

Assessing the Individual-Level Impact of SEARCH Classic

SEARCH III Cohort Survey Results

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Submitted to:



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SEARCH III Participants

21 of 27 SEARCH III participant respondents

Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to gather feedback from SEARCH III participants regarding the impact of SEARCH participation including application of skills in practice, utilization of the SEARCH network, personal and professional development, and dissemination and application of findings emerging from SEARCH projects. The SEARCH III follow-up survey was conducted as one component of ongoing follow-up with all program cohorts and results are compared, where possible, with feedback from SEARCH I and II participants.

Questions

Two years after completing the SEARCH program:

- What difference has the program made for participants?
- How do participants use the interpersonal networks established through SEARCH?
- To what extent have skills acquired through SEARCH been applied in practice?
- To what extent have SEARCH project findings been disseminated?
- In what ways have findings from SEARCH projects been used for decision-making?

Methods

The primary method of data collection was an electronic survey accessible through the SEARCH Desktop. Participants without current Desktop accounts were encouraged to contact the Centre for Health Evidence help desk to obtain access. Those participants who did not wish to connect through the Desktop, however, were offered three alternatives for completing the survey: telephone, fax, or e-mail.

Key Findings

What difference has the program made for participants?

Participation in the SEARCH Classic program has been consistently rated as a positive experience by previous program participants. In follow-up with participants from the first three cohorts, SEARCH participation was credited as a positive influence on personal and career development. Approximately 80% of SEARCH I, II, and III survey respondents reported that participation in SEARCH had positively impacted the development of their career.

SEARCH III respondents described a broad range of impacts including increased confidence and leadership skills, ability to influence organizational decision-making, value to organizations, respect and recognition from colleagues and employers, personal and professional networks, access to resources and tools, understanding of the health system, fundamental research skills and competencies, and the ability to choose, use and create evidence.

How do participants use the interpersonal networks established through SEARCH?

It has been well established that program participants from all cohorts continue to use the interpersonal networks established through SEARCH. All SEARCH III respondents (100%) reported contact with at least one member of the network after completing the residential modules. The quality of relationships within the network was characterized as positive and enduring despite an overall decrease in frequency of contact upon completion of the residential modules. Increased personal and professional networks emerged as one of the most positive impacts of SEARCH participation at an individual level.

The most common reasons for contacting members of the SEARCH network after the residential modules included requests for information, follow-up regarding SEARCH group projects, provision of information, social reasons (most frequently among fellow SEARCH III participants), and to obtain new contacts (defined as “to request contact information for individuals or staff members with responsibility for a given content area by first contacting someone connected through SEARCH”).

To what extent have skills acquired through SEARCH been applied in practice?

Survey respondents from all three cohorts reported that they continued to use the skills acquired through SEARCH two and four years after completing the program. The most frequently applied skills by SEARCH III respondents included those related to collaborating and participating in groups and networks and choosing and using evidence.

Approximately 50% of all respondents (across all three cohorts) reported that their responsibilities for choosing, using, and creating evidence had increased or increased substantially since the beginning of the SEARCH program.

Support from supervisors and organizations to apply skills obtained from the program was rated slightly higher by SEARCH III participants (compared with SEARCH I and II), suggesting increased organizational buy-in and support over time.

Lack of time has persisted as a commonly identified barrier to application of skills in practice. Less than half of respondents (from all three cohorts) reported sufficient time to apply skills in practice. In contrast, however, some participants noted that SEARCH skills had become integrated in their day to day work.

To what extent have SEARCH project findings been disseminated?

Participants from all three cohorts have disseminated findings from SEARCH projects through oral presentations, written reports, and in a few cases, peer reviewed journal publications.

Overall, while SEARCH project findings have been disseminated through a variety of channels (including conferences, workshops, posters, and journal publications) the potential breadth of dissemination has been limited by lack of time, limited resources and competing priorities. Some respondents expressed disappointment that findings were not more broadly shared given the amount of time, energy, and personal commitment dedicated to the SEARCH projects.

In what ways have findings from SEARCH projects been used for decision-making?

Findings from **individual projects** completed by SEARCH III participants were more likely to be used for decision-making than findings from group projects. Individual project findings supported decisions related to public health nursing, provincial standards of practice, electronic health records, obstetrical care, incident reporting systems, and regional policies regarding falls.

Commonly reported facilitators to the use of individual project findings included organizational support and interest in the topic (e.g., “*a targeted audience interested in the results*”). Common barriers included incomplete projects (due to termination of positions, loss of time commitment, or health region merges), lack of organizational support, and lack of agreement between stakeholders regarding project focus.

The majority of SEARCH III participants either did not know or reported that **group project** findings had not been used in practice for decision making. Identified barriers included incomplete group projects (due to regional changes, team member position and role changes, varying levels of commitment, and competing workload demands); lack of organizational interest in the project or topic; and difficulty applying the topic in practice (e.g., topic was too broad, not focused enough to be used in practice for decision making). Team member commitment and dedicated time to complete the project and disseminate results were cited as contributing factors to the use of group project findings.

Although findings from SEARCH projects were not always used in practice for decision making, survey respondents from all three cohorts reported that the skills developed through the process of completing SEARCH projects were used extensively (e.g., literature search skills and knowledge of the research process). The *process* of learning how to conduct research was often reported as more important than the *outcome* or specific findings of a given project. For example, the majority of SEARCH III respondents reported that the *process* of conducting an individual SEARCH project was beneficial even if the project was not completed as planned or when project findings were not used in practice. The process of completing the project resulted in increased awareness of issues, provision of important background information (through the literature review component), and practical experience with research methods and tools.

Introduction

Background

The Swift, Efficient Application of Research in Community Health (SEARCH) Classic program is a two-year inter-professional development program emphasizing applied research and knowledge translation. The focus of this report is on the perceived impact of program participation among SEARCH III participants (i.e., the group of professionals who took the program in its third iteration) 2 ½ years after completing the program. Results are contrasted, when possible, with similar follow-up conducted with SEARCH I and II participants two and four years after completing the program¹.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to gather feedback from SEARCH III participants regarding the impact of SEARCH participation including application of skills in practice, utilization of the SEARCH network, personal and professional development, and dissemination and application of findings emerging from SEARCH projects. The SEARCH III follow-up survey was conducted as one component of ongoing follow-up with all program cohorts.

Questions

Two years after completing the SEARCH program:

- What difference has the program made for participants?
- How do participants use the interpersonal networks established through SEARCH?
- To what extent have skills acquired through SEARCH been applied in practice?
- To what extent have SEARCH project findings been disseminated?
- In what ways have findings from SEARCH projects been used for decision-making?

Methods

The primary method of data collection was an electronic survey accessible through the SEARCH Desktop. Participants without current Desktop accounts were encouraged to contact the Centre for Health Evidence to obtain access. The Centre for Health Evidence provided ongoing support throughout the duration of the data collection period to facilitate participant access to the Desktop. Those participants who did not wish to connect through the Desktop, however, were offered three alternatives for completing the survey: telephone, fax, or e-mail.

Survey Development

The survey questions were based on previous evaluations and information gathering activities including surveys, interviews and focus groups with SEARCH participants, discussions with SEARCH program staff, and a literature review regarding the evaluation of continuing education programs. Questions were pilot tested with three members of the SEARCH Network Committee. Feedback from committee members was incorporated into the final survey instrument.

The survey was programmed electronically by the Centre for Health Evidence.

¹ Long Term Evaluation of the SEARCH Program: Assessing Impact at the Individual Participant Level (McCaffrey Consulting, 2003). Survey conducted in May and June, 2002.

Ethical Considerations

Tools developed by the Alberta Research Ethics Community Consensus Initiative (ARECCI) were used by the consultant and three independent reviewers to classify the current project by primary purpose and level of risk. The project was classified as non-research, minimal risk. The reviewers also provided opinions regarding the ethical acceptability of the SEARCH III survey project. Suggestions were incorporated into the final project materials and approved by SEARCH Canada for implementation.

Participant Recruitment and Response Rate

An e-mail invitation to complete the survey was sent to all SEARCH III participants (n=27) on January 6, 2006. Follow-up reminders were issued on January 31, February 6, and March 15, 2006. As a result of an initial low response rate, the original deadline for completing the survey was extended until March 22, 2006. The data was stored by the Centre for Health Evidence and provided to the consultant for analysis.

In total, 21 of 27 participants started to complete the survey. Two of these participants completed only the first section of the survey and the remaining 19 participants provided more complete data.

Of the six non-respondents, two were not reachable after repeated attempts, online name searches, and requests for follow-up through the SEARCH network committee. Thus, the total reachable population consisted of 25 participants.

The first section of the survey yielded an **84% response rate** (n=21 of 25) and the latter section of the survey a **76% response rate** (n=19 of 25).

Organization of Report

Unless otherwise noted the terms “survey respondents” and “participants” refer to the SEARCH III participants who responded to the 2006 follow-up survey (n=21). Comparisons with SEARCH I (n=19) and SEARCH II (n=17) follow-up data are based on responses to the 2002 survey (see Table 1).

Table 1. SEARCH Participant Follow-up: Overview of Survey Response Rates (2002-2006)

Cohort	Years of Program Participation	Total Number of Program Participants	Number of Survey Respondents	Date of Survey	% of Population (within cohorts)
SEARCH III	2002-2004	27	21	Jan-Mar, 2006	78%
SEARCH II	1998-2000	25	17	May-Jun, 2002	68%
SEARCH I	1996-1998	25	19	May-Jun, 2002	76%

Survey Results

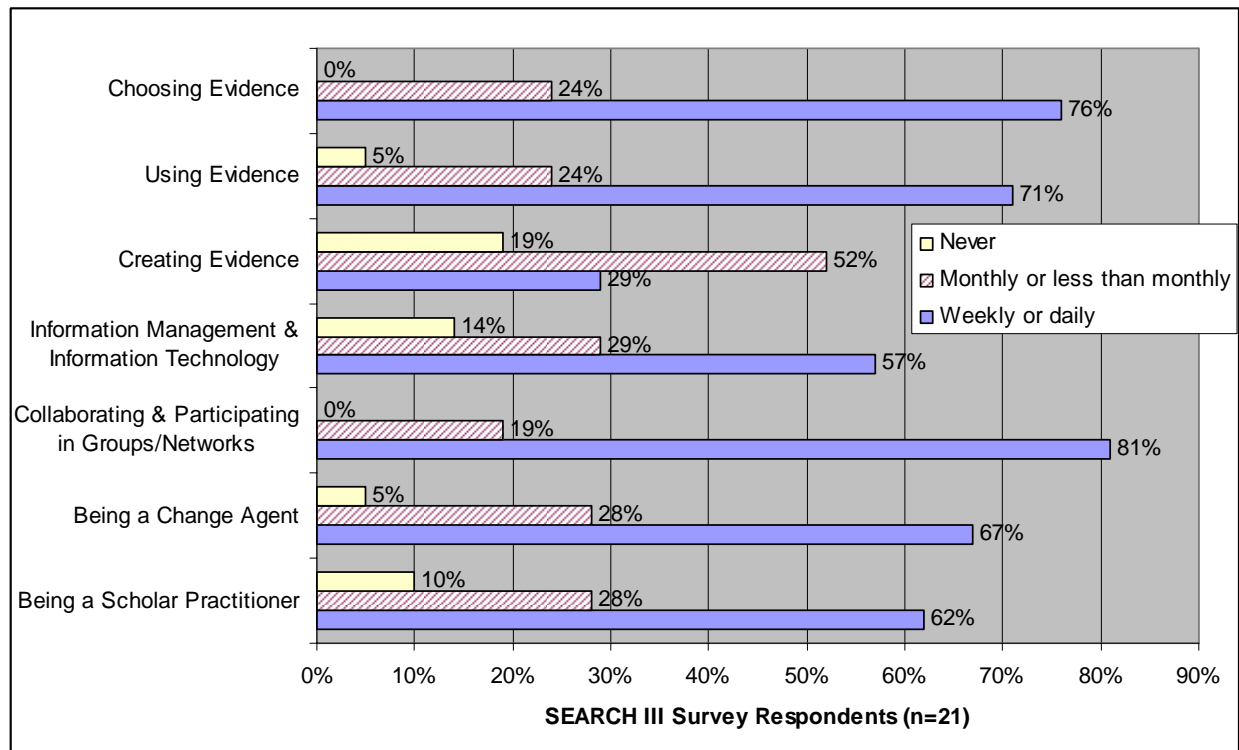
Application of Skills in Current Work Environment

Survey respondents reported application of skills obtained from SEARCH in their current work environments (see Table 2). The most frequently applied skills included those related to (a) collaborating and participating in groups and networks, (b) choosing evidence, and (c) using evidence. More than 70% of participants applied these skills on a weekly or daily basis (see Figure 1).

These findings cannot be directly compared with the results from the SEARCH I and II participant survey because the question and response options were modified. However, more than 80% of SEARCH I and II respondents reported that they applied skills related to choosing, using, and creating evidence “sometimes”, “often”, or “always” in their current work environments.

Table 2. Application of Skills in Current Work Environment

To what extent do you currently use skills related to.....	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
... choosing evidence (e.g., information searching and retrieval, critical appraisal, research syntheses, etc.) in your current work environment?	--	5% (1)	19% (4)	57% (12)	19% (4)
... using evidence (e.g., managing the interface of research and practice, organizational change and change management, etc.) in your current work environment?	5% (1)	10% (2)	14% (3)	48% (10)	24% (5)
... creating evidence (e.g., research design, data analysis, developing and funding research projects, etc.) in your current work environment?	19% (4)	33% (7)	19% (4)	24% (5)	5% (1)
... information management & information technology in your current work environment?	14% (3)	19% (4)	10% (2)	29% (6)	29% (6)
... collaborating and participating in groups and networks in your current work environment?	--	14% (3)	5% (1)	43% (9)	38% (8)
...being a change agent in your current work environment?	5% (1)	10% (2)	19% (4)	33% (7)	33% (7)
...being a scholar practitioner in your current work environment?	10% (2)	29% (6)	--	19% (4)	43% (9)

Figure 1. Most Frequently Applied Skills

Responsibility for Skills in Current Work Environment

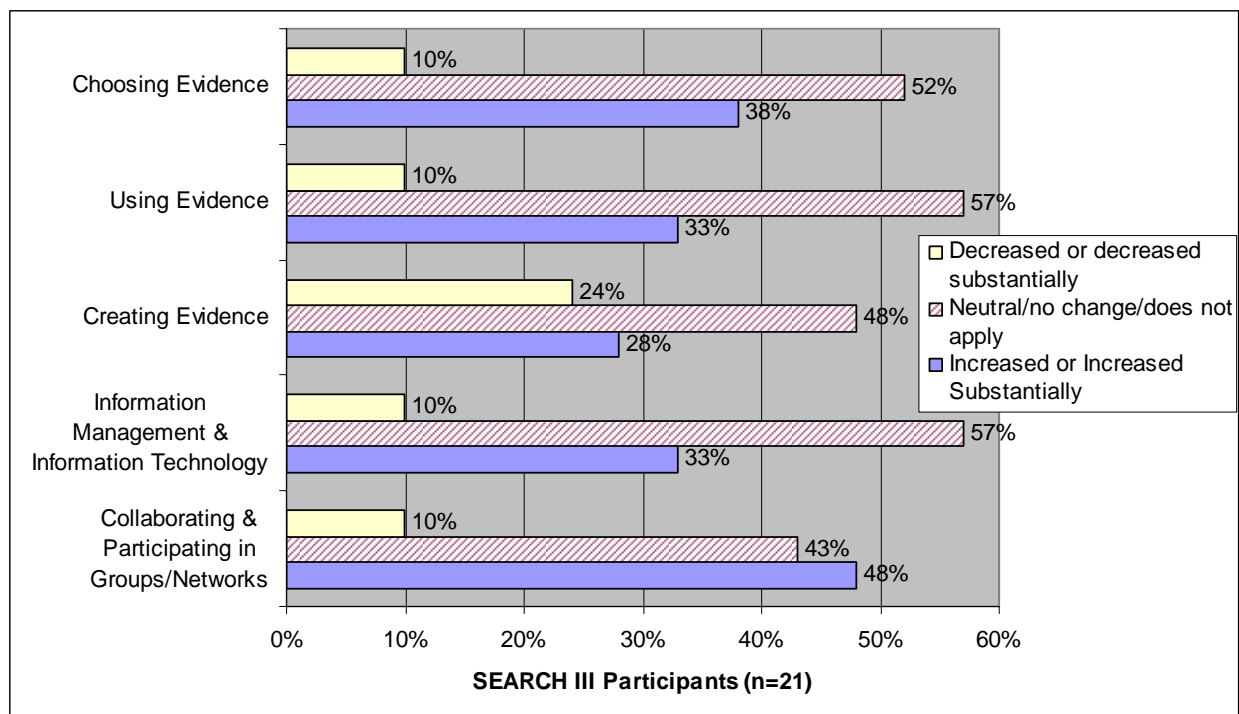
Between 28 to 48% of respondents reported that their responsibilities for choosing, using, and creating evidence, information management and information technology, and collaborating and participating in groups and networks had increased or increased substantially since beginning the SEARCH program (see Table 3 and Figure 2).

Responsibility for collaborating and participating in groups and networks was the greatest reported increase: 48% of respondents (n=10) reported increased or substantially increased responsibilities in this area since the beginning of the SEARCH III program.

A slightly higher percentage of SEARCH I and II respondents (58 to 59%) had reported increased or substantially increased responsibility for choosing, using, and creating evidence. SEARCH I and II respondents were not asked to comment on responsibility for collaborating and participating in groups and networks, being a change agent, or being a scholar practitioner.

Table 3. Responsibility for Choosing, Using and Creating Evidence

To what extent has your responsibility for each of the following areas changed, if at all, from the time you started the two-year SEARCH program until now?	Decreased Substantially	Decreased	Neutral/ Stayed Same	Increased	Increased Substantially	Does not apply or not stated
... choosing evidence	10% (2)	--	48% (10)	33% (7)	5% (1)	5% (1)
...using evidence	10% (2)	--	52% (11)	24% (5)	10% (2)	5% (1)
...creating evidence	5% (1)	19% (4)	43% (9)	19% (4)	10% (2)	5% (1)
...information management & information technology	5% (1)	5% (1)	48% (10)	24% (5)	10% (2)	10% (2)
...collaborating and participating in groups and networks	5% (1)	5% (1)	38% (8)	24% (5)	24% (5)	5% (1)

Figure 2. Reported Changes in Responsibilities

Very few examples were provided regarding *how* responsibilities had increased or what participants had become responsible for within the general categories outlined above. The examples provided are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Examples of How Responsibility Increased

Category	Examples of How Responsibility Increased
Choosing Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“Attending the SEARCH program was part of orientation into a research officer position. Key responsibilities in that position include information searching, and research synthesis to support evidence based decision making.”</i> ▪ <i>“I work on more projects that need these skills than I did prior to participation in SEARCH.”</i> ▪ <i>“I critically appraise research more.”</i>
Using Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“[I] provide ongoing consultation services to regional executive and management regarding best practices within research and evaluation projects... [and] manage the research and evaluation department with the goal of promoting and supporting organizational development in research and evaluation that reflects best practices in that area.”</i> ▪ <i>“...changing practice models for nurses using evidence.”</i>
Creating Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“...I have taken on more of a consulting role which includes being involved in research and evaluation design”.</i> ▪ <i>“...client satisfaction studies have been undertaken by the department and included design, data analysis and reporting.”</i>
Information Management & Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“For a two year period was the only individual in the region with access to the SEARCH desktop and its resources. We now have additional SEARCHers who bring this technology into the region...[and] have partnered with SEARCH Canada and CHE to pilot a desktop in the region to increase access to information for individuals across the region.”</i> ▪ <i>“More data entry and analysis...[and] much more evaluation.”</i>
Collaborating & Participating in Groups/Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“Developed networks internally and externally to support research and knowledge transfer...Participate in RTNA...and ARECCI.”</i> ▪ <i>“Sat on committee for evaluating new health centres.”</i> ▪ <i>“Gathering and application of research data to capital planning, leading groups, sharing information with project stakeholders.”</i>

Organizational Support and Opportunity to Use Skills

The majority of SEARCH III survey respondents reported organizational support and opportunity to apply skills obtained from the SEARCH program (see Table 5). For example, most respondents reported that their organizations were supportive of research: 81% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (n=17). The greatest variation in responses pertained to available time. Ten respondents (48%) reported that they had sufficient time to use the skills acquired through SEARCH and the remaining participants reported insufficient time (n=6, 29%) or provided a neutral response (n=5, 24%).

Table 5. Organizational Support and Opportunity to Apply Skills

Currently.....	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ Not Stated	Agree	Strongly Agree
I receive support from colleagues to use skills acquired during SEARCH	5% (1)	5% (1)	24% (5)	43% (9)	24% (5)
I receive support from my direct supervisor to use skills acquired during SEARCH	5% (1)	5% (1)	19% (4)	43% (9)	29% (6)
My organization is supportive of research	--	--	19% (4)	57% (12)	24% (5)
I have sufficient autonomy to use the skills acquired through SEARCH	--	10% (2)	10% (2)	48% (10)	33% (7)
I have sufficient time to use the skills acquired through SEARCH	5% (1)	24% (5)	24% (5)	29% (6)	19% (4)

The majority of SEARCH I and II respondents also reported organizational support and opportunity to apply skills obtained from the SEARCH program, although slightly less frequently than SEARCH III respondents. For example, support from supervisors and organizations to apply skills obtained from the program was rated slightly higher by SEARCH III participants (see Table 6).

Table 6. Support and Opportunity to Apply Skills: Cohort Comparisons

	SEARCH I and II (n=36) Agree or Strongly Agree	SEARCH III (n=21) Agree or Strongly Agree
Support from colleagues	67% (24)	67% (14)
Support from direct supervisor	53% (19)	72% (15)
Supportive organization	75% (27)	81% (17)
Sufficient autonomy	69% (25)	81% (17)
Sufficient time	36% (13)	48% (10)

Utilization of the SEARCH Network

The majority of SEARCH III respondents (n=16, 76%) reported that they currently use the interpersonal networks established through SEARCH (i.e., 2 ½ years after completing the program). In contrast, slightly more SEARCH I and II participants (n=32, 89%) reported that they currently used the interpersonal networks (2 and 4 years after completing the program).

However, 100% of SEARCH III respondents later reported that they contacted at least one member identified within the various categories of the SEARCH network (most often “fellow SEARCH III participants”) suggesting that they did use the interpersonal networks to some extent.

Note: one respondent stopped completing the survey after the first question regarding use of the interpersonal networks established through SEARCH. All subsequent percentages regarding frequency of use and types of contact within the network were calculated out of 20 respondents.

Exploring Contact within the SEARCH Network

As illustrated in Table 7, SEARCH III respondents reported ongoing contact within the SEARCH network. The most common frequency of contact was “less than monthly” with the exception of contact with Research Development Advisors (less often) and fellow SEARCH III participants (more often). The majority of SEARCH III respondents (n=15, 75%) reported no contact with Research Development Advisors. More than half (n=12, 60%) reported monthly or weekly contact with fellow SEARCH III participants.

Most respondents reported that the **overall frequency of contact** within the network had decreased (n=11, 55%) or significantly decreased (n=5, 25%) since completing the program. The remaining 20% (n=4) reported that their level of contact within the network was approximately the same as it had been during the program (not including residential modules).

Open-ended comments regarding the **quality of relationships** within the SEARCH network over time focused on the value, positive nature and strength of these relationships despite decreased frequency. A few participants emphasized the role of a common experience through the SEARCH program format in creating and sustaining these connections.

Table 7. Frequency of Contact

Category	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
SEARCH faculty members	25% (5)	65% (13)	10% (2)	--	
Research Development Advisors (RDAs) ²	75% (15)	10% (2)	15% (3)	--	--
Other university faculty or staff	40% (8)	50% (10)	10% (2)	--	--
Fellow SEARCH III participants	--	40% (8)	55% (11)	5% (1)	--
Participants from other SEARCH cohorts	15% (3)	70% (14)	10% (2)	5% (1)	--
SEARCH Program Staff	30% (6)	60% (12)	5% (1)	5% (1)	--

SEARCH III participants contacted members of the SEARCH network for almost all of the identified possible reasons (as illustrated in Table 8).

The most common reasons for contacting members of the SEARCH network after the residential modules included requests for information, follow-up regarding SEARCH group projects, provision of information, social reasons (most frequently among fellow SEARCH III participants), and to obtain new contacts (defined as “to request contact information for individuals or staff members with responsibility for a given content area by first contacting someone connected through SEARCH”).

Table 8. Reasons for Contact

Reason for Contact	SEARCH Faculty	Other University Faculty	SEARCH III Cohort	Other SEARCH Cohorts	SEARCH Program Staff	Research Development Advisors
To request information	50% (10)	35% (7)	70% (14)	55% (11)	40% (8)	20% (4)
To follow-up regarding SEARCH group project(s)	50% (10)	10% (2)	70% (14)	5% (1)	5% (1)	--
To provide information	30% (6)	20% (4)	50% (10)	40% (8)	25% (5)	5% (1)
For social reasons	15% (3)	5% (1)	80% (16)	30% (6)	15% (3)	--
To obtain new contacts	20% (4)	10% (2)	50% (10)	20% (4)	15% (3)	10% (2)
Other reasons	15% (3)	5% (1)	5% (1)	5% (1)	15% (3)	5% (1)
To discuss new research ideas/identify possible projects	10% (2)	--	5% (1)	15% (3)	10% (2)	15% (3)
To follow-up regarding SEARCH individual	5% (1)	10% (2)	10% (2)	15% (3)	10% (2)	--

² Research Development Advisors (RDAs) are “PhD prepared, working at college, university, or in private practice, and are seconded for part-time work” to support research or the application of research within Alberta health regions. (Source: Research Transfer Network of Alberta Water Cooler Presentation, Research Development Advisors (RDA's): Walking Sticks for the Health Regions, presented by Don Flaming, January 24, 2005).

project(s)						
To request other types of advice	25% (5)	5% (1)	15% (3)	10% (2)	10% (2)	10% (2)
To request advice regarding research methods	5% (1)	15% (3)	10% (2)	10% (2)	5% (1)	25% (5)

*Note: values do not total 100% because respondents reported multiple reasons for contact across categories.

Open ended comments regarding other reasons for contacting members of the SEARCH network (i.e., explanations regarding “other reasons” and “to request other types of advice”) are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9. Other Reasons for Contact within the SEARCH Network

Network Category	Other Reasons for Contact / Requests for Other Types of Advice
SEARCH faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“To discuss my interests in furthering my education...[and] to assist with a letter of support.”</i> ▪ <i>“I would also engage with Faculty through my involvement with the SEARCH Network.”</i> ▪ <i>“For advice about health care technology.”</i> ▪ <i>“Development of strategic plan for research and evaluation department.”</i> ▪ <i>“As part of our SEARCH V network we have faculty attend via teleconference meetings to discuss projects and issues related to the SEARCH program.”</i> ▪ <i>“References”</i> ▪ <i>“[One of the SEARCH faculty] is my graduate program advisor.”</i>
Other university faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“[Through] attending school...and through the RTNA.”</i>
SEARCH III cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“Dissemination of research – conference presentations, workshops.”</i>
Other SEARCH cohorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“SEARCH Network committee members for committee purposes.”</i> ▪ <i>“Other types of advice – discuss departmental planning or management issues; to share resources related to research projects (e.g., survey tools); to discuss provincial projects we are both involved with.”</i>
SEARCH program staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“When involved with the SEARCH network, I often contacted the desktop staff for assistance in posting items.”</i> ▪ <i>“SEARCH Canada technology issues.”</i> ▪ <i>“Development of Aspen Learning Centre – has involved ongoing contact with program staff.”</i> ▪ <i>“Work-related”</i>
Research Development Advisors (RDAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“RDA provides support to our Regional Research Committee.”</i> ▪ <i>“Other types of advice – consulting and review of survey tools and methods; planning for education sessions.”</i>

It is not possible to directly compare reasons for contact within the network with the SEARCH I and II cohort because the same level of detail was not collected. However, more frequent contact with members of the same cohort (versus members of other cohorts) was a consistent finding between the SEARCH I and II and SEARCH III follow-up surveys.

SEARCH I and II respondents most frequently reported contact with fellow SEARCH participants (from the same cohort), new contacts (as referred by SEARCH network members), and SEARCH faculty members after completion of the program.

Note: another respondent stopped completing the survey after the detailed questions regarding use of the SEARCH networks. Subsequent percentages were calculated out of 19 respondents.

Personal and Professional Development

The majority of SEARCH III survey respondents (n=15, 79%) reported that participation in SEARCH had positively influenced the development of their career: 63% (n=12) reported a “positive influence” and 16% (n=3) a “major positive influence”. Similarly, 84% (n=30) of SEARCH I and II respondents reported that participation in the program had positively influenced the development of their career. The remaining 16% (n=6) reported no influence. None of the SEARCH I and II survey respondents reported a negative influence of SEARCH participation on future career development.

SEARCH III respondents commented on both personal and professional influences of the SEARCH program. For example:

- *“Within [the health] region the SEARCH program is seen as key preparation for the research officer or manager positions. Personally the SEARCH program has allowed me to stay within a rural community and do the type of work I really enjoy as well as feel is very important within health care.”*
- *“The SEARCH program is well recognized in my health region. There are several SEARCH graduates now and they know one another and share that common experience. There are SEARCHers in key research positions here. In [the] few years since completing the program, there has been a positive change in the perception of the value of health research and this has resulted in many more research initiatives in our region. SEARCHers are well poised to take on research roles.”*
- *“I have moved to a different position within my RHA and I believe that my SEARCH participation was a factor in being hired.”*

The remaining SEARCH III respondents reported no influence (n=3, 16%) or a negative influence (n=1, 5%) on their career development as a result of SEARCH participation. The following comments were provided by participants who reported that SEARCH participation had either not influenced or negatively influenced their career development:

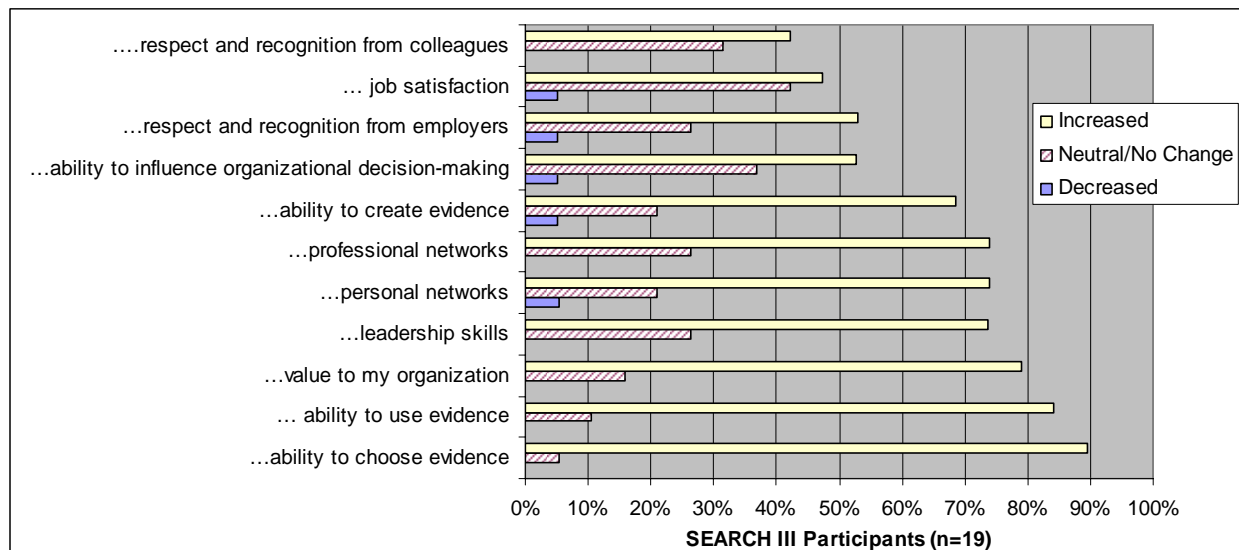
- *“The skills gained in SEARCH were valuable regardless of the role; but I did not specifically choose a different role based on being in SEARCH.”*
- *“My continued SEARCH skills are being practiced at the community level by establishing and running a support group, and personally, by accessing current information/research for personal use as well as for others on request.”*
- *“My participation in SEARCH...set up some initial expectations from my employer that were not fulfilled. Completion of SEARCH III fell at around the same time as the change in health regions...and this influenced the direction that the program and my career was forced to take (e.g., role changes, program cuts, reallocation and loss of funds). Because of these changes support on a management and regional level was not forthcoming and I needed to invest more of my time into re-establishing my former role within the organization.”*

SEARCH III respondents reported a range of impacts associated with SEARCH participation including increased leadership skills, ability to influence organizational decision-making, value to organizations, respect and recognition from colleagues and employers, increased networks, and ability to choose, use and create evidence (see Table 10 and Figure 3).

Table 10. Individual Level Impact of Program Participation

To what extent have the following potential areas of impact decreased or increased since you completed the two-year SEARCH program?	Significantly Decreased	Decreased	Neutral/ No Change	Increased	Significantly Increased	Not Applicable
... job satisfaction	--	5% (1)	42% (8)	37% (7)	11% (2)	5% (1)
...leadership skills	--	--	26% (5)	53% (10)	21% (4)	--
...ability to influence organizational decision-making	5% (1)	--	37% (7)	53% (10)	--	5% (1)
...value to my organization	--	--	16% (3)	63% (12)	16% (3)	5% (1)
...respect and recognition from colleagues	--	--	32% (6)	53% (10)	11% (2)	5% (1)
...respect and recognition from employers	--	5% (1)	26% (5)	42% (8)	11% (2)	16% (3)
...personal networks	--	5% (1)	21% (4)	58% (11)	16% (3)	--
...professional networks	--	--	26% (5)	47% (9)	26% (5)	--
...ability to choose evidence	--	--	5% (1)	47% (9)	42% (8)	5% (1)
... ability to use evidence	--	--	11% (2)	47% (9)	37% (7)	5% (1)
...ability to create evidence	5% (1)	--	21% (4)	42% (8)	26% (5)	5% (1)

Figure 3. Individual Level Impact of Program Participation



Self-Reported Positive Impacts of SEARCH Participation

Survey respondents were also asked to describe the most positive impact, at an individual level, that had resulted from participation in SEARCH thus far. Some of the identified impacts of SEARCH participation included increased networks/connections; increased access to resources, tools, supports and opportunities for continuing education; broader or deeper understanding of the health system; increased confidence; career development and job opportunities; and increased research skills and competencies.

Illustrative participant quotations for each category are presented below.

NETWORKS AND CONNECTIONS

- *“I did not expect to feel so personally connected to people who were part of the SEARCH experience. This includes colleagues and faculty members. I also feel very committed and loyal to SEARCH and am the first to voice the value of the learning experience and its process.”*
- *“The most positive impact has been the connection to a network of like minded individuals across the province who are committed to increasing capacity for using research in health care decision making at all levels. Working in a rural area - wearing many hats at different times - it is possible to feel isolated, the network both individuals and newsletters allows you to stay connected.”*

ACCESS TO RESOURCES, TOOLS, SUPPORTS, AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

- *“Having access to a whole range of research tools and skills...By this I mean, the desktop, research experts (SEARCH faculty, other searchers, RDAs) and the ability to know where and how to look for reliable and credible information.”*
- *“SEARCH participation also allows you to continually learn and grow as a health professional - there really are no limits to the opportunities available and presented via the desktop or the SEARCH Light to information (courses, articles, workshops, websites) that can be accessed for further learning and knowledge.”*

BROADER OR DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM

- *“On an individual level SEARCH changed me in a number of ways. Prior to SEARCH I was more impulsive in my decision-making. I now assess the whole situation through the use of research and listen more fully to the qualitative input of individuals providing information before making decisions. I now spend more time reviewing pertinent research available to me in my field. Prior to SEARCH I did not allocate the time necessary to do this as I didn't feel that this was a good use of my time in comparison to front-line tasks that were necessary. In whole I tend to have a different perspective on*

my practice now and assess situations from a multi-level perspective instead of just an individualized clinical focus. I feel that I have a much better understanding of how organizations work and how to provide pertinent input and influence decision-making at a higher level that may impact frontline practice.”

- *“Broader understanding and connection to the health system...at a provincial level, in other RHAs, universities...”*
- *“I feel a deeper sense of understanding of the various components of the healthcare system in general and the research process in particular.”*

CONFIDENCE

- *“The most positive impact has been the fact that I feel more confident about my ability to do my job.”*
- *“Increased confidence to gather, use and create evidence.”*

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- *“My experience with SEARCH coincided with graduate degree work and it's hard to pick apart the overall influence of SEARCH versus the other academic work, but I would say that participating in SEARCH was a very important factor in my career being where it is right now.”*
- *“Several new positions and ability to attract contract work.”*

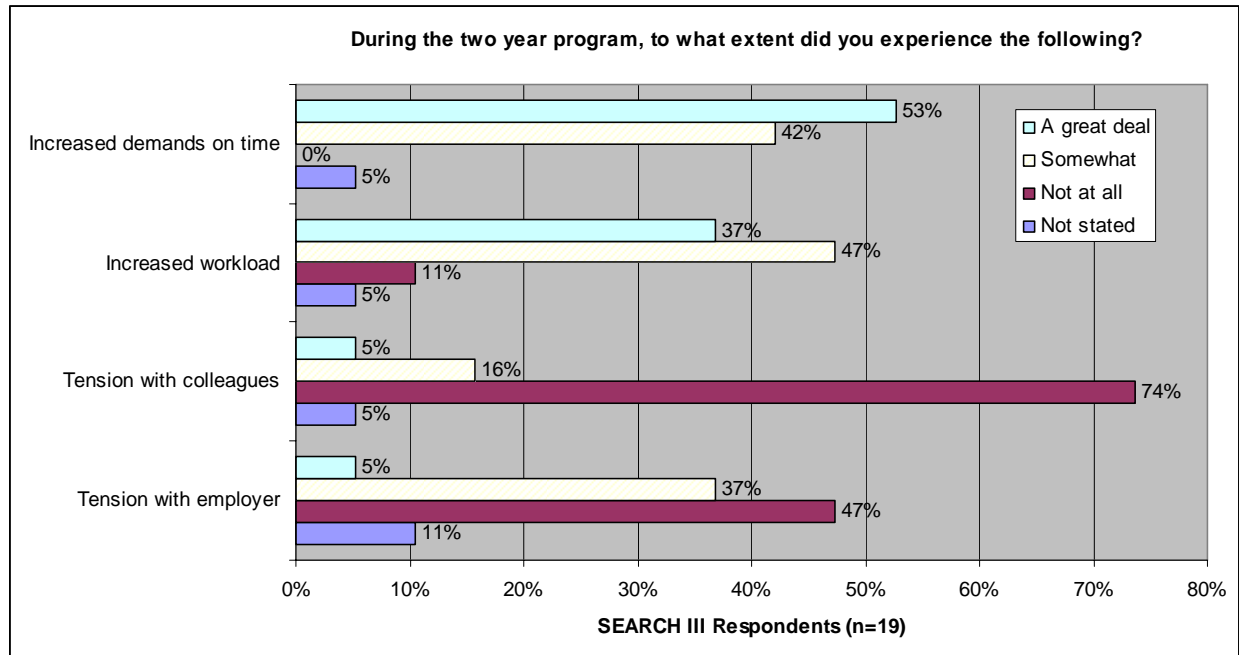
RESEARCH SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

- *“...The most positive is the increase in the ability to recognize the qualities of research, i.e., ability to judge the degree to which good research methods were used.”*
- *“...competency in program evaluation and research.”*

Adverse Outcomes of SEARCH Participation

Respondents were also asked to reflect on the extent to which participation in SEARCH had resulted in adverse outcomes. The majority of respondents (more than 80%) reported increased workloads as well as increased demands on time during the two-year program (see Figure 4). Most respondents (n=14, 74%) reported that they did not experience tension with colleagues during the SEARCH program although 37% (n=7) reported tension with employers.

Figure 4. Adverse Outcomes During the SEARCH Program



Review of open-ended comments revealed that most of these outcomes did not still apply at the time of follow-up with the exception of **workloads** and **demands on time** which continued to increase for many participants.

Tension with colleagues or employers was often resolved upon completion of the residential modules. A few participants expressed disappointment in not being able to fully utilize skills obtained through SEARCH because of insufficient time, resources, or organizational support.

SEARCH Participant Organizational Contributions

Survey respondents reported a range of contributions to their organizations as a result of participating in the SEARCH program. Contributions attributed to SEARCH participation included organizational capacity to conduct research, group and committee work, evidence-based decision making, development of new programs and initiatives, presenting and sharing information, and recruiting and supporting new cohorts of SEARCH participants. A few participants commented that it was difficult to determine and/or that they had not made specific contributions to their organizations. Illustrative participant quotations are presented below.

CONTRIBUTED TO ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH (through directly conducting research, collecting and analyzing data, and/or providing consulting services within organizations)

- *“Increased capacity for research and evaluation activities.”*
- *“I have also assisted the RHA by being able to perform research to determine best practices and to link other staff to resources through the SEARCH network.”*
- *“Used skills to get survey done at a school and the results published.”*

CONTRIBUTED TO GROUP AND COMMITTEE WORK

- *“Knowledge and skills from SEARCH have allowed me to become Chair of our Regional Research Committee.”*
- *“I have been asked to be a representative on a research group within the department.”*
- *“I have sat on a number of focus groups or committees to provide input into things such as regional mental health plan, smoking cessation, QI/accreditation etc.”*

CONTRIBUTED TO EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

- *“...the ability to contribute to research- and evidence-based decisions with confidence in understanding the issues at hand, whether they be methodological, evaluation of the evidence, or other.”*
- *“Greater use of evidence based decision-making models and implementation in my area.”*

CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

- *“...the creation of new programs (e.g., creating a Nurse Practitioner model in an outpatient clinic, creating a new breast health program across the care continuum.)”*

- *“Writing grant proposals to fund innovative models of care (e.g., Nurse Navigation Model within the regional Breast Health Program).”*

CONTRIBUTED AS A SEARCH PROGRAM RECRUITER AND SUPPORTER

- *“I continue to be an unofficial spokesperson for and supporter of the SEARCH program. I have participated in various forums and events related to SEARCH.”*
- *“(Contributed to...) the commitment by the organization to support ongoing participation in the SEARCH program and develop a process for selection of candidates.”*

DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE

- *“(It is) difficult to ascribe any particular aspect of work to SEARCH as SEARCH skills just become a way of going about doing your regular work.”*
- *“A lot of the skills developed or enhanced in SEARCH training are used so frequently that it is hard to pin-point any exact contribution.”*

NO DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS, DON'T KNOW, OR OTHER

- *I don't feel my organization has sought any contribution from me that could have been facilitated by SEARCH. My workload doesn't allow me to participate in even research discussions.*
- *Our group project was completed after my position was cut so the contribution of the study to my former organization is unknown... (however) I have made many contributions to several nonprofit organizations as a result of my SEARCH training and contacts.*

SEARCH Participant Contributions to the Health System

Three survey respondents (16%) reported that their contributions to the health system were the same as those made within organizations (including contributions to committee work, influencing decisions and developing new programs). Three respondents (16%) reported that they had not made contributions to the health system and nine respondents (47%) did not provide additional comments.

The remaining four respondents (21%) reported the following types of contributions to the health system: journal publications; conference presentations; participation in regional groups and committees; provision of information regarding mandated collaboration (health systems group project); and indirect influence on primary health care services.

Note: similar types of contributions were further explored in the individual and group project section, presented next.

Status of Individual Projects

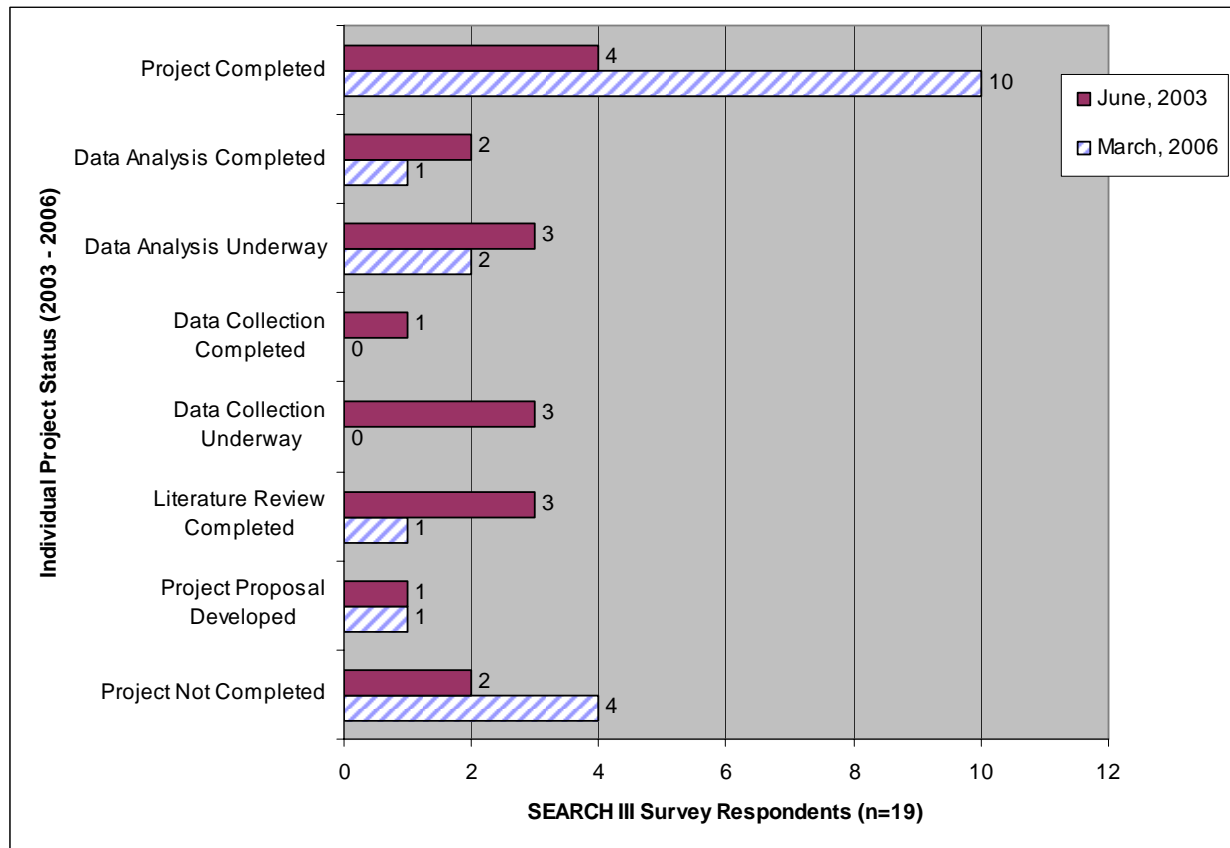
Upon completion of the two-year SEARCH program in June 2003, four survey respondents (21%) recalled that they had submitted a “final project report” based on their individual project. At the time of follow-up (January to March, 2006), an additional six respondents (32%) indicated that they had submitted a final project report or delivered a final presentation.

In total, ten respondents (53%) reported completion of final project reports or presentations by the time of follow-up.

Participant responses regarding the status of individual projects (upon program completion and follow-up) are summarized in Table 11. A comparison of project status at both time periods is presented in Figure 5.

Table 11. Individual Projects: Status of Completion

ID	Status of Individual Project At Program Completion	Status of Individual Project At Follow-up	Additional Comments / Explanation
	(June 2003)	(Jan-Mar 2006)	
1	Data analysis underway	Final report submitted	Not stated
2	Project not completed	Project not completed	As a result of work and personal life demands, I have not completed an individual project.
3	Project not completed	Project not completed	Project had to be abandoned when my position was cut and I was no longer working for the health region.
4	Data collection underway	Final report submitted	Not stated
5	Final report submitted	Final report submitted	Not stated
6	Final report submitted	Final report submitted	Not stated
7	Project proposal developed	Project proposal developed	Not stated
8	Data collection completed	Data analysis completed	Not stated
9	Data analysis underway	Final report submitted	Not stated
10	Final report submitted	Final report submitted	Not stated
11	Data analysis completed	Final report submitted	Not stated
12	Data collection underway	Data analysis underway	Not stated
13	Data analysis completed	Draft report prepared	A final report was not written rather a number of presentations were developed and given. The region underwent a re-organization thus the data collected was only applicable to a small portion of the region and other issues became priorities.
14	Data collection underway	Final report submitted	Project completed. Annualized regional funding obtained...based on the merit of the completed submission.
15	Data analysis underway	Data analysis underway	Not stated
16	Final report submitted	Final report submitted	Poster presentations
17	Literature review completed	Literature review completed	Not stated
18	Literature review completed	Project not completed	Project abandoned
19	Literature review completed	Project not completed	Project abandoned

Figure 5. Individual Project Status (2003 to 2006)

Dissemination of Findings from Individual Projects

Other Reports, Publications or Abstracts

As illustrated in Table 12, four respondents produced other written reports (in addition to the SEARCH project final report), journal publications or abstracts based on the individual project.

One respondent submitted a paper (based on the individual project) to a peer reviewed journal but noted *“it was rejected on the first attempt and there has been no time to make changes and resubmit”*.

One respondent further added that the individual project had continued far beyond the two-year SEARCH program: *“It seems to have become a five year project... no end in sight.”*

Table 12. Written Reports: Individual Projects

Type of Written Report	Number	Citation
Peer-reviewed journal publication	1	▪ Not stated
Non peer-reviewed journal publication	0	▪ Not applicable
Abstracts	4	▪ <i>Canadian Journal of Public Health</i> (1) ▪ Not stated (3)
Other reports	8	▪ Health region reports (4) ▪ Poster (4)

Oral Presentations

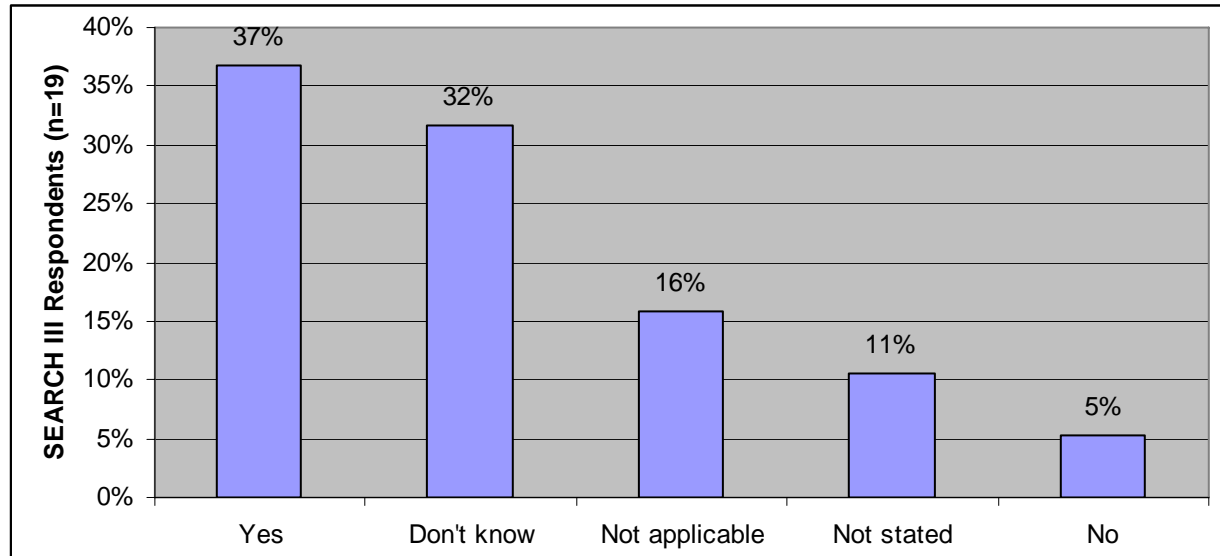
Six respondents (32%) had also delivered various oral presentations – between 2 and 19 presentations per person – based on their individual SEARCH project (see Table 13).

Table 13. Oral Presentations: Individual Projects

Type of Oral Presentation	Number	Description
Internal Presentations	18	▪ Not stated
External Presentations	9	▪ Regional research committee (1) ▪ Research day (1) ▪ Poster presentations (2) ▪ Not stated (5)
Presentations to the Media	1	▪ Not stated
Other Presentations	4	▪ Health region board (1) ▪ Community Liaison Committee (1) ▪ Community Health Councils (2)

Perceived Impact of Individual Projects

Just over one third of SEARCH III respondents (n=7, 37%) reported that findings from their individual SEARCH projects were used in practice for decision making (see Figure 6). An additional 32% (n=6) did not know whether or not findings were used. One respondent indicated that findings were not used in practice because the project was a pilot study and the results could not be generalized. The remaining respondents did not complete an individual project (i.e., the question was not applicable) or did not provide a response.

Figure 6. Use of Individual Project Findings for Decision Making

Specific examples regarding how individual SEARCH project findings were used in practice for decision making included the following:

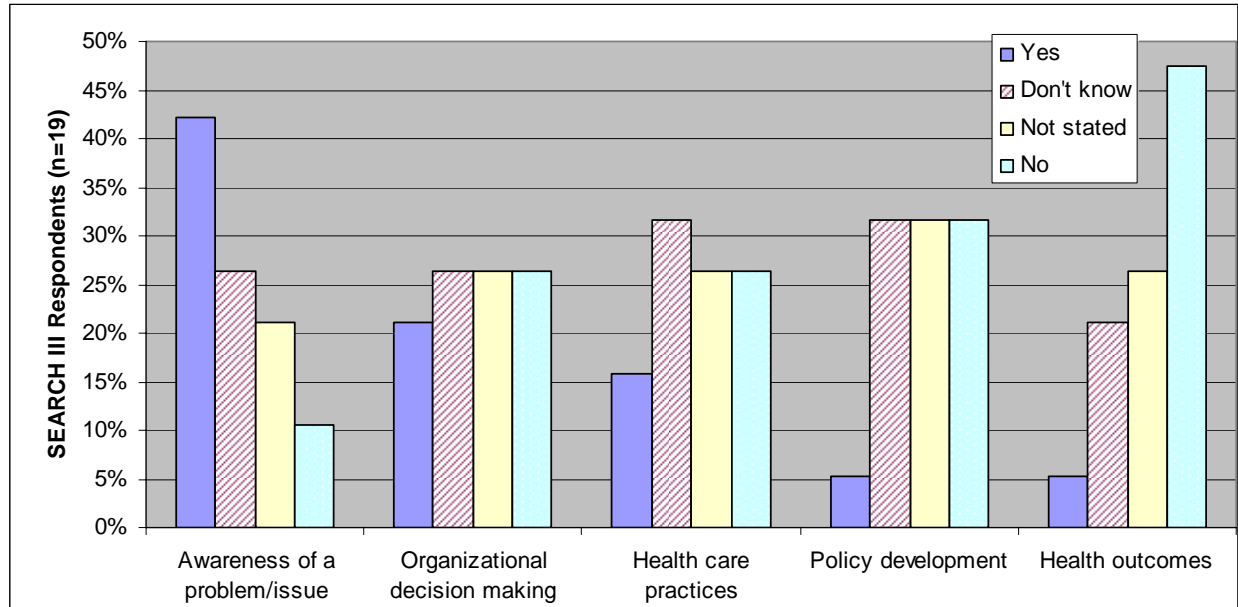
- using the results of the literature review component of the individual project to develop roles, programs, practices, or policies;
- using the results of interviews and surveys to inform public health nursing practices with Hutterite colonies and to create a women's health handbook; and
- using overall results of the individual project to contribute to provincial standards of practice.

Survey respondents were also asked to indicate whether or not individual projects had made an impact in any of the following areas:

- awareness of a problem/issue;
- organizational decision making;
- health care practices;
- policy development; and
- health outcomes.

As illustrated in Figure 7, the most common type of reported impact was **increased awareness of a problem or issue**. Forty-two percent (n=8) of respondents reported that their individual SEARCH project had increased awareness of a problem or issue.

Figure 7. Perceived Impact of Individual Projects



Reported examples within each category of impacts are provided below.

AWARENESS OF A PROBLEM OR ISSUE

- Individual projects increased awareness regarding:
 - Hutterite women's perspectives on health and utilization of health care;
 - lack of access to obstetrical care and difficult work conditions for obstetricians;
 - injury related falls and related factors; and
 - parents' needs when faced with decisions about immunization.

ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION MAKING

- Individual project findings supported decisions related to:
 - implementing electronic health records;
 - introducing a new role in obstetrical care that was not previously available;
 - developing new incident reporting systems; and
 - reviewing regional policies regarding falls.

HEALTH CARE PRACTICES

- Individual projects impacted health care practices through:
 - creating resource material that could be used in practice (*Handbook on Women's Health for Hutterite Women*);
 - creating a model for future projects with immigrant women; and

- enabling increased emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention within an obstetrical clinic (through creation of nurse practitioner role).

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- One respondent indicated that his/her individual project had impacted policy development but did not provide a specific example.

HEALTH OUTCOMES

- One respondent indicated that his/her individual project had resulted in health outcomes and provided the following examples:
 - improved access to prenatal care for pregnant women;
 - improved quality of work life for obstetricians; and
 - improved care for pregnant women who have access to obstetrician and nurse practitioner.

OTHER IMPACTS RELATED TO THE PROCESS OF COMPLETING THE INDIVIDUAL PROJECT

The majority of survey respondents (n=14, 75%) reported that the *process* of conducting an individual SEARCH project was beneficial even if the project was not completed as planned or when project findings were not used in practice. The process of completing the project resulted in increased awareness of issues, provision of important background information (through the literature review component), and practical experience with research methods and tools.

For example:

- *“My project provided me with hands on experience in the areas of ethical review, proposal writing, survey design, project management, interviewing, training of interview staff, etc. It also engaged the interest and participation of a group of public health nurses.”*
- *“Yes, it gave me the opportunity to go through the research process from start to finish as the PI. This has allowed me to have the confidence to embark on various other research projects since then.”*
- *“Regionalization had a major role in influencing the impact of this project on the organization. Clearly organizational priorities were redirected to other areas following regionalization therefore the results of the project were not overly valued. What was valued was the learning involved – to analyze the data I used ACCESS a program that I had not used before and one that I continue to use to analyze data for surveys and other projects in the region.”*
- *“It gave me experience with doing qualitative analysis.”*
- *“The process was a significant learning opportunity.”*

REASONS FOR IMPACT OR LACK OF IMPACT OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

Survey respondents were asked to comment on the key reasons individual projects did or did not make an impact. Reported barriers and facilitators are summarized in Table 14.

Table 14. Barriers and Facilitators to Individual Project Impact

Reasons for individual project impact	Reasons for lack of individual project impact
Well thought out solution to a pressing practice issue based on comprehensive review of the literature	Project not completed (e.g., termination of position, loss of time commitment, health region merge)
Project was specifically requested by the organization (<i>“they were waiting to have the project information and results”</i>)	Pilot project (e.g., <i>“conclusions could not be generalized”</i>)
Limited research occurring elsewhere on the topic	Lack of organizational support/interest/lack of feedback from management regarding use of findings
Targeted audience interested in the results	Lack of agreement between stakeholders regarding project focus and questions

Status of Group Projects

The majority of respondents (n=14, 73%) reported that they had completed a group project at the time of follow-up. Group project completion was defined as submission of a draft or final report. The remaining respondents reported various stages of group project completion including literature review completed (n=1); ethics review completed (n=1); data collection underway (n=1); and not stated (n=2).

However, given that survey data was not linked to individuals, and respondents were not asked to identify the title of their group project to protect anonymity, it was not possible to calculate a valid group project completion rate. Seventy-three percent of survey respondents reported completion of a group project (14 of 19 respondents); however, this number does not indicate how many group projects were completed.

As a result, additional follow-up was conducted with the faculty mentors assigned to each of the group projects (n=8 group projects listed on the SEARCH Desktop). Upon further review of these projects, it was determined that one project (Recruitment/Retention) did not proceed beyond the initial discussion phase and potential group members participated in other projects. Thus, although eight projects were listed on the SEARCH Desktop, a total of **seven group projects were initiated**.

At the time of the SEARCH conference in June 2003 data collection or analysis was underway for five of seven group projects. Changes to health region boundaries presented challenges for the remaining two projects: (1) One project did not proceed beyond the initial planning stage as a result of position changes and loss of group members. (2) A literature review and project proposal had been completed for the second project at the time of the June 2003 conference.

Of the seven group projects, five were completed by the time of additional follow-up (2006). The remaining two were not completed as a result of health region boundary changes.

Details regarding group project completion are presented in Table 15. Comments provided by SEARCH faculty members, where applicable, are summarized in the column regarding perceived impact, utilization or dissemination of the project findings. A comparison of group project status at both time periods is presented in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8. Group Project Status (2003 to 2006)

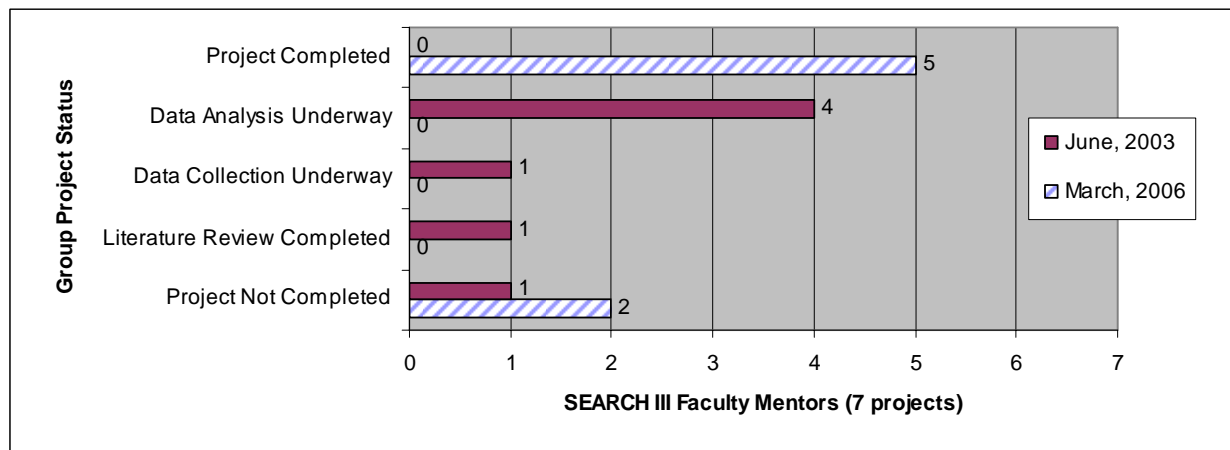


Table 15. Group Project Completion

ID	Title	Status of Group Project	Status of Group Project	Perceived Impact, Utilization or Dissemination of the Project Findings
		JUNE 2003	JUNE 2006	
1.	Health Needs Assessment	Project did not proceed as a result of new regionalization, position changes, and loss of group members.	Not applicable	Not applicable
2.	Managing Research in Alberta	Topic identified, question determined, literature review completed and project proposal developed	Not completed (project did not proceed beyond proposal stage as a result of health region changes)	This project <i>“created a network of people who were responsible for research policy and process in regions. This network provided useful communication channels when the ARECCI work emerged... We are now seeing the sharing of research policies and structures across rural regions - although the people in this group are no longer involved.”</i>
3.	Influenza Vaccination: A Study of Family Physicians in Alberta	Data collection underway	Project completed (published April 2005 although final report not posted on Desktop)	Published in peer reviewed journal. Citation: Russell M, Yau A, Baptiste B, Rowntree C, Robb J, and Hill S. Improving the Public Health/Physician Partnership for Influenza Immunization. March – April 2005, <i>Can J Pub Health</i> ; Volume 96, No.2; p. 155 – 158.
4.	Mandated Intersectoral Collaboration	Data analysis underway	Project completed (final report submitted May 2004)	Article under development (plans to submit to peer reviewed journal).
5.	Primary Health Care Team Development	Data analysis underway	Project completed (final report submitted Dec 2004)	Article submitted to peer reviewed journal (CJPH)
6.	Research in Practice: What Influences Use in Alberta Health Settings	Data analysis underway	Project completed (final report submitted Feb 2004)	This project... <i>“provided qualitative data exploring the influence of contexts on research use. The report was grounded in examples and incorporated a more nuanced understanding of context than is typically the case in health services work.”</i>
7.	Staff Perceptions of Medication Use With Persons With Dementia	Data analysis underway	Project completed and findings are summarized in a pending journal article.	Peer reviewed journal publication in press (<i>Journal of Advanced Nursing</i> , anticipated publication date summer 2006). The group was hoping to use this article as the final report, however it cannot be published on a website.

Dissemination of Findings from Group Projects

Other Reports, Publications or Abstracts

In addition to final project reports, ten respondents (53%) had produced other written reports, journal publications or abstracts based on their SEARCH group project (see Table 16). Between one and seven additional reports *per respondent* were reported.

One respondent noted that *“some of us continued to work on the project for a year after SEARCH ended to get the report finished. We also tried to put together an article for publication but differing priorities and work situations really made that difficult to impossible.”*

Table 16. Written Reports: Group Projects

Type of Written Report	Number	Citation or Description
Peer-reviewed journal publication	8*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Russell M, Yau A, Baptiste B, Rowntree C, Robb J, and Hill S. Improving the Public Health/Physician Partnership for Influenza Immunization. March – April 2005, <i>Can J Pub Health</i>; Volume 96, No.2; p. 155 – 158. ▪ Other publication citations not provided.
Non peer-reviewed journal publication	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not applicable
Abstracts	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SEARCH III Conference - June 2003 ▪ 10th Annual Qualitative Health Research Conference - April 2004 ▪ The Centre for Knowledge Transfer Spring Institute - May 2004 ▪ RTNA Water Cooler - Full Day Workshop - November 2004 ▪ Canadian Association of Rural and Remote Nursing - Practice to Research Conference - November 2004 ▪ Primary Healthcare Conference, Calgary AB September 26, 2005, "What are the perceptions of professionals involved in the development of collaborative primary health care teams in selected Alberta projects?" Tanya Ewashko BScPT, MPH; Suzette Miller RN, MN; Nancy Stocker BA; Ann Casebeer PhD. ▪ Other abstract citations not provided.
Other reports	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report to health region (1) ▪ Document prepared for publication but not submitted (1)

*Note: it is likely that the number of peer-reviewed journal publications reflects the same publications cited by multiple team members.

Oral Presentations

Nine respondents (47%) had also delivered oral presentations – between 1 and 8 presentations per person – based on the group projects (see Table 17).

Table 17. Oral Presentations: Group Projects

Type of Oral Presentation	Number of Presentations	Description
Internal Presentations	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not stated
External Presentations	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 90-minute presentation (Research in Practice) at Centre for Knowledge Transfer Spring Institute May 4, 2004 ▪ Research in Practice. Research Transfer Network of Alberta Water Cooler videoconference presentation November 8, 2004 ▪ Primary Health Care conference, Calgary, September 2005 ▪ A Toolkit for Primary Care Reform September 26th, 2006 ▪ CPHA: Canadian Public Health Association, June, 2004 ▪ Poster Presentations at CFPC Family Medicine Forum; October 2003, ▪ “Response Rate of Family Physicians to Postal Surveys: Do Original Signatures on Cover Letters Improve Response Rates Compared to Electronic Signatures” and “Prevalence of Influenza Vaccination of Alberta Family Physicians”. ▪ Poster Presentation at Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Population Therapeutics, Winnipeg, Manitoba, June 6-8, 2004 . “How doctors evaluate services from regional public health influenza control programs.” Russell ML, Yau A, Baptiste B, Rowntree C, Robb J. ▪ Poster presentation at the 6th Canadian Immunization Conference, Montreal Dec 5-8 2004, “Adherence to Guidelines for Quality Assurance for Office Vaccination”, Russell ML, Yau A, Rowntree C, Robb J. ▪ Podium presentation, CJPH June 2004
Presentations to the Media	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not applicable
Other Presentations	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poster Board display - locally ▪ Brief presentation on knowledge transfer done with local further education council.

Perceived Impact of Group Projects

Eleven survey respondents (58%) **did not know** if group project findings were used in practice for decision making. Four respondents (21%) indicated that the findings had **not been used** for decision making because the project was not completed or because of lack of time to disseminate findings.

For example:

- *“Re-regionalization made our particular topic impossible to complete at the time.”*
- *“Time to disseminate the research; the group as a whole struggled with having protected time, not only during, but especially after the SEARCH III program, which is unfortunate because we could have easily published at least 6 other publications on our research and presented at other national and international conferences.”*

One respondent (5%) chose the **“other”** response category and commented that results from the group project had facilitated further thinking and development of organizational capabilities to move research into practice. The remaining three respondents (16%) did not comment.

Survey respondents were also asked to indicate whether or not group projects had made an impact in any of the following areas:

- awareness of a problem/issue;
- organizational decision making;
- health care practices;
- policy development; and
- health outcomes.

AWARENESS OF A PROBLEM/ISSUE

As illustrated in Figure 9, the most common type of reported impact was increased awareness of a problem or issue. Very few respondents reported impacts in any of the other areas. Six respondents (32%) reported that their group project had increased awareness of a problem or issue.

- *“Based on oral presentations and poster presentation... a greater awareness of potential pitfalls when forming primary health care teams and strategies to effective team formation.”*
- *“Increased understanding of the research-practice gap.”*
- *“Aware(ness) of the different types of barriers and facilitators with mandated collaboration.”*

ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION MAKING

Two respondents reported that the group project had impacted organizational decision making by supporting the development of a new regional program and influencing “*physician practices, RHA services, barriers, and timeliness of health care services surrounding immunization*”.

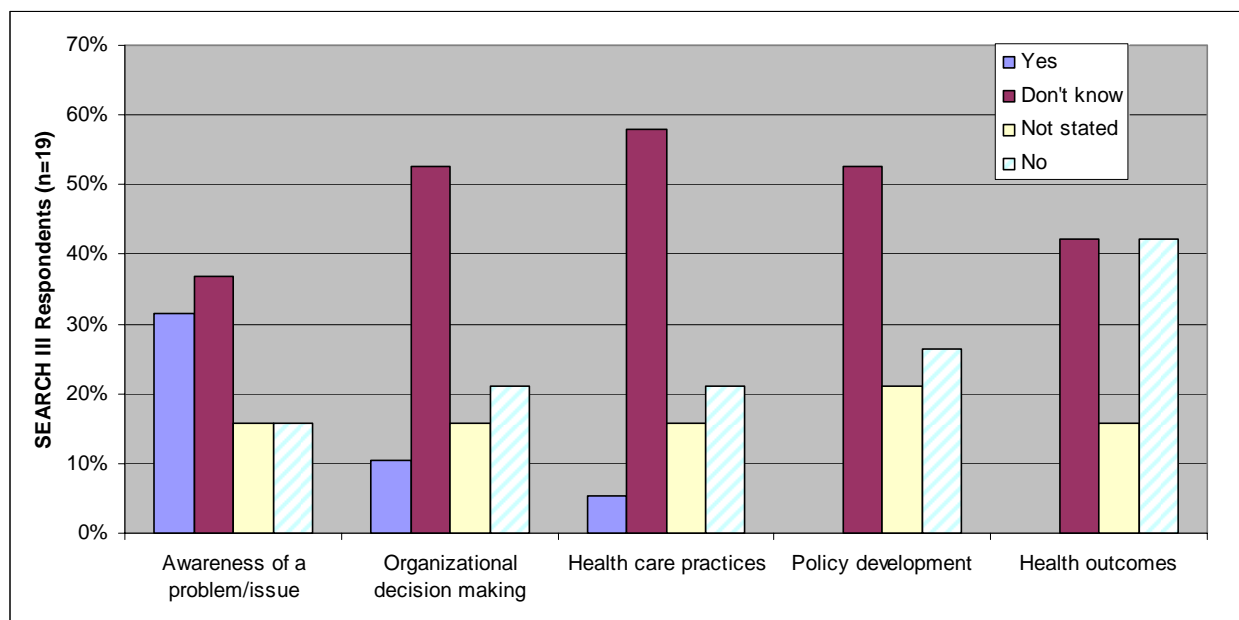
HEALTH CARE PRACTICES

One respondent reported that the group project had impacted health care practices by influencing “*whether physicians recommend influenza immunization to their patients and whether they themselves are vaccinated*”.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH OUTCOMES

None of the survey respondents reported policy development or health outcomes as a result of the group projects.

Figure 9. Perceived Impact of Group Project Findings



OTHER IMPACTS RELATED TO THE *PROCESS* OF COMPLETING THE GROUP PROJECT

Just over half of survey respondents (n=11, 58%) described impacts resulting from the *process* of completing the SEARCH group project.

Types of impacts included increased awareness and knowledge regarding group dynamics, group work skills, (e.g., “*the ability to work collaboratively over a distance*”), increased experience in research methods (e.g., questionnaire development, qualitative analysis),

increased understanding of various challenges (e.g., *“highlighted the difficulty and time issues related to multiple ethics reviews”*), increased subject knowledge (e.g., influenza immunization), and increased networking and relationship building with group members.

Some respondents described tension with employers or other group members due to conflicting priorities and varying levels of commitment. One respondent noted that the process of completing the group project had *“little impact”* at both an individual and organizational level, and further added that the *“descriptive type project did not intend for specific service delivery changes”*.

REASONS FOR IMPACT OR LACK OF IMPACT OF GROUP PROJECTS

Reported **barriers** to group project impact included the following:

- Project not completed (due to regional changes, team member position/role change, varying levels of commitment and competing workload demands);
- Lack of organizational interest in the project/topic; and
- Topic difficult to apply in practice (too broad).

Facilitators to group project impact, as described by one respondent, included team member commitment and dedicated time (including work and personal time) to complete the project and disseminate results. No other facilitators to group project impact were described.

New Projects

The majority of respondents (n=14, 74%) had engaged in new projects since the completion of the two-year SEARCH program. Three respondents (16%) had not engaged in new projects and two (11%) did not respond to the question. Respondents reported involvement in a variety of evaluations, surveys, and other projects and initiatives (see Table 18).

Table 18. Types of New Projects

Type of New Project	Topic/Area of Investigation
Evaluation projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health care services ▪ Population health ▪ Primary health care ▪ System change ▪ Nutrition ▪ Rehabilitative services ▪ Regional health centres
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Client satisfaction ▪ Staff quality of work life assessments ▪ Tobacco use
Other Projects and Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medication management and clinical practices ▪ Infection control practice changes ▪ Qualitative study of the impact of rural preceptorships ▪ Delphi study of rewards and challenges of family medicine ▪ Research projects in medical related fields ▪ Planning projects using relevant data, developing business cases based on review of existing data. ▪ Review of speech-language services for children and youth

SEARCH III respondents filled a variety of roles in new projects (see Table 19). The most commonly reported roles included **leadership**, **analyst**, and **facilitator** roles.

Almost all respondents who had engaged in new projects since completion of SEARCH (n=12 of 14) had filled a leadership role in the project.

Table 19. Roles of SEARCH Participants in New Projects

Role	#
Leader/lead investigator/project coordinator	12
Analyst	6
Facilitator	4
Presenter	2
Participant	2
Co-investigator	2
Advisor	1
Advocator	1
Consultant	1
Evaluation design	1
Interviewer	1
Linkage to external expertise	1
Mentor	1
Partnership developer	1
Proposal development	1
Report writer	1
Reviewer	1
Survey design	1

Note: n=14 participants had engaged in new projects since completing SEARCH; types of roles within these projects do not sum to 14 because participants often reported more than one role.

The majority of survey respondents (n=14, 74%) provided further comments regarding the extent to which SEARCH participation had prepared them for these roles.

Respondents indicated that SEARCH participation had resulted in increased confidence, skills, and abilities to fill roles such as project leader, analyst or facilitator for new projects. Respondents also reported use of the interpersonal networks established through SEARCH to facilitate contact and initiate new projects.

Illustrative examples of how SEARCH participation prepared participants to serve new roles are presented below.

INCREASED CONFIDENCE

- *“SEARCH gave me confidence to look at policy, practice, evidence, etc. in an educated way.”*
- *“I would never have felt confident to engage in a research project, let alone be the leader!”*

APPLICATION OF RESEARCH SKILLS

- *“I believe that the SEARCH experience and acquisition of specific research skills was a big part of being prepared to assume these roles.”*
- *“Critical evaluation of the scientific literature is likely the largest role SEARCH played in my current work in these roles as there is a lot of junk science that is published in the literature that is often brought to the forefront...and there are many different agendas and opinions related to the research I'm normally engaged in.”*

NETWORKING

- *“Facilitated contact.”*
- *“It also gave me a huge network to tap into when I need more information or just to contact others doing similar work.”*

Respondent Demographic Information

Almost all respondents (n=18, 95%) were **still in Alberta** and working in the **health sector**, directly or indirectly, at the time of the follow-up survey. One participant did not respond to the demographic questions.

Most respondents also reported employment with the **same organization** (n=13, 68%) from the time they started the SEARCH program (2 ½ years after completing the program). Similarly, 61% of SEARCH I and II respondents (n=22) were employed with the same organization two to four years after completing the program.

Most respondents (n=14, 74%) had **changed job positions** (including changes within the same organization) since the beginning of participation in SEARCH. Similarly, 75% of SEARCH I and II survey respondents had changed job positions at the time of follow-up.

SEARCH III respondent position changes were characterized in the following ways: increased responsibility for leadership and management of other staff members; increased responsibility for research, evaluation, or education; and changed specialty or focus areas.

Among SEARCH III respondents that had changed job positions, most reported one or two position changes from beginning the SEARCH program until the time of follow-up. The frequency of position changes was similar across cohorts (see Table 20).

Table 20. Frequency of Position Changes (SEARCH I, II, and III)

Category	SEARCH I	SEARCH II	SEARCH III	Total	%
Did not change position	5	4	4	13	24%
Changed 1x	6	5	9	20	37%
Changed 2x	5	5	4	14	26%
Changed 3x	1	2	0	3	6%
Changed 4 to 6x	2	1	1	4	7%
Total	19	17	18	54	100%

The **primary function** of SEARCH III respondents' jobs had changed for 8 individuals (42%). Among these individuals:

- four respondents changed focus from **information/research** to management or combined roles (e.g., information, quality improvement, and/or clinical responsibilities);
- two respondents changed focus from **clinical/front line** positions to information/research roles; and
- two respondents changed focus from **management** to clinical or information/research roles.

Most survey respondents were employed with health regions (n=16, 84%) at the onset of the SEARCH III program. At the time of follow-up, the majority of respondents (n=13, 68%) were still employed with health regions (see Table 21). The remaining respondents were employed with federal or provincial government, private consulting or academic institutions.

Table 21. Organizational Changes (2001-2006)

	Beginning of SEARCH III (2001)	SEARCH III follow-up (2006)
Health region or board	84% (16)	68% (13)
Federal or provincial government	5% (1)	16% (3)
Academic institution	--	5% (1)
Private/consulting	5% (1)	5% (1)
Other/not stated/not employed	5% (1)	5% (1)
Total	100% (19)	100% (19)

Note: Totals rounded to 100%.

Survey respondents reported a range of geographic locations including primarily rural (n=7, 37%), primarily urban (n=7, 37%) and rural/urban mixed (n=4, 21%).

The majority of survey respondents had attained a bachelors (n=8, 42%) or masters degree (n=7, 37%) at the end of the two-year SEARCH program (June 2003).

Six respondents initiated or completed an additional degree program after completing the SEARCH program. One post doctorate specialty training and five masters programs were initiated or completed after June 2003.

The post-doctorate training and masters programs were undertaken at the University of Alberta (n=3), University of Calgary (n=2), and University of Waterloo (n=1).

The majority of respondents had also undertaken additional coursework or training (not part of a formal degree program) since the end of the two-year SEARCH program. Examples of additional coursework included computer/software training, management/leadership, research/evaluation methods, clinical practice skills, and ethics in health care.

Additional Comments

In closing, respondents were asked to provide any additional comments regarding the impact of SEARCH. Given the length and scope of the survey, very few participants provided further responses. Among those who did provide comments (n=4), respondents expressed appreciation for the SEARCH experience and provided suggestions regarding protected time to facilitate successful program completion.

- *“Best experience of my life – opened my eyes and many doors.”*
- *“I feel extremely fortunate to have been a SEARCH participant. The training, experience and network contacts have proven valuable countless times.”*
- *“I value SEARCH and think it’s an incredible experience, but personally could have benefited so much more if my time was better protected at work to balance the personal and work life which would have allowed me to personally dedicate more time to the program.”*
- *“I have found my experience to be invaluable both from a personal and professional viewpoint.”*

Follow-up Interview Request

Eight survey respondents volunteered to participate in follow-up interviews (case studies) should plans proceed to use this method to further explore the impact of the SEARCH program over time. Names of volunteers were shared with the SEARCH Canada program staff.

Summary of Key Findings

A summary of key findings for each evaluation question is presented next.

WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS THE PROGRAM MADE FOR PARTICIPANTS?

Participation in the SEARCH Classic program has been consistently rated as a positive experience by previous program participants. In follow-up with participants from the first three cohorts (i.e., SEARCH I, II, and III) program participation was credited as a positive influence on personal and career development. Approximately 80% of SEARCH I, II, and III survey respondents reported that participation in SEARCH had positively impacted the development of their career.

SEARCH III respondents described a broad range of impacts associated with SEARCH participation including increased confidence and leadership skills, ability to influence organizational decision-making, value to organizations, respect and recognition from colleagues and employers, personal and professional networks, access to resources and tools, understanding of the health system, fundamental research skills and competencies, and the ability to choose, use and create evidence.

HOW DO PARTICIPANTS USE THE INTERPERSONAL NETWORKS ESTABLISHED THROUGH SEARCH?

It has been well established that program participants from all cohorts continue to use the interpersonal networks established through SEARCH.

The majority of SEARCH I and II respondents (89%) reported that they currently used the interpersonal networks two and four years after completing the program. All SEARCH III respondents (100%) reported contact with at least one member of the network after completing the residential modules. The quality of relationships within the network was characterized as positive and enduring despite an overall decrease in frequency of contact upon completion of the residential modules. Increased personal and professional networks emerged as one of the most positive impacts of SEARCH participation at an individual level.

The most common reasons for contacting members of the SEARCH network after the residential modules included requests for information, follow-up regarding SEARCH group projects, provision of information, social reasons (most frequently among fellow SEARCH III participants), and to obtain new contacts (defined as “to request contact information for individuals or staff members with responsibility for a given content area by first contacting someone connected through SEARCH”).

TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE SKILLS ACQUIRED THROUGH SEARCH BEEN APPLIED IN PRACTICE?

Survey respondents from all three cohorts reported that they continued to use the skills acquired through SEARCH two and four years after completing the program. The most frequently applied

skills by SEARCH III respondents included those related to collaborating and participating in groups and networks and choosing and using evidence.

Approximately 50% of all respondents (across all three cohorts) reported that their responsibilities for choosing, using, and creating evidence had increased or increased substantially since the beginning of the SEARCH program.

Support from supervisors and organizations to apply skills obtained from the program was rated slightly higher by SEARCH III participants (compared with SEARCH I and II), suggesting increased organizational buy-in and support over time.

Lack of time has persisted as a commonly identified barrier to application of skills in practice. Less than half of respondents (from all three cohorts) reported sufficient time to apply skills in practice. In contrast, however, some participants noted that SEARCH skills had become integrated in their day to day work.

TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE SEARCH PROJECT FINDINGS BEEN DISSEMINATED?

Participants from all three cohorts have disseminated findings from SEARCH projects through oral presentations, written reports, and in some cases, peer reviewed journal publications.

Overall, while SEARCH project findings have been disseminated through a variety of channels (including conferences, workshops, posters, and journal publications) the potential breadth of dissemination has been limited by lack of time, resources and competing priorities. Some respondents expressed disappointment that findings were not more broadly shared given the amount of time, energy, and personal commitment dedicated to the SEARCH projects.

IN WHAT WAYS HAVE FINDINGS FROM SEARCH PROJECTS BEEN USED FOR DECISION-MAKING?

Follow-up with SEARCH I and II participants revealed that SEARCH project findings (from both individual and group projects) were frequently used to plan, implement, and modify the delivery of individual programs and services. Findings were less often applied at the broader health system or decision making level.

SEARCH III respondents were asked more specific follow-up questions regarding the use of both individual and group projects for decision making.

Findings from **individual projects** completed by SEARCH III participants were more likely to be used for decision-making than findings from group projects. Individual project findings supported decisions related to public health nursing, provincial standards of practice, electronic health records, obstetrical care, incident reporting systems, and regional policies regarding falls.

Commonly reported facilitators to the use of individual project findings included organizational support and interest in the topic (e.g., "*a targeted audience interested in the results*"). Common barriers included incomplete projects (due to termination of positions, loss of time commitment, or health region merges), lack of organizational support, and lack of agreement between stakeholders regarding project focus.

The majority of SEARCH III participants either did not know or reported that **group project** findings had not been used in practice for decision making. Identified barriers included incomplete group projects (due to regional changes, team member position and role changes, varying levels of commitment, and competing workload demands); lack of organizational interest in the project or topic; and difficulty applying the topic in practice (e.g., topic was too broad, not focused enough to be used in practice for decision making). Team member commitment and dedicated time to complete the project and disseminate results were cited as contributing factors to the use of group project findings.

Although findings from SEARCH projects were not always used in practice for decision making, survey respondents from all three cohorts reported that the skills developed through the process of completing SEARCH projects were used extensively (e.g., literature search skills and knowledge of the research process). The *process* of learning how to conduct research was often reported as more important than the *outcome* or specific findings of a given project. For example, the majority of SEARCH III respondents reported that the *process* of conducting an individual SEARCH project was beneficial even if the project was not completed as planned or when project findings were not used in practice. The process of completing the project resulted in increased awareness of issues, provision of important background information (through the literature review component), and practical experience with research methods and tools.

Concluding Comments and Next Steps

The SEARCH Classic program continues to be rated highly by previous program participants. SEARCH participation has resulted in a range of individual-level impacts including increased personal and professional networks, increased confidence to participate in and lead knowledge generating projects, and increased skill development in choosing, using, and creating evidence. Survey findings also suggest a number of areas for program improvement, including increased support in finalizing projects and

The next steps in the finalization of this report include:

- follow-up interviews** with SEARCH III volunteers (n=8) to gather individual stories to illustrate the impact of SEARCH participation, barriers and facilitators to project completion, dissemination, and application in practice, etc.
- development of recommendations** based on analysis and interpretation of survey and interview findings;
- development of summary chart comparing/contrasting survey data across cohorts;**
- final review of the report** by SEARCH III participants and SEARCH Canada;
- incorporation of feedback** and finalization of the report;
- posting of the report on the SEARCH Desktop.**

Appendix A: Survey Questions

SECTION A: Application of Skills in Current Work Environment

The SEARCH program is designed to develop competencies in choosing, using, and creating evidence and to build foundational skills in information management/information technology, collaborating and participating in groups and networks, and personal and professional development as a change agent and scholar practitioner. Please rate the extent to which you use these skills in your current work environment.

1. To what extent do you currently use skills related to....

	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
1a. ... choosing evidence (e.g., information searching and retrieval, critical appraisal, research syntheses, etc.) in your current work environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1b. ... using evidence (e.g., managing the interface of research and practice, organizational change and change management, etc.) in your current work environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1c. ... creating evidence (e.g., research design, data analysis, developing and funding research projects, etc.) in your current work environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1d. ... information management & information technology in your current work environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1e. ... collaborating and participating in groups and networks in your current work environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1f.being a change agent in your current work environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1g. ... being a scholar practitioner in your current work environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. To what extent has your responsibility for each of the following areas changed, if at all, from the time you started the two-year SEARCH program until now?

	Decreased Substantially	Decreased	Neutral/ Stayed Same	Increased	Increased Substantially	DOES NOT APPLY
2a. ...responsibility for choosing evidence (e.g., information searching and retrieval, critical appraisal, research syntheses)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2b. ...responsibility for using evidence (e.g., managing the interface of research and practice, organizational change and change management)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2c. ... responsibility for creating evidence (e.g., research design, data analysis, developing and funding research projects)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2d. ...responsibility for information management & information technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2e. ...responsibility for collaborating and participating in groups and networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For any question (above) where you answered "Increased" or "Increased Substantially" please describe how your responsibility increased. For example, what did you become responsible for? Please provide specific examples.

3. Please rate the extent to which you have organizational support and opportunity to use the skills acquired through SEARCH in your current work environment. (Support could include practical types of support such as time, resources, etc., as well as psychological support such as encouragement and recognition for use of skills.)

Currently.....	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ No Change	Agree	Strongly Agree
3a... I receive support from colleagues to use skills acquired during SEARCH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3b... I receive support from my direct supervisor to use skills acquired during SEARCH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3c... My organization is supportive of research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3d... I have sufficient autonomy to use the skills acquired through SEARCH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3e... I have sufficient time to use the skills acquired through SEARCH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION B: Utilization of the SEARCH Network

Now we would like to ask a few questions about the use and development of the SEARCH network. SEARCH Canada would like to better understand the ways in which the overall SEARCH network is used and how it has developed over time. The SEARCH network is broadly defined as connections between health care professionals, researchers, policy-makers and decision-makers established directly or indirectly through SEARCH.

4. Do you currently use the **interpersonal networks** established through SEARCH?

- Yes
 No
 Other (please explain) _____

5. On average, over the past two years, how often have you contacted the following types of members of the SEARCH network?

Note: We recognize that it may be difficult to estimate frequency of contact over a two-year period. Responses will be considered rough approximations that may more accurately fluctuate over time. The question is important because it will enable comparisons with data collected from within your own cohort (SEARCH III participants) at the midpoint of the two-year program and will help to further understand how the SEARCH network is used.

	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
5a. SEARCH faculty members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5b. Research Development Advisors (RDAs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5c. Other university faculty or staff (i.e., indirectly connected through SEARCH but not SEARCH faculty members)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5d. Fellow SEARCH III participants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5e. Participants from other SEARCH cohorts (i.e., SEARCH I, II, IV, or V)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5f. SEARCH Program Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5g. Other individuals (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. For what reasons did you usually contact each of the above categories of members? Please check ALL that apply. (The response options are not mutually exclusive. They were created based on open-ended responses to the SEARCH III midpoint survey, July 2002.)

	To follow-up regarding SEARCH individual projects	To follow-up regarding SEARCH group projects	To request advice regarding research methods	To request other types of advice (please specify below)	To request information	To provide information	To discuss new research ideas/ identify possible projects	To obtain new contacts *	For social reasons	Other reasons (please specify below)
6a. SEARCH faculty members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6b. Research Development Advisors (RDAs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6c. Other university faculty or staff (i.e., indirectly connected through SEARCH but not SEARCH faculty members)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6d. Fellow SEARCH III participants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6e. Participants from other SEARCH cohorts (i.e., SEARCH I, II, or IV)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6f. SEARCH Program Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6g. Other individuals (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*For example: to request contact information for individuals or staff members with responsibility for a given content area by first contacting someone connected through SEARCH.

Please note: The next question pertains to your **overall experience** within the SEARCH network. While it is likely that your contact has increased with some individuals and decreased with others, the question pertains globally to your perceived contact within the network. Please think back to your level of contact within the network during the two-year program but **outside of the residential modules**. That is, do not include contact time during the residential modules.

7. In your experience, has your overall level of contact with individuals through the SEARCH network increased or decreased since completion of the two-year program? (not including contact time during the residential modules)

- Significantly decreased
- Decreased
- No change
- Increased
- Significantly increased
- Other: please explain _____

8. In your overall experience, how would you describe the quality of relationships within the SEARCH network over time?

SECTION C: Personal and Professional Development

9. To what extent did your SEARCH involvement influence the development of your career after SEARCH?

- Major negative influence
 Negative influence
 Neutral/no influence
 Positive influence
 Major positive influence

10. Please explain your answer.

11. Please rate the extent to which the following areas of potential impact apply to you. Categories were derived from previous SEARCH participant surveys as well as published studies regarding the impact of continuing professional development programs.

	Significantly Decreased	Decreased	Neutral/ No Change	Increased	Significantly Increased	Not applicable
To what extent have the following potential areas of impact decreased or increased since you completed the two-year SEARCH program?						
a. ... job satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. ...leadership skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. ...ability to influence organizational decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. ...value to my organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.... respect and recognition from colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f... respect and recognition from employers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g... personal networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h... professional networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i ... ability to choose evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j... ability to use evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k... ability to create evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 11b. What has been the most positive impact for you *at an individual level* that has resulted from your participation in SEARCH thus far? This could include expected or unexpected impacts.

Some potential adverse outcomes of SEARCH participation have also been identified through surveys and focus group discussions conducted with other SEARCH cohorts. Participants have reported that participation in SEARCH sometimes resulted in tension with employers (e.g., regarding ongoing time commitments or lack of opportunity to use skills acquired through SEARCH); tension with colleagues (e.g., regarding time spent out of the office to participate in residential modules); increased workloads and increased demands on time (e.g., workloads may have increased as a result of the new skills acquired through SEARCH).

12. During the two-year program, to what extent did you experience the following?

Participation in the SEARCH program resulted in....	Not at all	Somewhat	A great deal
a. ... tension with my employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. ...tension with colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. ... increased workload	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. ... increased demands on my time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. a) To what extent do the above apply today?
 b) Have you experienced any additional challenges or adverse outcomes as a result of SEARCH participation (beyond the examples such as tension or workload provided above)?

14. Please describe any contributions you have made to your organization that were facilitated by SEARCH.

15. Please describe any contributions you have made to the health system that were facilitated by SEARCH.

SECTION D: Dissemination and Application of Findings Emerging from SEARCH Projects

Individual Projects

The next several questions pertain **only** to your SEARCH individual project. Thus, please consider only your **individual project** for your responses. Questions regarding the SEARCH group projects are included in a separate section.

16. Please indicate the status of your **individual** SEARCH project (a) at the time of the June 2003 SEARCH conference, and (b) now.

	(a) June 2003 SEARCH Conference <i>(select one only)</i>	(b) now <i>(select one only)</i>
Topic identified	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question determined	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Literature review completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project proposal developed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ethics review completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data collection underway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data collection completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data analysis underway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data analysis completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Draft report prepared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final project report submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. Have you produced any **written reports, journal publications, or abstracts** based on your individual SEARCH project?

- Yes (if yes, go to list of options - below)
 No (if no, go to next question)

If yes, please specify the number of reports for each of the following categories.

<input type="checkbox"/> # peer-reviewed journal publications	
<input type="checkbox"/> # non peer-reviewed journal publications	
<input type="checkbox"/> # abstracts	
<input type="checkbox"/> # other reports	

18. Have you delivered **oral presentations** based on your individual SEARCH project?

- Yes (if yes, go to list of options – below)
 No (if no, go to next question)

<input type="checkbox"/> # internal presentations (i.e., within your organization)	
<input type="checkbox"/> # external presentations (e.g., conference presentations, specify title/date)	
<input type="checkbox"/> # media presentations	
<input type="checkbox"/> # other presentations (please specify)	

19. Were findings from your individual SEARCH project used in practice for decision-making?

- Yes <If yes, please provide specific examples.>
 No <If no, what were the barriers to using your SEARCH project findings for decision-making?>
 Don't Know
 Other <Please explain>

20. Did your individual project make an impact in any of the following areas? PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Yes (please provide examples below)</i>
Health outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health care practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organizational decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awareness of a problem/issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21. a) In follow-up interviews with SEARCH I and II participants, we heard that the impact of SEARCH projects was not always associated with specific project findings. It was often the process of conducting the project that made a difference for participants and organizations. With this in mind, in what ways – if any – did the process of conducting an individual SEARCH project impact you or your organization?

b) Please comment on the key reasons your project did or did not make an impact.

22. Do you have any additional comments regarding your SEARCH individual project?

Group Projects

23. Please indicate the status of your SEARCH **group** project (a) at the time of the June 2003 SEARCH conference, and (b) now.

	(a) June 2003 SEARCH Conference <i>(select one only)</i>	(b) now <i>(select one only)</i>
Topic identified	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question determined	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Literature review completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project proposal developed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ethics review completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data collection underway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data collection completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data analysis underway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data analysis completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Draft report prepared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final project report submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. Have you produced any **written reports, journal publications, or abstracts** based on your group project?

- Yes (if yes, go to list of options - below)
 No (if no, go to next question)

If yes, please specify the number of reports for each of the following categories.

<input type="checkbox"/> # peer-reviewed journal publications	
<input type="checkbox"/> # non peer-reviewed journal publications	
<input type="checkbox"/> # abstracts	
<input type="checkbox"/> # other reports	

25. Have you delivered **oral presentations** based on your group project?

- Yes (if yes, go to list of options – below)

- No (if no, go to next question)

<input type="checkbox"/> # internal presentations (i.e., within your organization)	
<input type="checkbox"/> # external presentations (e.g., conference presentations, specify title/date)	
<input type="checkbox"/> # media presentations	
<input type="checkbox"/> # other presentations (please specify)	

26. Were findings from your group project used in practice for decision-making?

- Yes <If yes, please provide specific examples.>
 No <If no, what were the barriers to using your SEARCH project findings for decision-making?>
 Don't Know
 Other <Please explain>

27. Did your group project make an impact in any of the following areas? PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Yes (please provide examples below)</i>
Health outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health care practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organizational decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awareness of a problem/issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

28. a) In what ways – if any – did the process of conducting your group project impact you or your organization?

b) Please comment on the key reasons your project did or did not make an impact.

29. Do you have any additional comments regarding your group project?

New Projects

30. Have you engaged in new projects since the completion of the two-year SEARCH program? This does not have to be "SEARCH project" but refers generally to involvement in new project-based investigations (e.g., research, evaluation, quality improvement, etc.). Yes No

31. If yes, please provide specific examples of the **types of new projects** within which you have been involved.

32. Please provide examples of the **types of roles** you have undertaken in the new projects (e.g., leadership, facilitator, analyst, participant, etc).

33. To what extent, if any, did your SEARCH participation prepare you for these roles?

SECTION E: Demographic Information

34. Thinking back to the beginning of your participation in the SEARCH program...			
a...are you still with the same organization (from the time you started SEARCH)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain)
b...are you still in Alberta?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain)
c...are you still working in the health sector?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain)

35. Also thinking back to the beginning of your participation in the SEARCH program....

a) Have you changed your job position (including changes within the same organization) since the beginning of your participation in SEARCH? Yes No

b) If yes, how many position changes have you had? Specify #: _____

36. Which if the following categories best describes the primary function of your job at the onset of the SEARCH program and now?

	<i>At the beginning of SEARCH III (2001)</i>	<i>Now</i>
	<i>Select only one</i>	<i>Select only one</i>
Information/Research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clinical/Front Line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

37. How would you characterize your position changes, if any, since the beginning of the SEARCH? (e.g., unique shifts in emphasis or responsibility not yet described.)

38. Which of the following categories best describes your place of employment at the onset of the SEARCH program and now?

	<i>At the beginning of SEARCH III (2001)</i>	<i>Now</i>
	<i>Select only one</i>	<i>Select only one</i>
Health region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Municipality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Federal or provincial government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not-for-profit agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private/consulting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

39. We know that there is debate regarding the classification of rural, urban, and combined rural/urban communities. For the purposes of survey analyses, please select one of the following categories that best describes the geographic location of your primary place of employment. If not employed, please select the geographic location of your primary place of residence.

- Primarily Rural
- Primarily Urban
- Rural/Urban Mix
- Other (please explain) _____

40. What was your **highest level of educational attainment** at the end of the two-year SEARCH program (June 2003)?

- Diploma
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctorate
- Other (please specify)

41. a) Have you initiated or completed a **degree program** since the end of the two-year SEARCH program?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify:

- Bachelors program initiated
- Bachelors program completed
- Masters program initiated
- Masters program completed
- Doctoral program initiated
- Doctoral program completed
- Other (please specify)

b) If degree program initiated, please specify academic institution.

42. Have you initiated or completed **additional coursework or training** (i.e., courses not part of a formal degree program) since the end of the two-year SEARCH program?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify:

- Computer/software
- Management/leadership
- Proposal writing
- Research/evaluation methods
- Other (please specify) _____

SECTION F: Other Comments & Case Study Request

43. Do you have any other comments about the impact of SEARCH?

44. As part of longer-term evaluation plans, SEARCH Canada is considering the development of a selected number of individual case studies to illustrate the impact of the program over time. Should these plans proceed, would you be interested in being the subject of a case study? If applicable, you would be offered the opportunity to review the written case study before broader circulation.

- Yes
- No
- Other (please explain)

Name: _____