

Health Promotion Research



At RTI International, our goal is to increase the knowledge base, inform policy makers, and enhance the quality of health promotion practice. Dedicated to conducting high-quality health promotion research, we use multidisciplinary approaches—psychology, sociology, epidemiology, health communications, economics, among others—to

- Identify determinants of health risk and protective behaviors
- Evaluate policies, programs, and interventions designed to change health behavior
- Identify best practices that can be applied on a population level.

Overarching Approaches to Health Promotion Research

Our health promotion researchers study health behavior and its many determinants in the social and physical environments in which people live. Such determinants encompass multiple layers of factors in an individual's social and physical environments—including family and friends, community, media, economic factors, and health policy. A multidisciplinary, science-based approach enables RTI researchers to evaluate health promotion efforts by tailoring our design and methods to meet the unique needs of the client and program under study.

Addressing Pressing Issues in Public Health

RTI studies all preventable diseases, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. We also study behaviors that can be promoted through interventions addressing immunization, nutrition, physical activity, smoking cessation, and other health issues.

Diverse Fields of Expertise

We use theory-based quantitative and qualitative research and evaluation methods to meet our client's specialized needs in fields such as

- Community-based research
- Health communications and social marketing
- Health economics
- Health psychology
- Population health
- Environmental health
- Public health policy research.



Methods and Tools for Conducting Health Promotion Research

RTI teams use a multi-method approach to designing and implementing evaluation and research tasks, triangulating information from a variety of methods, data sources, and theories to achieve a fuller understanding of community contexts and programs. Our staff are experts in a wide variety of research and evaluation methods and tools.

Quantitative

- Surveys conducted at multiple levels (e.g., organizationally, among partners and patients)
- Regression modeling and path analysis to assess program impacts and outcomes
- Multi-level and structural equation modeling
- Cost-effectiveness and other econometric studies
- Secondary data analysis of large, existing data sets such as the U.S. National Cancer Institute's Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER); Medicare claims; state cancer registry data; and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

Qualitative

- Case studies
- Site visits, including to locations that address issues among disparate populations
- Multiple group processes to facilitate data collection or group decision making (e.g., focus groups, Delphi process)
- Interviews through various modes among key informants and others
- Content analysis

Research Tools

- Program logic models
- Conceptual frameworks
- Theory-based evaluations
- Systematic analysis of findings using state-of-the-art software

Highlights of Our Research Efforts

The range of issues RTI addresses with regard to health promotion research are best illustrated by a select list of our projects:

- Serving as a Center for Excellence in Health Promotion Economics
- Evaluating community-based programs to promote cancer screening
- Evaluating state programs that promote nutrition and physical activity
- Assessing the unique needs of disparate populations, including American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Pacific Islanders
- Evaluating worksite, health care, and community-based interventions to determine promising practices in heart disease and stroke prevention
- Developing comprehensive evaluation plans for state and federal cancer, tobacco, obesity, diabetes, and asthma programs
- Building partnerships to advance cancer survivorship and public health
- Evaluating Parents Speak Up, a media campaign to promote increased parent-child communication about sexual activity
- Implementing utilization-focused evaluation through collaboration with expert panels
- Evaluating community-based youth empowerment programs against tobacco use
- Facilitating group or organizational decision making in program development
- Providing evaluation technical assistance and training to international, state, and local program staff
- Evaluating a pilot program to improve cancer care through coordination of community-based cancer centers

Clients

RTI conducts health promotion research on behalf of federal agencies, state governments, and private organizations, including:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Cancer Institute
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
- U.S. Department of Education
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- Department of Defense
- American Legacy Foundation
- States of New York, Florida, New Jersey, Ohio, Indiana, Delaware, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Vermont
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Lance Armstrong Foundation
- Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation
- Pfizer Foundation
- American Cancer Society



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RTI International is one of the world's leading research institutes, dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. Our staff of more than 2,800 provides research and technical expertise to governments and businesses in more than 40 countries in the areas of health and pharmaceuticals, education and training, surveys and statistics, advanced technology, international development, economic and social policy, energy and the environment, and laboratory and chemistry services. For more information, visit www.rti.org.

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