



Health Communication

BA (JMC) 108

UNIT 4

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Health Communication

1. Define Information Education (IEC): Concept and Functions
2. Define Behavior Change Communication (BCC): Concept and Functions
3. Design Communication Campaign: Pre-test and Evaluation
4. Future of Health Communication and Career Prospects


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Define Information Education Communication (IEC): Concept and Functions

- In IEC, we encourage the people and the society to develop confidence or skills related to the healthcare and hygiene.
- In communication it's not about giving instructions but it's about showing our point of view to the people. Communication is all about learning process, when we communicate with people, we share the information with people
- There are two types of communications:
 - i. **Direct Communication** – It is face to face interaction like where we go to community or visit a village or interact with people. If opinion leaders or community workers visits your home and demonstrate that is the direct communication.

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- **ii. Indirect Communication** – Communicating through virtual mode is known as indirect communication. We can also say as communicating through a medium.
- IEC approach **may use mass media** or even **interpersonal information** to inform or establish positive norms among general population to help those at **risk to develop their own behavior and develop new personal skills**.
- Health functionaries require motivational and communication skills to motivate community in order to implement the IEC approach.
- In the form of public service messages, news, articles, features on various health issues can be publicized using following media tools:

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- **Traditional Media** – Face to face communication; events such as fairs & festivals, health melas/camps; songs & drama; puppetry shows etc.
- **Print Media** – Posters, flip charts, booklets, brochures, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines etc.
- **Electronic Media** – Audio visual programs such as documentaries, interviews, infotainment programs, advertisements broadcasting through radio & television.
- **Digital Media** – Websites, social sites, e-mails, mobile phones, display boards etc.
- **Outdoor Media** – Hoardings, banners, kiosks etc.


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Applications of IEC in the delivery of healthcare services

- Raise the level of awareness, knowledge and understanding of people about various health problems
- Undertake motivational activities and create an enabling environment for behavioral changes among people
- Provide a conducive environment for care as well as rehabilitation of people suffering from diseases.


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Activities of IEC

- Help health functionaries in organizing home visits, peer counselling and group meetings in order to sensitize people about various diseases
- Provide special communication packages to tackle the health problems of the people by interpersonal, group or mass communication approaches, depending upon the intensity of the problem.
- Designing and providing training in communication skills,
- Supervision
- Carrying out research


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Behavior Change Communication (BCC): Concept and Functions


- Monitoring and evaluation of IEC activities in audience to determine what information is needed and the most effective way of delivering it.
- Designing and producing the materials to support activities.
- BCC is a communication strategy which encourages individual/community to change their behavior.
- It is a strategy that triggers people/society/ communities to adopt healthy, beneficial and positive behavioral practices.

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- BCC is an effective communication approach which helps to promote changes in knowledge, attitudes, norms, beliefs and behaviors
- BCC is an interactive process with communities to create custom-fitted messages and methodologies utilizing different channels
- It aims to create positive practices; advance and support individual, network and cultural conduct change; and keep up suitable practices.

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- BCC is a powerful and fundamental human interaction – communication – which positively influences dimensions of health and well-being.
- BCC is a direct approach towards changing behavior. It is different as BCC is considered more for creating awareness and giving information.
- Seek community participation in discussion, planning, supervision and monitoring.
- Should be need and situation specific.

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- Focus on social pressure at the group level to create new social norms.
- Generate demands.
- Identify unmet needs.
- Increase services utilization
- Change their attitude, social norms, cultural patterns and undesired behaviours.
- Facilitate empowerment of women.
- Encourage inter-spouse communication and male participation

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Benefits of BCC

- Increase in knowledge and attitude of the people
- It helps to trigger and stimulate people for adopting positive behavioral approaches
- Promotes appropriate and essential attitude change
- As BCC strategies and messages are tailored for specific target groups, these strategies are efficient and effective.
- Approaches are more sustainable and acceptable
- BCC helps to increase learning and skills
- Improves aptitudes and feeling of self-adequacy


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Design Communication Campaign: Pre-test and Evaluation


- Communication campaigns **utilize a purposeful promotional strategy to change knowledge, attitudes, behavior or policy in a specific, intended audience via marketing and advertising techniques.**
- Communication campaigns are used to:
 - Raise awareness
 - Influence attitudes and norms
 - Increase knowledge
 - Reinforce knowledge, attitudes and/or behavior
 - Show benefit of behavior change
 - Demonstrate skills
 - Suggest/prompt an action
 - Refute myths and misconceptions

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- "Pre-testing is the process of **bringing together members of the priority audience** to react to the components of a communication campaign, before they are produced in final form. Pre-testing measures the reaction of the selected group of individuals and helps determine whether the priority audience will find the components - usually draft materials understandable, believable and appealing."
- Pre-testing is designed to enhance a **social and behavior change communication (SBCC)** campaign's effectiveness through various components like: key benefits and support points, messages, story boards, name of campaign & logo, signature tune, interpersonal communication activities.

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- Pretesting is done to gather information from the audience on the suitability of the message design.
- It is an attempt to gather information on comprehension, attractiveness, acceptance, believability, involvement, relevance, motivation/persuasion, and improvement.
- Before pretesting and as a basis for it, the creative brief developed for the campaign should be reviewed.

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• Steps in pre-testing

Step 1: Outline Pretest Objectives

Step 2: Choose the Pretest Method

Step 3: Plan the Pretest

Step 4: Develop Pretesting Guide

Step 5: Develop Questions


Step 6: Conduct Pretest

Step 7: Analyze Data and Interpret Results

Step 8: Summarize the Results

Step 9: Revise Materials and Retest

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• **Evaluation of a campaign**

Evaluation is done to **determine whether a campaign achieved its objectives** (e.g., a change in behaviour, a reduction in diseases, a change in knowledge or attitudes).

Evaluation is used to understand why the program did or did not achieve its objectives


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Why is it important to evaluate your program?

- To continuously improve the delivery of the campaign by identifying gaps and how to overcome them to increase effectiveness.
- To provide hard evidence to decision-makers that the campaign is having positive effects and to justify continued or new funding.
- To determine whether the program is reaching the appropriate audience and find even more effective ways to reach them.
- To identify how and why the program has influenced

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the behaviour of the target audience, and their reactions to the campaign. This can be important to ensure continued support and motivation to deliver the campaign.


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Future of Health Communication and Future Prospects

- Today, it is one of the fastest growing areas in the field of communication, which involves putting public communication strategies to work.
- It improves relationship between patients and healthcare providers, planning, designing and executing public health campaigns and promoting health living through the media.
- We've seen public service announcements on television, hoardings, panels, newspapers and magazines and even heard them on the radio. These are all part of health communication campaigns but the real opportunities are much greater than this.

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Flaws in Health Communication

- Unfortunate ability to make the false and misinformed messages spread quickly before they have the chance to be disputed by professionals. Eg. Ongoing COVID times
- Lack of trained professionals, only a handful of them have degrees
- In many cases, trained professionals are not consulted before is produced and distributed to the audience.


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Changing trends in health communication


- Most countries are at some stage of health sector reform to try to provide expanded and equitable access to quality services while reducing, or at least controlling, the rising cost of healthcare.
- Health reform processes have many facets and there is no single model being adopted by all countries.
- The methods people use to communicate with each other have also changed significantly.
- Mobile telephony, electronic mail and video conferencing offer new options for sharing perspectives in most urban settings.

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- Digital technologies are making visual images and voices of people more accessible through radio, TV, video, portable disk players and internet, which have changed the opportunities for people to share their opinions, experiences and knowledge.
- Using mobile messages, mobile apps, online social networking sites like blogs, twitters, facebook, youtube etc.


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Career perspective of health communication

- The HC field is very diverse, and becoming a health communication professional within it will mean different things depending on where you live, who your employer is, and what you hope to do.
- A health communicator is a specialized type of PR professional, who works efficiently to spread public health messages and help others to understand more about medical treatment, healthy lifestyle choices, disease prevention, and more.
- They focus primarily on spreading information to the public that can have an overall impact on the health and wellbeing of the population.


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Like marketing jobs, but instead of trying to sell a product, more focus of HC specialists is on creating health awareness. Duties may vary, but include the following:

- Analyze public health risks or concerns to determine what areas need improvement.
- Design printed materials that educate about health issues and distribute them to the community.
- Create ad campaigns that help increase public knowledge of health related risks and solutions.

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- Use the internet and other forms of mass media to help influence public policy and help to educate the public about various health and wellness issues.
- Conduct workshops to improve overall understanding and management of health issues.
- Issue press releases about emergencies or about crisis related issues in the community health field.
- Analyze current programs and initiatives and determine how health communication efforts can be changed for better results
- Measure overall outcomes of all efforts above and adjust as needed.

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