

POEM.....

The liquid of life

Levi Tafari can be viewed performing this poem on the *JECH* web site at: <http://www.jech.com/misc/poems.shtml> with children from Windsor Street School in Liverpool, UK. The Editors would like to thank Windsor Street School and National Museums Liverpool (<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk>) for their help with the filming of this performance.

Nowadays our water
don't taste like it oughta
we have polluted the sea
and contaminated rivers
I really think it vital
for human survival
to keep water pure and clean
in a state that is natural.

A gift from JAH this element
is something we should treasure
but man destroys everything
destruction brings him pleasure
drink thereof and quench your thirst
to humans this is natural
but men abuse the waterways
and this is suicidal.
Factories dump toxic waste
and this is far from clever
whenever they are confronted
they will tell you that they never
pipes are made of lead
bringing domesticated water
lead enters the body
lead is a polluter
this creates a problem
and puts you in a trap
you cannot drink the water
straight from the tap
you have to buy bottles
or use a waterfilter
but if we cleaned up our act
it would be much cheaper.
A family took a bath last week
their skins turned bright green
and all that they were doing
was trying to stay clean
they all grew very angry
which was easy to overstand
being environmentally friendly is one thing
but turning green is out of hand.
Cases like this are happening
all over this land
polluting water is crazy
acts like this should be banned
because I turned my tap on today
the water was really murky
and so in the abundance of water
we could all go thirsty.

Because...

Nowadays our water
don't taste like it oughta
we have polluted the sea
and contaminated rivers
I really think it vital
for human survival
to keep water pure and clean
in a state that is natural.

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Speaker's corner

Understanding the basic principles of knowledge translation

Two problems dictate why scientific knowledge needs to be translated for decision makers. The first problem is volume. Scientific findings are being published all the time. For example, there are some 17 000 new biomedical books published every year, along with 30 000 biomedical journals, resulting in annual increase of 7%.¹ As a result, decision makers such as physicians need to read on average 19 original articles each day to keep abreast of their field.^{1, 2} The second problem is complexity. Many of these studies use complicated designs, high power statistics, and technical jargons, which are not readily understood by people outside the field.

It has been suggested that from time to time, scientists who are effective translators must stop simply generating scientific evidence and instead translate knowledge into a product suitable for use by decision makers.³

The basic principles of knowledge translation are integration and simplification. Methods for integration include: narrative review,¹ systematic review,^{1, 4} meta-analysis,^{1, 5} meta-database,⁶ inventory of best practices,⁷ and public health observatory.⁸ After integration, information must be simplified to a level that can be understood and used by the users. Knowledge translation is analogous to a regional power grid, in which generating plants from different localities contribute electricity at half a million volts. The high voltage is necessary to increase efficiency—that is, to minimise energy loss for conveyance along power lines over long distance. But then at the other end the electricity must be stepped down to the household voltage before it can be used. Similarly, complex high power technical information must first be integrated and then stepped down for communication to different audiences in the most appropriate way.

Take the example of tobacco demand reduction messages. For the policy maker, the economic and health burden on the society is easily understood. In Canada, one appropriate message is the extra burden on the society that can be removed by eliminating tobacco use for one year. This amounts to savings of \$16.5 billion per year (health care costs \$2.5 billion; residential care costs \$1.5 billion; workers' absenteeism \$2 billion; lost future earnings \$10.5 billion),⁹ and avoidance of 47 000 unnecessary deaths per year (30 000 men; 17 000 women).¹⁰

For the younger audiences, "smoking makes you ugly" is an appropriate way to convey information for smoking cessation.¹¹ While teenage smokers may not care about the long term morbidity and premature mortality caused by

tobacco smoking, they can certainly relate to the immediate problems of smoking induced facial wrinkles¹² and hair loss.¹³ They can understand the message that smoking 20 cigarettes per day is equivalent to 10 years of chronological aging.¹⁴

For other audiences who are interested in sports, they may not be interested in the number of years of life lost due to smoking. Instead, they should be told the number of sports games they are going to miss in their lifetime due to smoking, such as the Grey Cup (football game, annual, Canada), the Stanley Cup (hockey game, annual, USA and Canada), or even the World Cup (soccer game, every four years, global)!

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