

Evaluation of the impact of CATIE's programs and services

Executive summary

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Canada's source for
HIV and hepatitis C
information

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CATIE is Canada's source for up-to-date, unbiased information about HIV and hepatitis C. We connect people living with HIV or hepatitis C, at-risk communities, healthcare providers and community organizations with the knowledge, resources and expertise to reduce transmission and improve quality of life. For more than 29 years, CATIE has been there to provide information that enables people to make informed choices about their health and enhances the ability of healthcare providers and other frontline organizations to respond to their clients' needs.

In 2019, CATIE conducted a national survey to assess the overall success of its complement of programs and services in knowledge exchange. The survey was designed to evaluate CATIE's reach, frequency of use, relevance, usefulness and effectiveness. This report presents the overall results from all respondents to the CATIE survey.

The CATIE survey was accessed by 1,973 people working in HIV and hepatitis C, which tells us that CATIE is doing a good job at reaching its intended audiences. Survey respondents represented a diverse array of organizations that collectively provide a full range of HIV, hepatitis C, sexually transmitted infection (STI) and harm reduction services; 39% of respondents worked in public health and healthcare, 40% were from the community and volunteer sector and 14% were policy- and decision-makers/leaders. Eighty-one percent

of organizations worked from an integrated sexual health and harm reduction framework.¹

Survey respondents reported frequent use of CATIE's services, with 33% reporting daily or weekly use and 33% reporting monthly use in the past year.

The information provided by CATIE has had an impact on respondents' HIV and/or hepatitis C knowledge, with 96% reporting that their knowledge of HIV and/or hepatitis C has increased as a result of CATIE's services and resources. In addition, 92% felt confident that they have the necessary knowledge to respond to issues or concerns of their clients and/or community. At least 97% reported that they had used/applied this knowledge in their work and 96% reported they had used information from CATIE to educate or inform others.

CATIE has been successful in helping respondents to increase their knowledge of programming, with 93% of respondents reporting increased knowledge of new developments, best practices and other evidence-informed program innovations in HIV and hepatitis C. This information has had an impact on programming, with 92% reporting changes such as modifying a program or practice or implementing a new program or practice. Respondents provided 602 specific examples of evidence-informed changes to policies, practices and programming as a result of CATIE's services and resources. The following key themes emerged from respondents' qualitative comments:

1. Increased capacity and knowledge among service providers

¹ This type of framework entails working in two or more of the following areas: HIV, hepatitis C, STIs and harm reduction.

Respondents reported that they used information from CATIE to stay up to date with new knowledge about HIV and hepatitis C. This included using CATIE's services and resources for staff training and education, as primary references on an ongoing basis and to provide up-to-date and credible information to colleagues.

2. Increased capacity and knowledge among priority populations

Respondents reported that they used information from CATIE to educate the populations they serve. This work included using information to develop intake and educational packages, using information as teaching aids and using information to refer patients to needed services and supports. They also used information to create pamphlets and brochures and to develop workshops and information sessions for priority populations.

3. Evidence-informed practice change

Respondents gave many examples of how CATIE's services and resources had helped to improve their practice. For example, CATIE's services and resources had helped them to interpret new research and subsequently had informed the messages they used and developed for their interactions with clients. Information obtained from CATIE helped providers to initiate conversations and to improve client-provider relationships.

4. Increased application of evidence-based programming and practice

Respondents reported that they applied information from CATIE in their programs, policies and approaches within their organizations. For example, they revised programs, policies and practices following evidence-based guidance they accessed through CATIE, applied best practices guidelines in their organizations, changed policies around important issues and developed shared organizational understanding of, and approaches to, important issues.

When asked how satisfied they were overall with CATIE's services and resources, the response was emphatic. Ninety-three percent agreed or strongly agreed with at least six of eight measures of satisfaction. CATIE's services and resources were regarded as accurate (97% agreed or strongly agreed), relevant (96%), easy to access (96%) and responsive to new developments in HIV and hepatitis C (93%). Ninety-five percent agreed or strongly agreed that CATIE plays an important role in people's search for HIV and hepatitis C information and 86% agreed or strongly agreed that CATIE helps those responding to HIV and hepatitis C to become aware of the work that other organizations are doing in HIV and hepatitis C. Respondents also reported that they would recommend CATIE to others (97% agreed or strongly agreed) and that CATIE helps them to resolve issues, solve problems or answer questions related to their work (91%).

People seeking to acquire knowledge often experience barriers to the uptake and use of knowledge. Ninety-six percent of respondents reported that CATIE minimizes barriers to the uptake of biomedical information and 94% reported that CATIE minimizes barriers to the uptake of programming knowledge.

The results of the survey indicate that CATIE's complement of services and resources are extremely successful in increasing biomedical knowledge of HIV and hepatitis C and knowledge of best practices and other evidence-informed program innovations across the continuum of care (prevention, testing and treatment). While imparting knowledge to CATIE's target audiences is an important first step, knowledge is meant to be used to bring about action and change. CATIE has also enhanced the capacity of individuals and organizations to respond to HIV and hepatitis C through effective planning and delivery of programs, services and policies.