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Research Category

Community Health / Policy

Abstract Title

Strengthening Pediatric Research Impact in Manitoba Through Knowledge Mobilization and National Research Collaboration the Pediatric Outcome imProvement through COordination of Research Network

Authors

Name	Role	Profession
Megan Bale-Nick	Presenting Author	Research Staff
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Will they participate in the poster presentation at CHRD?

No

Background

Children remain underrepresented in large-scale clinical research, and pediatric studies often face challenges related to fragmented data systems, site-specific approvals, and coordination across institutions. In response to gaps highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, POPCORN was established as a national pediatric research network connecting pediatric hospitals, research networks, patients, families, and knowledge users across Canada.

Objective

POPCORN aims to strengthen multicentre pediatric research capacity and support evidence-informed practice and policy through coordinated national collaboration.

Methods

Beginning in 2022, POPCORN developed a national “network of networks” model integrating pediatric emergency, inpatient, critical care, infectious disease, and perinatal research networks. Knowledge Mobilization (KM) is one of the networks cross-cutting pillars.

Led by Dr. Knisley, the KM Pillar, supported by a Communications Coordinator and Knowledge Broker, advances KM and uptake of research findings across POPCORN projects. Dr. T’Jong serves as the Manitoba Site Lead, promoting participation in research activities. Ms. Bourrier serves as Manitoba Core Research Manager, leading feasibility assessments and coordinating local resources for project start-up and implementation.

Results

POPCORN has connected pediatric centres and networks across Canada, creating shared governance structures, study review processes, data harmonization activities, and coordinated site engagement. In Manitoba, the network supported implementation of the national COVID-19 Prospective Cohort Study. The KM Pillar has facilitated collaboration among researchers, clinicians, patients, families, and decision-makers, developed and maintains popcornpediatrics.ca, supported the dissemination of six studies, supported the patient engagement training co-developed with patient partners, including significant contributions from parent partner Ms. Conia. Support from the Research Support Unit at CHRIM has contributed to network development, and project implementation.

Conclusion

A coordinated national research infrastructure with embedded knowledge mobilization can strengthen pediatric research capacity and accelerate evidence uptake. Manitoba’s leadership within POPCORN demonstrates how provincial expertise can contribute to sustainable national collaboration and improved child health research impact. Future POPCORN-enabled studies focus on priority areas including bacterial meningitis, antimicrobial resistance, and biobanking initiatives.