Modifying Audit Tools

Introduction

Assessing a community's physical environment, especially those aspects related to walking and cycling, is becoming more important as physical activity recommendations focus on active living and incorporating moderate intensity physical activity into daily life (Pikora et al., 2002). One way of assessing aspects of the physical environment is by conducting an audit of the local community.

> "*An environmental audit instrument is defined is a tool used to inventory and assess the physical environment conditions associated with walking and cycling" (Moudon and Lee, 2003: p21.*

Modifying Audit Tools

Researching how aspects of the physical environment facilitate or impede active living is an area of rapid development and a number of audit tools have been designed by researchers. These tend to have been designed for specific communities, to achieve specific objectives, or answer specific research questions. In order to ensure they are applicable to other settings and populations, it may be necessary to make a number of changes to the tool chosen.

The types of modifications that might be required include:

- deleting, adding or changing items;
- altering response options;
- changing how the tool is scored once completed;
- changing the audit instructions; and
- altering training provided to those administering the tool.

When an audit tool is modified, it should, ideally, be piloted in the setting and/or with the communities for which it is intended prior to widespread application. This will allow additional changes to be made should the need arise.

The ideal approach when modifying an audit tool would involve evaluating the tool for its reliability and validity in the setting for which it is intended for use. If substantial changes are being made to the original instrument, it is recommended that the users consult with the developers of the tool as part of this process.

Language Translation

Language translation and cultural adaptations are special case modifications that may need to be applied to self-report and observational measures. The aim when translating is to express the same concepts in a different language rather than making a literal translation of the words. A back-translation into English will be necessary to assess the accuracy of the translation. Because this is a complex process, it may be necessary to collaborate with agencies with particular expertise in translation.

Support for translating audit tools

- Guidelines for translating and adapting measures related to physical activity are available from the *International Physical Activity Questionnaire* – www.ipaq.ki.se.
- The *NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service* has expertise in translation. The Service will provide translation services to support the implementation of health research and programs. www.health.nsw.gov.au/mhcs/index.html

References

Pikora TJ, Bull FCL, Jamrozik K, Knuiman M, Giles-Corti B and Donovan RJ. 2002. Developing a Reliable Audit Instrument for Measuring the Physical Environment for Physical Activity. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine 23 (3)*: 187-194.

Active Living Research. *Proper Use of Environment and Physical Activity Measures.* Accessed 29 Sept 2006 from http://www.cpah.health.usyd.edu.au/pdfs/2007_ProperUseDisclaimer.pdf