CALL FOR PAPERS

26th Annual Meeting
May 29 – June 1, 2018
Hyatt Regency Washington, Washington, DC

Abstract Submission Deadline: October 31, 2017, 11:59 pm, Pacific Time

Optimizing the Relevance of Prevention Science to Systems

Over the last 25 years, the Society for Prevention Research (SPR) has established itself as the leading scientific organization devoted to advancing prevention science to promote health and well-being. The cornerstone of SPR’s efforts is the Annual Meeting, where the world-wide prevention science community, including researchers, practitioners, advocates, administrators, and policy-makers, come together to discuss advances in prevention science and strategies to achieve this goal.

Prevention science is at the forefront of creating knowledge that can influence policy and practice to support positive population level outcomes and equity throughout the world. Prevention science is uniquely positioned to inform science-based efforts for implementation and integration of evidence-based programs in systems and communities to create opportunities for improved outcomes including education, physical, behavioral, emotional, and social health for all.

This year's conference theme, Optimizing the Relevance of Prevention Science to Systems, recognizes the importance of enhancing the effectiveness of prevention science for public health impact at scale throughout the world. Optimizing prevention science has many elements including but not limited to:

- Targeting research to more efficiently and effectively serve individuals, communities and geographies
- Increasing equity for all
- Optimizing interventions to be implemented more efficiently and effectively by continuing to study and enhance programs as they are implemented in dynamic real-world settings
- Leveraging new research designs and analytic tools
- Leveraging new technologies to deliver content and engage individuals, families and communities
- Leveraging administrative data
- Engaging in long-term prevention science-practice partnerships that enhance local, state and/or national health and well-being goals

Consistent with the conference theme, we encourage submissions related to: (1) application of research design and methods for optimizing prevention science, (2) the role of research-practice-policy partnerships in
optimizing prevention science and the use of research evidence, and (3) promoting health equity and reducing disparities through optimizing prevention science. Topics focused on this year’s special theme can be directed at populations across the lifespan and in a variety of settings that interact with public systems of care and are influenced by public health policy. Submissions examining these three themes in domestic and international contexts as well as using cross-cultural comparisons are encouraged. Submissions across the three special themes are encouraged that address effective strategies outside of the U.S. that can help inform domestic efforts; cost analysis of prevention efforts; and workforce development. Additionally, research of all types, basic, applied, and developmental, is encouraged for submission.

The SPR Program Committee invites submissions for the conference that fit within the theme of optimizing the relevance of prevention science as well as the related to the three special conference themes described below. We will also consider proposals that focus on the core areas of interest to SPR, including research related to epidemiology and etiology, development and testing of interventions, implementation and dissemination strategies, innovative methods and statistics, and research, policy, and practice. Submissions are encouraged from researchers and policy-makers at all stages of their career and from varied backgrounds including public health, education, social work, human services, criminal justice, medical and bio-behavioral sciences, developmental science, social science, and genetics.

Special Conference Themes

Each year, SPR selects special themes designed to highlight specific areas of research relevant to prevention scientists. These special themes guide the development of plenary sessions, symposia, and preconference workshops.

Application of research design and methods for optimizing prevention science
As knowledge has accumulated about the importance of understanding what works best, for whom, and under what circumstances, methods that can support the design and testing of programs and improvement of programs at scale has become critical. The work to date scaling prevention programs has highlighted the importance of theory, conceptual frameworks, identification of core components, and mixed methods to support achieving outcomes and high quality implementation. The need for timely knowledge enhances the importance of methods and designs such as: the Multiphase optimization strategy (MOST), Sequential Multiple Assignment Randomized Trial (SMART), client preference trials, behavioral economics, rapid cycle evaluation, effectiveness-implementation hybrid designs, cost effectiveness and benefit cost evaluations, Collaborative Innovation and Improvement Networks (COOIN), Breakthrough Series Collaboratives, and other methods that complement the existing tools used in prevention science. Many of these techniques are focused on optimizing prevention programs in the design phase and implementation at scale. These techniques can answer questions about the most effective components in the design of an intervention, test variations in implementation, or can test questions related to altering the intensity of a program based on participants’ response to treatment. Some of these techniques leverage existing administrative data to randomize and test components of programs to increase impacts. In addition to these designs, research utilizing Bayesian methods to examine questions related to optimizing programs are encouraged. Proposals are encouraged that demonstrate the rigorous use of these methodologies to advance understanding of the optimization of evidence-based prevention approaches to achieve population-level impact.

Role of research-practice-policy partnerships in optimizing prevention science and the use of research evidence
The use of research evidence in policy and practice is critical. Prevention science may have the most impact when it addresses knowledge gaps of policy and practice at all levels: local, state, national, and international. One of the most effective means of addressing these gaps is through research-practice-policy partnerships at
multiple levels, from large systems to local decision-makers. In both domestic and international contexts, research-practice-policy partnerships and their role in integrating evidence into practice and policy need to be understood from a variety of perspectives and disciplines. This theme focuses on the emerging empirical study of the use of research evidence for decision-making at local, national, and international levels. This body of work examines how research evidence is acquired, understood, and used in decision making as well as effective strategies to improve the use of research in policy and practice. The emerging field has leveraged mixed methods and multidisciplinary teams. To date three factors have been found to influence whether and how research is used to influence policy and practice: (1) if the research produced is useful and valued, recognizing the role of evidence as one of many other considerations in policy and practice decisions, (2) shared in the context of trusting relationships, and (3) research-practice-policy partnerships that promote shared knowledge development, feed research into policy and practice, and shape future research questions. Research partnerships can be formed at all stages of prevention science: conceptualization, design, testing, interpretation, and dissemination. Proposals are encouraged that focus on partnerships in optimizing prevention programs, strategies for building and leveraging partnerships for increasing evidence use, and different models for supporting the translation of evidence-based practice into practice (e.g., prevention infrastructure, partnership models, models to support constant improvement of community outcomes, practice-based research networks etc.).

Promoting equity and decreasing disparities through optimizing prevention science
Inequities and disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles in achieving optimal health and accessing prevention interventions and care based on their economic and/or social status. These include a person’s racial or ethnic group, religion, economic status, gender and sexual identity, geographic location (including country of origin), mental health, disability or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion. Inequalities and disparities need to be understood broadly, at both national and international levels. Optimizing prevention science with an equity lens means taking into account individual and group experiences and access to opportunity, treatment, and outcomes in the design, testing, adaptation, and implementation of prevention programs. Optimization builds on research examining risk and protection (e.g., social, behavioral, biological) and developmental trajectories within health disparity populations to develop optimized intervention strategies to reduce disparities and promote health equity. Optimizing prevention science to achieve health equity should address the systems and structures that create and maintain disparities as well as other social factors that perpetuate inequalities. Prevention scientists can take a critical eye related to equity issues by framing research questions, selecting measures, choosing research designs, engaging stakeholders, analyzing and interpreting findings, and disseminating results. Equity should be considered when prevention scientists disseminate, implement and scale prevention programs. Proposals are encouraged that advance understanding of (a) risk and protection across and within populations as related to health disparities, (b) the impact of public systems on disparities, (c) prevention efforts that address disparities, and (d) policies that promote equity, health, and well-being. In addition, proposals are encouraged that examine how the scale-up of evidence-based programs relate to equity within a system.

General Conference Themes: Advances across the Stages of the Prevention Research Cycle
In addition to the conference themes above, SPR continues to encourage submissions under each of the stages of the prevention research cycle. While each of the conference themes above fit under one or more of the stages of the prevention research cycle, the conference welcomes submissions that are not specific to this year’s conference theme. These may be of particular interest to early career scientists and those involved in prevention science internationally.
Epidemiology and Etiology: Submissions under this theme are focused on describing the distribution and patterns of injury and disease (e.g., cancer, cardiovascular disease, substance use disorders, depression, and HIV/AIDS) as well as on identifying risk and protective targets of preventive interventions, especially those with a developmental and/or lifespan approach, or that include neurobiological, genetic, or contextual factors.

Development and Testing of Interventions: Prevention interventions can be tested for efficacy under conditions of high quality assurance and strong research designs ("proof of concept") and tested for effectiveness under real world conditions in settings and systems. Submissions reporting the findings from efficacy or effectiveness trials (including pilot studies with preliminary outcome data) are welcomed, and those that combine the findings of such trials with one of the special conference themes are particularly encouraged.

Dissemination and Implementation Science: Dissemination, implementation, and operations research bridge the gap between research and everyday practice through a dynamic, transactional process between the public health community and researchers. Submissions under this theme should advance the scientific understanding of dissemination and implementation, including cost-efficient sustainability of preventive interventions into systems. Presentations that focus on program dissemination and implementation outcomes, improve dissemination and implementation processes, or identify individual, provider, organizational, and/or system levels factors that contribute to dissemination, implementation, and effectiveness are encouraged.

Innovative Methods and Statistics: “Cutting edge” studies and methodological analyses that address measurement, statistical, and design challenges to prevention science are invited. Examples may include systems science approaches (e.g., computational modeling and simulation, network analysis, and engineering control methods) to conceptualize prevention at the micro- or macro-levels of analyses; alternative intervention designs for when randomization is not possible; new methods for optimization of interventions; adaptive interventions and SMART designs; and innovative analytic approaches including time varying effect models, and models for incorporating intensive longitudinal data and/or real time data capture in prevention science research. Presentations should highlight the challenges related to prevention science that these innovative design and statistical methods can address and additional benefits gained by using these techniques.

Research, Policy, and Practice: Decision makers around the world are emphasizing evidence-based policy reform. In the U.S., the federal administration supports rigorous evaluation of social interventions, use of preventive interventions that demonstrate strong evidence of effectiveness, and analysis of the financial benefits that offset or outweigh costs. There are also new policy initiatives at the state and national levels such as changes in the legal status of marijuana and new approaches to improving the educational system where evidence is needed to guide further policy change. This theme encourages submissions that evaluate or estimate the outcomes of planned, new or existing policies, the impact of efficacious programs in emerging policy contexts, as well as submissions that demonstrate how empirical research has been used to inform and guide new policies. In addition, research that describes and evaluates the processes by which policies have been formed, developed, and implemented are encouraged. A wide variety of content areas are welcomed, including emergent areas such as marijuana legalization, policies to address misuse of and nonmedical use of prescription drugs, recurring areas of concern such as cancer screening or HIV antiretroviral therapy compliance (What are effective strategies for reaching high-priority populations?), education policy (What policies and practices contribute to the well documented racial disparities in exclusionary discipline and expulsion?), gun safety and obesity prevention (What is the impact of national and local laws and policies?), and bullying laws and policies. Proposals that combine the findings of such research with one of the special conference themes are particularly encouraged. International research and/or comparative research across policy contexts are especially encouraged.
**NIDA International SPR Poster Session**

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is sponsoring an international poster session. Posters will highlight drug abuse prevention and/or drug-related HIV prevention research completed in international settings by international, domestic, and cross-nation teams of researchers. A separate call for submissions to this international poster session is issued.

All abstracts will be submitted on-line at [www.preventionresearch.org](http://www.preventionresearch.org).

Please contact Jennifer Lewis for questions at 703-934-4850, ext. 213 or jenniferlewis@preventionresearch.org.

The abstract site will open the week of September 11, 2017.

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