

Knowledge Translation Through Theatre: Spotlight on *The Cut of It*

Objective

To evaluate audience members' perceptions of theatre as a knowledge translation strategy.

Practice Points

1. Knowledge translation is the process of communicating scientific evidence and sharing new knowledge in order to lead to improved health care services, products, and patient experiences.

Background

1. The performance was based on NL SUPPORT-funded research about the experiences of breast cancer patients.
2. The research team included Kathleen C. Sitter, Natalie Beausoleil, Gail Wideman, Erin McGowan, Erin Cameron, Alex Mathieson, and Rosemary Lester.
3. Playwright Meghan Greeley wrote the script, entitled *The Cut of It*.
4. White Rooster Theatre produced the original performances of *The Cut of It* from Nov 7 – 10, 2019 at the Resource Centre for the Arts.
5. The cast included three women with lived experience of breast cancer.
6. In total, 653 audience members attended the performances.
7. Public engagement funding was awarded in 2020 for performances in other health regions.



Wendi Smallwood & Ruth Lawrence in the White Rooster Theatre production of *The Cut of It* by Meghan Greeley, based on research conducted by Dr. Kathleen C Sitter, Directed by Lois Brown. Funded and Supported by NL SUPPORT and CIHR. Photo by Vaida V. Nairn.

"Amazing work! It is wonderful to see research and art coming into one place. What a great way to communicate the findings with the average public."

"I lost my sister and mother to cancer; we need more information in such a touching way."

Methods

1. Audience members were asked to provide feedback about the use of theatre to share research results.
2. The questionnaire asked respondents the extent to which they agreed with five statements and included space for written comments.

Results

- 250 questionnaires were returned after the four performances. The average response rate for each performance was 39%.



Excerpts from Stephanie Curran’s “Experiencing *The Cut of It: More Than Just A Review*,” published by The Racket Online on November 15, 2019

- “This is what is so beautiful about theatre. Along with seeing a beautiful show, the audience is lucky to learn things, educate themselves, see life through someone else’s eyes. Everyone, in some way or another, will be affected by cancer in their lifetime, and this show hits home for every single person in the audience. Theatre as an art form is so important, and it’s shows like this that takes art and raises it above just going to see a show, but going to experience a moment in time.”
- “I hope, women especially, get to see this show and realize that this is the scary truth. Your life can be turned upside down in just a moment, and we need to know the signs and take action so we can keep ourselves aware of our bodies. Our bodies are our homes, we live and breathe each day in them, and it is so important to recognize when something is not right. Thanks to this show, I will be more aware of my body going forward. Art and education, now that’s a beautiful pairing.”

Conclusions

1. Over 90% of audience members agreed this performance was an effective way to share research results with the public.
2. Most respondents agreed that this performance could affect how they would make treatment decisions (62%) or support a family member or friend making treatment decisions related to breast cancer (89%).
3. This evaluation suggests that audience members perceived theatre to be an effective knowledge translation strategy.

