



THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENTIFIC RESOURCES

Among Local Public Health Practitioners

Local health department (LHD) practitioners develop evidence-based programs and policies by means of a complex process. Often referred to as evidence-based decision making (EBDM), this process involves making decisions on the basis of the best available scientific evidence, applying program planning and quality improvement frameworks, engaging the community in assessment and decision-making, and conducting sound evaluation. To inform efforts aimed at boosting performance of public health agencies, there should be a clearer understanding of decision making patterns in LHDs, particularly those that are based on scientific information.



An online survey was delivered to **1489** LHD leaders and program managers. Those surveyed represented **517** individual LHDs across the United States. **849** practitioners responded to the survey, a response rate of **57%**.

Survey questions covered biographical data, administrative practices, diffusion attributes, barriers to EBDM, importance and use of resources, and competencies in evidence-based public health.



KEY FINDINGS

- Educational background, population size, and leadership that encouraged EBDM were associated with a higher perceived importance of scientific resources.
- Most LHDs gain access to journals through agency subscriptions, state health agencies, or academic partners.
- Barriers to using academic journals include a lack of access (including the cost of subscriptions).

NEXT STEPS

