

AcademyHealth Impact Metrics Tracker:

■ A Tool for Researchers to Measure the Impact of their Work

The AcademyHealth Impact Metrics Tracker helps researchers to measure the awareness, influence, and impact generated by a research project, including the impact of the project on health care policy and practice. Researchers record their dissemination activities in the Tracker and these activities are reflected in a custom dashboard summarizing the impact of the work. Using the Tracker as a centralized place for recording research activities and associated impacts can assist researchers with:

- Grant reporting,
- Submitting effective proposals for funding,
- Enhancing promotion and tenure materials,
- Responding to policymaker requests regarding an institution's impact, and
- Identifying gaps in the dissemination activities conducted to-date, among other uses.

Recognizing the urgent need to improve the measurement and communication of research impact, AcademyHealth developed the Tracker with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Grants #72831, #75505).

How to Use the Impact Metrics Tracker

1. **Download** the AcademyHealth members-only Impact Metrics Tracker and save a copy for personal use.
2. Enter dissemination activities directly in the Impact, Influence, and Awareness tabs.
 - The data should be entered in each cell as detailed narrative text.
 - A few categories (e.g., page views/downloads, social media, attendees) are structured for numerical data entry.
 - The Impact Dashboard tab will automatically populate with the totals for each category.
3. Utilize the custom dashboard image in presentations, proposals, and other materials and the recorded narrative information in crafting case studies or other descriptions of research impact.

The Impact Metrics Tracker is most helpful when users enter detailed information about the product, activity, or exchange they wish to capture - e.g., for a media mention, the name of the news outlet and the article title where the mention appeared, the date of publication, any context about conversations with a reporter or other activity leading up to the media mention, any follow up that resulted from the mention, etc.

Suggested Citations

Impact Metrics Tracker. Developed by AcademyHealth with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. February 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3GLR9uc>

We encourage users to retain the overall structure of the Impact Metrics Tracker, including the metrics categories listed. Users who make changes to the Impact Metrics Tracker should use the following citation when sharing the adapted tool publicly.

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Background

One of the top professional challenges reported by health services researchers is effectively communicating their research for impact. In the U.S. and abroad, many researchers and their institutions face growing expectations to demonstrate the value and contributions of their work beyond academia. In 2015, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) asked AcademyHealth to conduct a pilot project focused on a subset of the Foundation's research to: (1) help the RWJF better understand the impact of a subset of grants across investment types, and 2) help inform how the Foundation may more systematically track and measure the impact of the research it funds. Like many other foundations, the RWJF conducts regular program evaluations, but this pilot was unique in that it sought to formulate practical recommendations for how Foundation staff might collect, organize, and interpret key measures of policy impact on an ongoing basis, particularly when working with limited time and resources. This pilot project and subsequent follow-on work resulted in the Impact Metrics Tracker, an Excel tool that can help researchers track research outputs and related outcomes.

