

RAP

Rapid Anthropological Assessment Procedures



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people serving people
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RAP

was developed by
Susan Scrimshaw and Elena Hurtado
in 1983 for a United Nations
University 16-country study of
communities' perspective
on nutrition and
primary health programs

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What is RAP?

- Field guide for using anthropological research techniques to look at health behavior and health seeking behavior from the perspectives of the community
- A toolkit of methods based on qualitative and some quantitative techniques

History of RAP

- Nutritional and epidemiological data was sometimes explained by anthropological insights
- Needed community perspectives of effectiveness of primary health care post Alma Ata declaration of health for all
- 16 country study commissioned by the United Nations University

History of RAP

- RAP was the common methodology developed by the multi-site research team
- Method adopted by UNICEF and others and published
- Parallel development of Rapid Rural Appraisal by Sussex rural sociologist Robert Chambers and colleagues

Versions of RAP

- Translated into Spanish, French, Portuguese, Chinese, Arabic, and many other languages
- UNU versions published for reproductive health, diarrheal disease, epilepsy, focus groups
- Versions under development for AIDS (available on disk), water and health (Spanish)
- RAP has become a generic concept and many other versions now exist.(eg RARE, ERAP)

Techniques included in RAP

- Informal conversations
 - individual
 - group
- In-depth ethnographic interview
 - individual
- Semi-structured interviews
 - focused
 - community
- Focused participant observation
 - open
 - semi-structured
 - structured

Data Collection (1)

Traditional Anthropology

RAP

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Existing documents | • Same |
| • Ethnographic interview | • Same |
| • Participant observation | • Same |
| • Observation | • Same |
| • Structured interview | • Same |
| • Informal conversation | • Same / Focus groups |

Data Collection (2)

Traditional Anthropology

RAP

- Life histories
- Time sampling
- (Experimental design)
- Psychometric techniques
- Photography
- Video/film
- Genealogy
- Long field stay (one year is the standard)
- Brief field stay (ca. six weeks)

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Characteristics of RAP Studies

- Based in the community
- Relatively rapid
- Focused
- Action orientated
- Not expensive

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When to use RAP

- Before beginning a program or a survey
- To pretest aspects of a program, or to design and test educational materials
- During a program as on-going evaluation or for problem-solving
- At the conclusion of a program or a survey for final evaluation

Uses of RAP

- Program planning
- Program evaluation
- Quantitative survey planning
- Quantitative survey interpretation
- Community participatory research

Theory & Approach

Traditional Anthropology

- Usually theory-driven
- Sometimes problem-oriented (applied)
- Combines emic & etic perspectives— emphasis may vary
- Often holistic

RAP

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Theory & Approach

Traditional Anthropology

- Long periods of data analysis (often equals time in the field)
- Long written report
- Often published
- Theory driven

RAP

- Brief period of data analysis (often equal to time in the field or briefer)
- Brief written report
- Sometimes published
- Problem solving

Limitations

Traditional Anthropology

- Takes too long for many programmatic needs
- Rarely permits planned cross-cultural comparative work (costly and time consuming)
- Labor intensive

RAP

- Focus limits exploratory nature of field work
- Focus and brevity give “snapshot” not rich understanding of cultural complexity
- Can be superficial
- Less likely to get data on proscribed behaviors

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What have we learned?

- Used by people from varied disciplines (social work, physicians, public health workers, nurses).
- Many people around the world using the method.
- AIDS, other health problems, have brought out need.
- More quantitative/qualitative studies now done.

What have we learned?

- More team studies possible
- More multi-site studies possible
- Validity and speed valuable for health program evaluation
- A tool for community participation in research and program planning

New RAP under development

Working title: Rapid Assessment Procedures
for Understanding Food and Fitness
Behaviors relevant to Children's Health

Funders: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation,
Sprague Institute (Chicago)

Location: UIC School of Public Health

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