Year Two: what we’ve learned

The major emphasis of our iTAG work through our second year moved from research which describes how gender influences smoking, towards the development of gender-specific tobacco reduction (TR) interventions. We have learned a great deal more about why “gender matters” for TR and what is required to develop interventions which address the needs of men and women smokers from a range of different social circumstances and life-stages. Across our iTAG projects key lessons learned about gender and tobacco include:

**Gender matters.** All too often gender has been absent from the research literature on smoking cessation, and when it is present gender remains poorly defined. We have learned that TR interventions defined as gender-specific (e.g., developed “for” men or women) have yet to be systematically evaluated, and that little is known about their effectiveness compared to generic interventions. Our research advances conceptual clarity about how gender influences tobacco use through performing systematic reviews of TR interventions for men and women smokers, and through synthesizing and integrating our findings to develop best practice guidelines on gender and smoking cessation.

**Gender similarities matter.** With an overwhelming emphasis on gender differences between men and women, research on TR tends to overlook the potential for gender similarities - especially in terms of how other social and contextual factors intersect with gender in the lives of smokers. For example, through a pilot study with university students who have recently quit smoking, we have learned that young men and women in Vancouver share concerns about how smoking can limit their capacity for being physically active and leading a healthy “B.C. Lifestyle”. As well, our research on HIV+ men who smoke suggests that to be effective TR must account for gender and other identity issues specific to gay men. The work of iTAG is unique in that it considers how we can mobilize both gender differences and similarities to promote tobacco reduction.

**Gender relations matter.** Another key area of study is how gender relations influences smoking. In daily activities, gender influences are reflected in the way femininities and masculinities are played out in relation to one another in the context of spousal, parent-child, and other family and peer relationships. We have learned that in relationships where one or both people smoke, there is an opportunity to develop research methods to study the influence of gender relations, and the ways that men’s and women’s interactions influence smoking patterns. iTAG projects study gender relations in contexts such as couple dynamics around TR during pregnancy and parenting, family interactions about smoking and cessation following a lung cancer diagnosis. Likewise, through the START project we are developing gender
What we’ve learned (cont’d)

Specific messages for teens about reducing exposure to secondhand smoke in peer relationships and social settings, to raise awareness about secondhand smoke and early breast cancer risk. Our work prioritizes how gender matters for couples, families and friends as a dynamic, interactive and relational influence on smoking cessation.

Gender-specific and gender-sensitive services matter. Studies have shown that people accessing treatment for substance use have high rates of tobacco dependence, and that integrating TR into other treatment settings increases cessation success rates. We have learned that there are unique opportunities for delivering gender-sensitive (programs addressing gender) and gender-specific (programs designed for men or women) interventions in the context of tobacco dependence treatment. iTAG is breaking new ground by studying how gendered TR interventions can be integrated within polysubstance treatment settings.

New iTAG project

FACET 5: Strengthening support for tobacco reduction for pregnant and postpartum women: Hosting a stakeholder consultation meeting to follow-up on past FACET work, and to develop new approaches and research proposals on TR for pregnant and postpartum women. Funded by: Canadian Institutes of Health Research (10 K), Spring 2011.

Café Scientifique event

The Café Scientifique, “For better or for worse: Women’s efforts to promote men’s health” was held in Vancouver on March 4th and in Kelowna on March 7th. Both events were a great success. The cafés had a total of 79 attendees and generated a series of stimulating discussions about health, gender and gender relations.

Panelists: Drs. Bottorff, Oliffe and Robinson
Moderators: Rebecca Haines-Saah (Vancouver) Marion Barschel (Kelowna)
Knowledge translation activities (2010 — 2011)

Persisting themes

What this paper adds: Highlights the unique social contextual factors influencing smoking cessation interventions among gay men living with HIV
Authors: White, Oliffe, Bottorff
Title: Marketing manhood: Catalyzing black and white masculinities in cigarette advertising
Journal: American Journal of Public Health
What this paper adds: Compares gendered cultures of white American and African American cigarette consumption via an analysis of Marlboro and Kool advertising.
Authors: White, Oliffe, Bottorff
Title: From the physician to the Marlboro Man: Medicine, masculinity and cigarette advertising in America, 1927-1965
Journal: Social History of Medicine
What this paper adds: Analyses the mid-twentieth century shift in dominant cigarettes advertising tropes (from the physician to the cowboy) as a transformation of masculinity.

In progress
Authors: Torchalla, Okoli, Bottorff
Qu. Poole, Greaves
Title: Smoking cessation program targeted to female smokers: A systematic review
Journal: Women’s Health Journal (in progress)
What this paper adds: Identifies innovative smoking cessation programs developed to meet the specific needs of women, and evaluates their effects on abstinence.

The FACET project’s cessation booklet, “The right time. The right reasons: Dads talk about reducing and quitting smoking” was launched in time for Father’s Day 2010. The BC Ministry of Health has distributed 5,000 copies throughout the province with a request to print another 10,000 copies of the booklet. FACET has also received requests to distribute the booklet from health authorities in Ontario and Saskatchewan. You can download your copy at: www.facet.ubc.ca

Conference presentation highlights

Milan Khara was invited to present, Smoking cessation in patients with substance use disorders at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Conference in Toronto (June, 2010)

John Oliffe, presented, Knowledge translation and qualitative research: The Tao of puzzles, at the 16th Qualitative Health Research Conference in Vancouver, and Translating descriptive knowledge into men-centered interventions – Imagine! at the Men’s Health World Congress in Nice (October, 2010).

Craig Phillips and colleagues presented, Smoking prevalence among Vancouver PLWH: Current trends and implications for interventions at the 23rd Annual Conference of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care in Reno (November, 2010)

iTAG investigators made several presentations at the CIHR Institute for Gender and Health conference, Innovations in Gender, Sex and Health Research in Toronto (November 2010). Among these was a symposium, Descriptive evidence to gender-informed tobacco reduction interventions with Joan Bottorff, John Oliffe, Lorraine Greaves, Nancy Poole, and Cameron White. iTAG Co-Principal Investigator Joan Bottorff presented, Methods for studying gender relations in health research: Promising directions, and John Oliffe gave the panel address, Of boys and men: The state of the science on boys’ and men’s health.
Dr. Craig Phillips has officially joined the iTAG team as a co-investigator starting January, 2011. He is an Assistant Professor of Nursing at the University of British Columbia. He has extensive research and clinical experience in community settings in Florida, Botswana, and British Columbia. Dr. Phillips is the Vancouver PI for an international nursing research collaborative study to explore the effects of self-concept on managing HIV symptoms and antiretroviral therapy adherence. Currently, Dr. Phillips is co-leading with Dr. John Oliffe the Tobacco reduction interventions for HIV+ smokers in BC project.

Dr. Gayl Sarbit joined the iTAG team as a Knowledge Broker in September, 2010. In her role she focuses on knowledge creation and translation. She facilitates interactions between researchers, decision makers and knowledge users in order to further understandings about each other’s goals and professional cultures, to provide opportunities for influencing each other’s work and to build new partnerships for promoting the use of research-based evidence.

Honorable mentions

The College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (CRNBC) Excellence Award is given in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the field of research in nursing. The 2010 recipient of the CRNBC Excellence in Nursing Research Award is John Oliffe for his work in men’s health research.

The BC Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health Tobacco Research team won first prize in the CIHR poster competition at the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) conference in Montreal, QC.

The 2010 recipient of the Richard L. Sowell Editor’s Award for outstanding JANAC reviewers is Craig Phillips. This Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (JANAC) Award acknowledges Craig Phillips’ continuous support of an outstanding reviewer for the JANAC.

Graduate Fellowship in Tobacco & Gender

The START research team is inviting applications for one graduate student (Masters or PhD level) who is interested in research training related to tobacco messaging, youth, and gender, to be located at UBC Vancouver or Okanagan. Applicants must be enrolled full-time in graduate studies in a health-related program of study with an interest in one or more of the following areas: development of methodologies for messaging youth; knowledge translation and exchange; gender-based analyses; tobacco control; and health promotion.

For more information please contact: Laura Bissell, START Research Coordinator (laura.bissell@ubc.ca)