identify and characterize communities and schools for the purpose of sampling and benchmarking?
8. How can we increase recruitment of smokers, schools and other units into tobacco control studies and programs? Should a registry of smokers be considered?

Theme: Burden of illness

9. What is the 'real cost' of smoking, i.e., economic, political, social and health impacts?
10. What is the predicted impact of different interventions and their potential to achieve desired tobacco control outcomes, using simulation models?

Theme: Tobacco pricing

11. What is the impact of tobacco prices on smuggling and what is the ideal pricing strategy for tobacco products?
12. What is the impact of tobacco prices on the outcomes of other tobacco control policies and programs?
13. What are the political, economic and policy implications of a dedicated tobacco tax?
14. What is the impact of discount cigarettes on cigarette consumption?

Theme: Understanding the smoker

15. How do we define a 'smoker' and have the characteristics of a 'smoker' changed over time?
16. What does smoking mean to individuals (e.g., social context)?
17. How is knowledge about the risks of smoking used by individuals?

Theme: Next generation of tobacco control strategies

18. How can we use knowledge exchange more effectively with decision makers, policy developers, advocates, researchers, public health practitioners, health professionals, and other communities of interest?
19. How can we inform program development and delivery for future issues such as hard to reach smokers, changes in youth culture, etc.
20. How can we inform policy development for future issues such as:
 - homes and multi-unit dwellings (including nursing homes)
 - sales outlets
 - packaging
 - harm reduction and product design including reduced exposure products, reduced propensity cigarettes, light & mild
 - tobacco marketing via the internet
 - tobacco industry exit strategy
 - ban on tobacco

21. What is the impact of alternative tobacco products (e.g., chewing tobacco, hookah pipes) on health, uptake, cessation, and second-hand smoke exposure?

Your comments on OTRU's research priorities are welcome. To provide feedback on this initiative or to receive more information, please contact Pam Kaufman, Ontario Tobacco Research Unit at pam_kaufman@camh.net.