



NCD Communication Science

» Our experts in global health, NCDs, and communication science work collaboratively to design and leverage a myriad of innovative communication messages, campaigns, interventions, programs, and tools.

The Global Impact

Every day, people make decisions about diet, physical activity, and tobacco and alcohol use; these decisions are grounded in individual experiences, perceptions, and attitudes—as well as social and cultural norms. Patients also make health-altering decisions about seeking care, following medical advice, and choosing treatments. These behavior choices contribute to people's risk of and experience with noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, and cancer. Communication strategies—done at the right time and in the right way—can influence health behavior, reduce incidence of disease, and improve NCD outcomes.

Guided by best practices in communication research, RTI International works with communities to assess health behaviors and to create evidence-based, culturally relevant, and motivational solutions. RTI assesses how social and cultural norms, market forces, and media messaging influence health behaviors. We partner with health practitioners, policymakers, and local communities to examine how people seek and share health information. RTI's Center for Communication Science applies evidence-based communication campaigns using social marketing principles and techniques to promote healthy behaviors and empower meaningful and lasting change. We combine expertise in global health, NCDs, and communication to design and leverage innovative technological and traditional communication tools, including the following:

- Social media platforms
- Technology-based toolkits
- Text messaging campaigns
- Radio, television, and newsprint
- Local outreach strategies
- Health literacy tools, publications, and campaigns
- Impact evaluations of behavior change campaigns
- Policy analysis and reform



Country Partners and Projects

RTI works with policymakers, public health practitioners, global institutions, private industry, and other researchers. We collaborate with these partners to measure risks of NCDs and outcomes of programs and policies to prevent and manage NCD conditions. RTI has active partnerships and projects addressing NCDs in more than 19 countries across Asia; Africa; South, Central, and North America; the Caribbean; and South Pacific. The following examples illustrate, in part, RTI's versatility and diverse capabilities to address NCDs.

Improving Access to Care | Technology

Digital Communication Toolkit

RTI collaborated with academic and nongovernmental organizations in India to assess Indians' preferred communication channels and the viability of online platforms for sharing information about cancer. We produced a Digital Communication Toolkit to enable Indian organizations to maximize the impact of their communication campaigns about cancer. RTI worked with the Indian Cancer Society to update its digital outreach with best communication practices.

Platform for Knowledge Sharing on Access to Innovative Medicines

RTI worked with the World Bank on a knowledge platform to increase access to NCD medicines and products. The work supports Access Accelerated, a consortium of 22 global pharmaceutical companies, to make decisions and devise programs that will make essential technology more available in low- and middle-income countries.

Behavior Change | Research and Evaluation

Analysis of Healthy Eating Programs in India and Rwanda

NCDs are on the rise in both India and Rwanda, driven by poor dietary habits early in life and in adulthood. We reviewed evidence-based programs that improve diet among adolescents and adults, grading each on evaluation rigor and potential impact.

The Dual Burden of Malnutrition | Strategies for Improved Health in Rwandan Children

Rwandan children are at risk for being undernourished and overweight. RTI conducted formative, participatory research in Rwanda to develop messages that promote culturally relevant health behaviors that are acceptable and appropriate for both under- and overweight Rwandan children aged 5 years or younger.

Improving Prevention and Treatment | Health Literacy

Health Literacy Skills Instrument

Many instruments that measure health literacy look primarily, or solely, at reading ability. With funding from the U.S. National Cancer Institute, RTI designed the Health Literacy Skills Instrument (HLSI), which assesses four separate domains of health literacy: reading, math, listening, and information-seeking skills. Development of the instrument required expertise from researchers in multiple disciplines—including health communication, health services research, psychometrics, literacy, health literacy, plain language, cultural competency, and clinical medicine. RTI designed the HLSI to reflect a range of tasks and skills that adults with NCDs face in their daily lives when making health care–related decisions. The HLSI helps researchers determine where gaps exist between increased demand for health communication and health literacy.



More Information

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