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**Building capacity to communicate evidence with personalized Skills Assessments**

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**Objectives/aims**

Effective communication of research evidence is a critical component of Evidence-Informed Decision Making (EIDM). In order to communicate evidence, public health professionals must first thoroughly understand the evidence. The new EIDM Skills Assessment Tool from the National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools (NCCMT) is designed to help public health practitioners evaluate their own ability to understand and apply evidence into their decisions. NCCMT’s Skills Assessment Tool requires users to answer 20 multiple-choice questions drawn randomly from a bank of questions, each designed to assess a different concept relevant to EIDM. The questions use typical public health scenarios as examples.

Users are immediately informed whether they chose a correct or incorrect answer. At the end of the assessment, each user receives a report containing personalized feedback based on the submitted responses. The personalized feedback report identifies areas for improvement and guides continuing professional development with regards to EIDM. Public health professionals are informed of their individual strengths and weaknesses related to EIDM knowledge and skills, are made aware of gaps in their understanding, and are provided recommendations for freely available NCCMT resources that can support skill development where gaps have been identified.

**Methods**

The EIDM Skills Assessment Tool can also be used to support organizational capacity to use evidence in decision making. Managers and team leaders may use the personalized feedback reports from staff to help to identify and respond to gaps in EIDM capacity within their teams or to help plan tailored professional development opportunities at the organizational or individual level. Understanding of existing gaps can thus guide organizations to create informed strategies to increase EIDM capacity and communication.

**Main findings**

Launched in October 2017, the Skills Assessment Tool has proven to be popular among public health professionals. Early analysis of scores indicate improvement from users’ first attempts and subsequent attempts. Referral traffic to recommended resources within the NCCMT’s site indicates that users are using recommended resources.

NCCMT’s EIDM Skills Assessment Tool helps individuals and organizations identify areas for individual and organization-wide improvement in EIDM and directly links appropriate resources to the user for additional learning. Empowering individuals, teams and public health organizations to confidently use and communicate research evidence for decision making may support the uptake of EIDM in public health practice, leading to better health outcomes for the broader Canadian population.