

Engaging the media in disseminating high quality research evidence: experiences and lessons learned

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Introduction

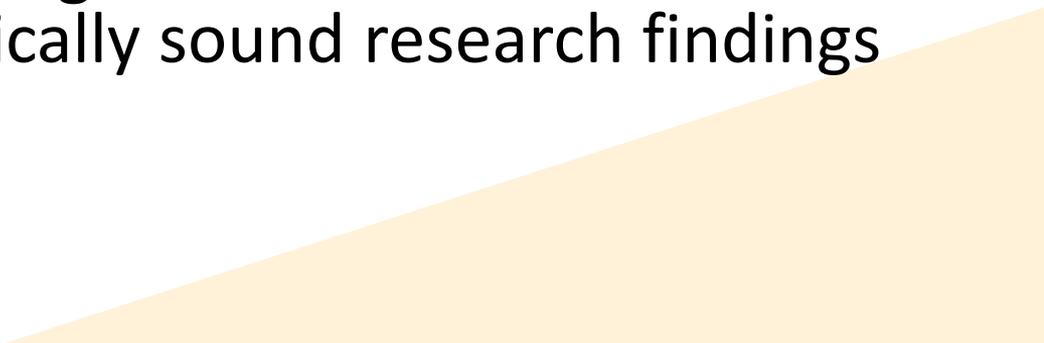
- The media houses have potential to disseminate high quality research evidence to the general public, as a platform for engaging the general public in order to make better informed health decisions.
- The shortcoming of using the media houses is that many a times, they fail to communicate these research findings accurately.
- In Sub Saharan Africa, particularly Uganda, utilising the media houses in disseminating research evidence in an accurate way is poor, possibly due to lack of skills in reporting scientific research findings by the journalists.
- We therefore describe the experience of the Innovations and Knowledge Translations (IKT) Office in working with the media to promote dissemination of research evidence.

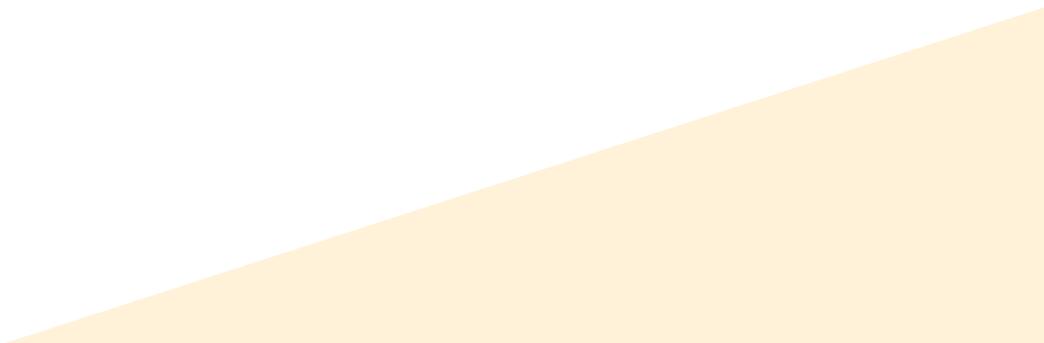


General objective

- To describe the approaches used and to highlight what worked well, the challenges we faced, and overall lessons learnt in order to provide a learning platform for institutions seeking to adopt similar strategies.

Methodology

- A case study approach that reviews the experiences of IKT in working with the media to promote evidence-based reporting of researchers' and PHD fellows quality scientifically sound research findings was used.
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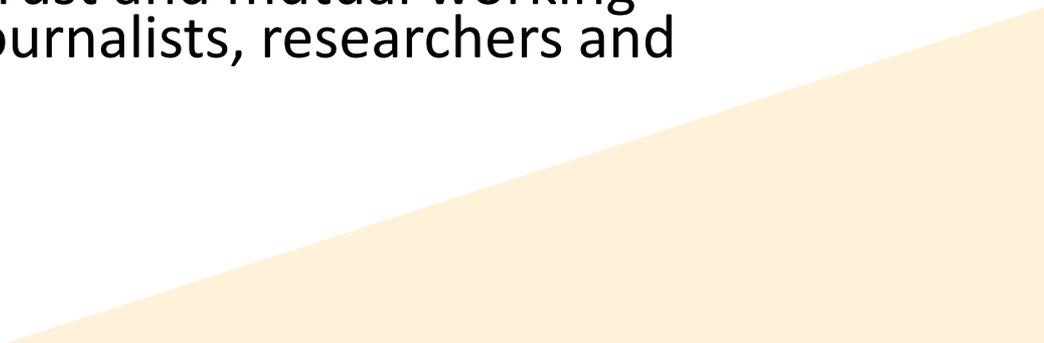
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- we also utilized findings from a self-administered survey of PHD fellows and journalists in order to understand the key challenges that journalists face in evidence-based reporting of health issues and their insights on how the challenges could be addressed.
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Interim results

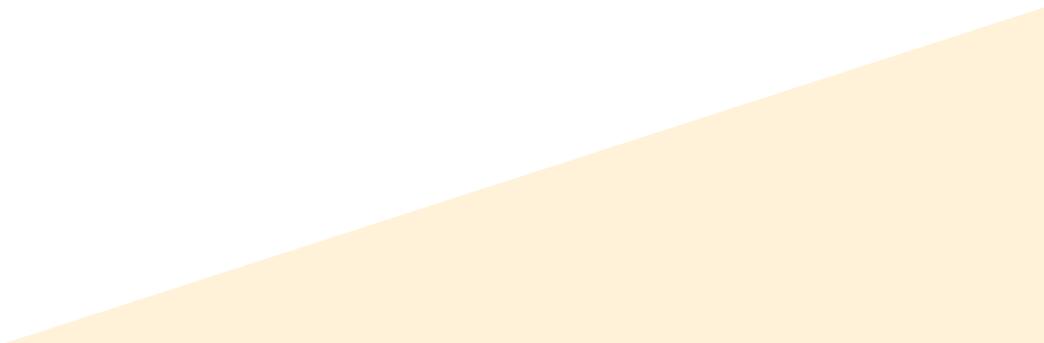
- The IKT officers are knowledge brokers that facilitate the user -pull model of knowledge translations. The IKT office has utilised various strategies in order to engage the media in reporting evidence based research findings accurately.

Lessons learned

- Motivating and training journalists and health researchers in communicating evidence based research findings is key for this platform to be effective.
 - Use of plain language summaries that package research evidence in the simplest language are effective in acting as a guide for the journalists during their face to face interviews with the health researchers.
 - Building and maintaining trust and mutual working relationships among the journalists, researchers and knowledge brokers is vital.
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Possible challenges

- Lack of funding to conduct continuous refresher trainings for both the journalists and the researchers on how to communicate scientific research evidence.
 - Lack of a clear framework for sustaining knowledge broker bodies.
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Conclusion

- Motivating and building capacity of both the journalists and the health researchers through training and use of plain language summaries are effective strategies in promoting dissemination of research evidence.