



Special Research Initiatives Evaluation Peer Review Committee

Meeting #1
May 24, 2022

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Today's Agenda

- Introductions
- SRI Background
- Evaluation Overview
- Assessment of Progress Toward Goals
 - *Process/Short term outcomes*
 - *Medium term outcomes*
- Next Steps

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INTRODUCTIONS

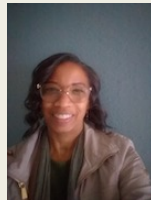
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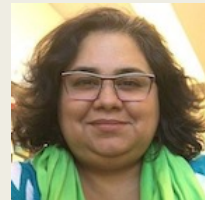
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SRI BACKGROUND

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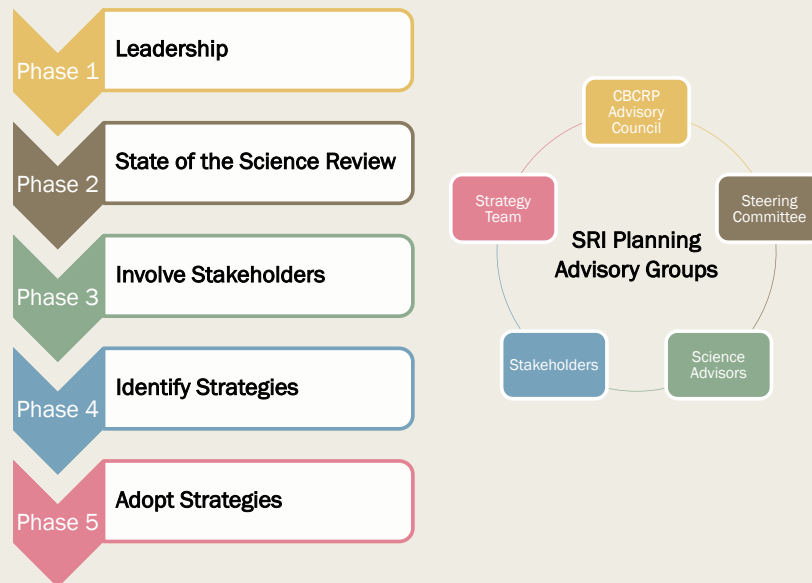
Special Research Initiatives (SRI)

- In 2004, CBCRP launched its **Special Research Initiatives (SRI)**, with the overarching goal of supporting California-based coordinated, directed, and collaborative research in two areas:
 - *The effects of the environment on the development of breast cancer; and*
 - *Disparities in breast cancer.*
- **Vision:** To identify and support research strategies that increase understanding of, and create solutions to, environmental links to breast cancer and disparities in breast cancer, including solutions to reduce suffering and move us closer to eliminating the disease.
- **Goals:**
 - *Support a coordinated statewide effort to explore innovative ideas and new theories.*
 - *Leverage California's unique and diverse geographic and population resources.*
 - *Undertake critical studies that significantly move these fields forward.*

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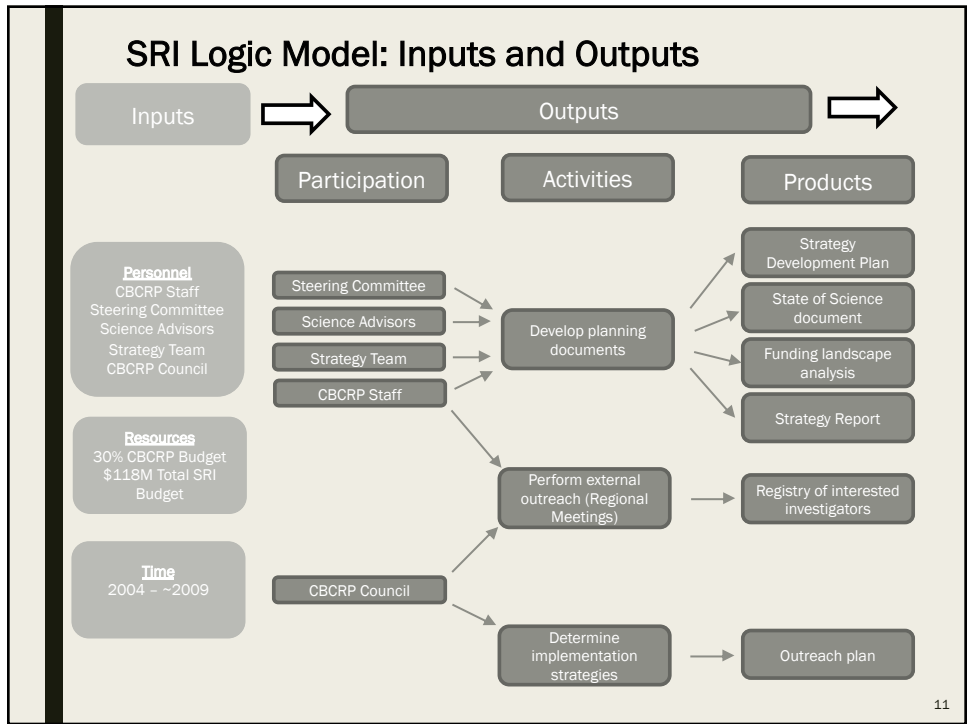
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SRI Strategy Planning Process (2005-2008)

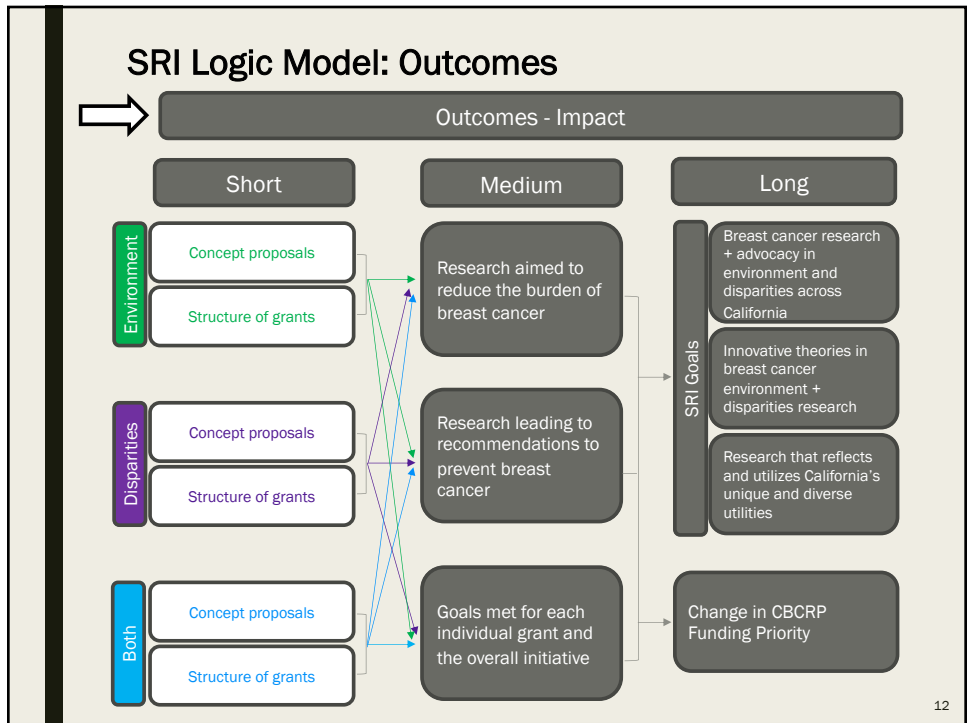


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Nine Special Research Initiatives to Address Environment and/or Disparities

Disparities

- Racial & ethnic differences
- Demographic questions
- Factors of breast cancer among immigrants

Environment

- CA chemicals policy that considers breast cancer
- Making chemicals testing relevant to breast cancer

Both Disparities and Environment

- Statistical methods to study interacting factors
- Toward an ecological model of breast cancer causation and prevention
- Environmental causes of breast cancer across generations
- Environmental exposures & breast cancer in a large, diverse cohort

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After SRI, CBCRP Continued to Make Investments in Environment and Disparities Research



Focus of this review

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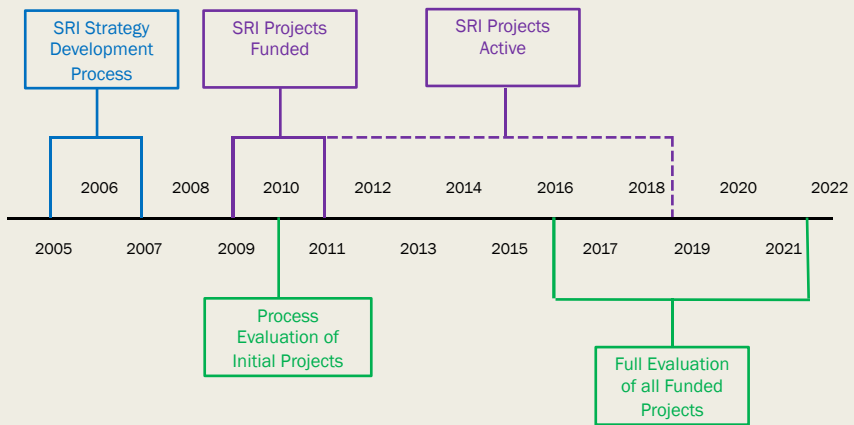
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SRI EVALUATION OVERVIEW

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SRI Initiative and Evaluation Timelines



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SRI Process Evaluation (2010)

Vision: To provide results that may guide SRI steering committee for future funding directions.

Goal: To carefully review the SRI planning process and early implementation of the first 8 SRI projects implemented during 2009-2010 and to identify initial outcomes from these projects.

Mixed-Methods Approach:

- External evaluator review of newly developed RFQ and Program Directed Award processes
- Interviews with staff, consultants, advisors, and grantees (SRI investigators)

Analysis: Synthesis of learnings from each stakeholder group during the initial implementation of the SRI projects

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SRI Full Evaluation (2016-2021)

Goals:

- To understand how the SRI initiatives (9) and research grants (26) funded increased knowledge about the prevention of breast cancer by focusing on environmental exposures and health disparities
- To collect and analyze the research outputs of SRI projects

Visions:

- To provide results that may inform CBCRP's third strategic planning effort.
- To provide a more nuanced story of the SRI project's value and inform CBCRP on the long-term outcomes of these SRI projects.

Mixed-Methods Approach:

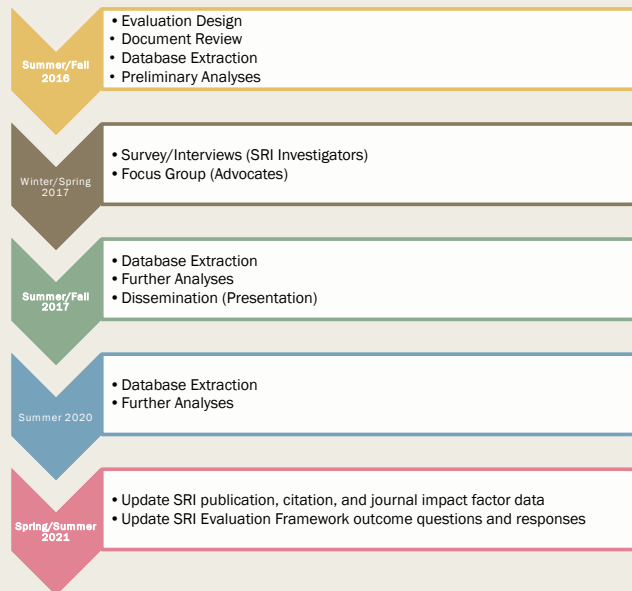
- **Document Review** (*Grant documents, SRI planning documents, preliminary evaluation findings, Council meeting notes*)
- **Database Extraction** (*internal systems, ICRP, NIH RePORTER, SciVal, UberResearch, Web of Science*)
- **Survey** (*SRI investigators*)
- **Interviews** (*SRI investigators, CBCRP staff and consultants*)
- **Focus Groups** (*SRI advocates*)

Analysis: Compilation of data from listed sources.

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SRI Full Evaluation Process



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SRI Evaluation Framework: Process and medium-term outcomes that are the focus of today's meeting

Process/Short Term Outcomes

1. What investment did the CBCRP make in SRI?
2. How were the SRI initiatives identified? How were the SRI initiatives structured?
3. What types of projects were funded in the SRI?
4. Did SRI build on existing data but avoid duplicating funding strategies by other research funders?
5. Did SRI choose topics based on the most up-to-date knowledge and opinion of experts?

Medium Term Outcomes

1. Were the goals of each initiative met? Did the grants within these initiatives meet their goals?
2. Do the research findings from the SRI grants lead to increased knowledge to reduce the burden of breast cancer?
3. Do the research findings from the SRI grants lead to increased opportunities to move these fields forward in research and/or advocacy?
4. How did the structure of SRI impact the research initiated within each initiative?
5. How did the SRI funded grants leverage California's unique and diverse, geography, demographics, and research resources?

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SRI Evaluation Framework: Long-term outcomes that are the focus of the next meeting (6/7/2022)

Long Term Outcomes

1. Did SRI reach its overarching goal?
2. Did the research produced as a result of SRI stimulate the field of breast cancer research?
3. Did the research produced as a result of SRI stimulate breast cancer research in the areas of environment, disparities, and/or disparities and environment?
4. Was the research produced innovative and/or theory generating?
5. Have we created value by pursuing SRI targeted funding rather than sticking to only investigator-initiated awards?
6. Have we funded research that would not have happened otherwise?
7. How did the research portfolio change for the researchers who received a SRI grant?
8. How did the SRI influence:
 - a) CBCRP research portfolio?
 - b) CBCRP funding priorities?
9. Who benefitted from the research produced by SRI funded grants?
10. Did SRI serve as a pipeline for new investigators interested in these areas?

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ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS

PROCESS/SHORT TERM OUTCOMES

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Process/Short Term Outcomes

1. What investment did CBCRP make in SRI?
2. (a) How were the SRI initiatives identified?
(b) How were the SRI initiatives structured?
3. What types of projects were funded in the SRI?
4. Did SRI build on existing data but avoid duplicating funding strategies by other research funders?
5. Did SRI choose topics based on the most up-to-date knowledge and opinion of experts?

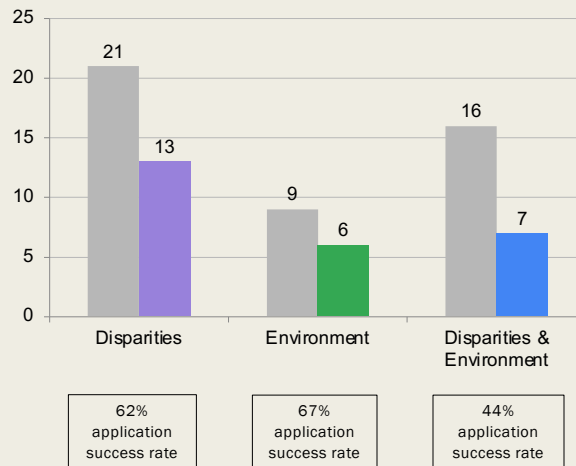
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1. What investment did CBCRP make in SRI?

Applications Received vs. Grants Awarded by Topic Area

■ Applications ■ Disparities awards ■ Environment awards ■ Disparities & Environment awards



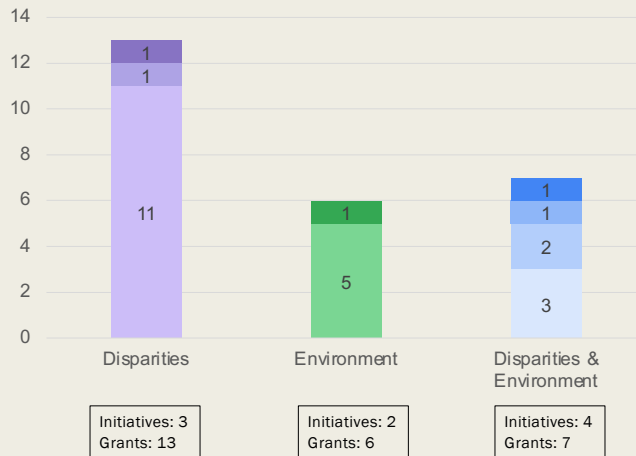
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1. What investment did CBCRP make in SRI?

Grants Awarded by Topic Area



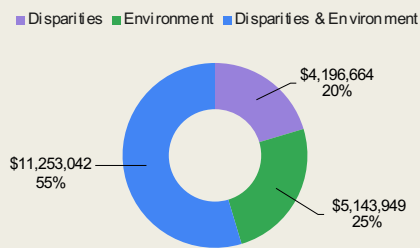
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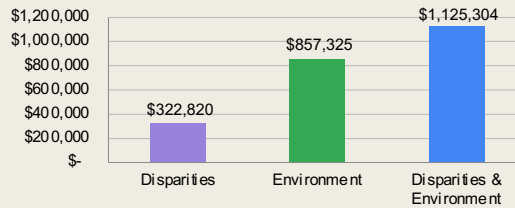
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1. What investment did CBCRP make in SRI?

Funding by Topic Area



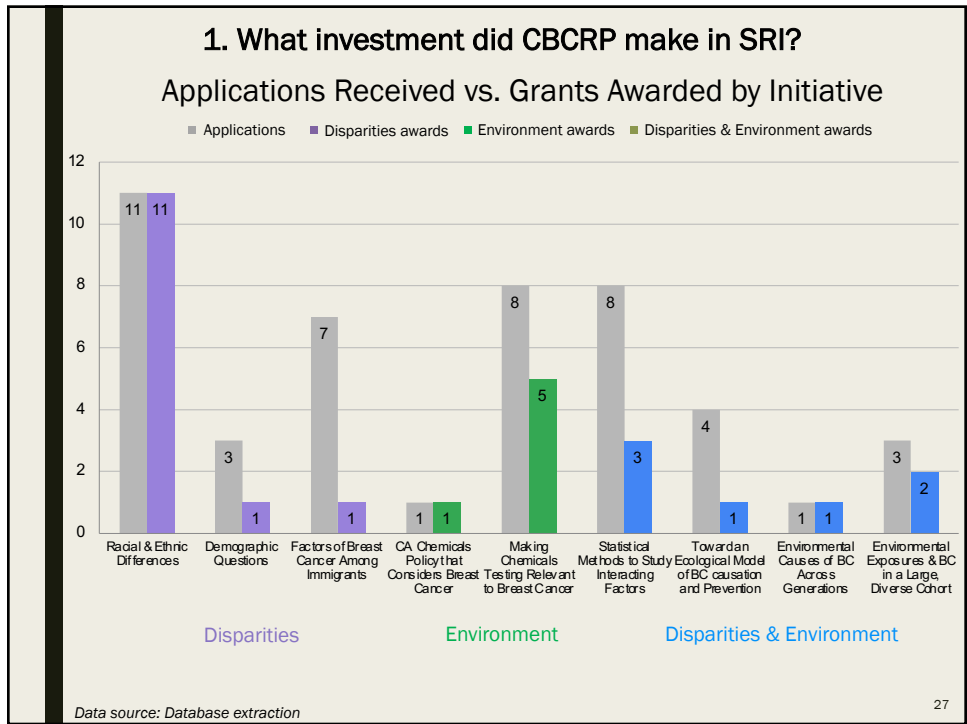
Average Award Amount per Grant by Topic Area



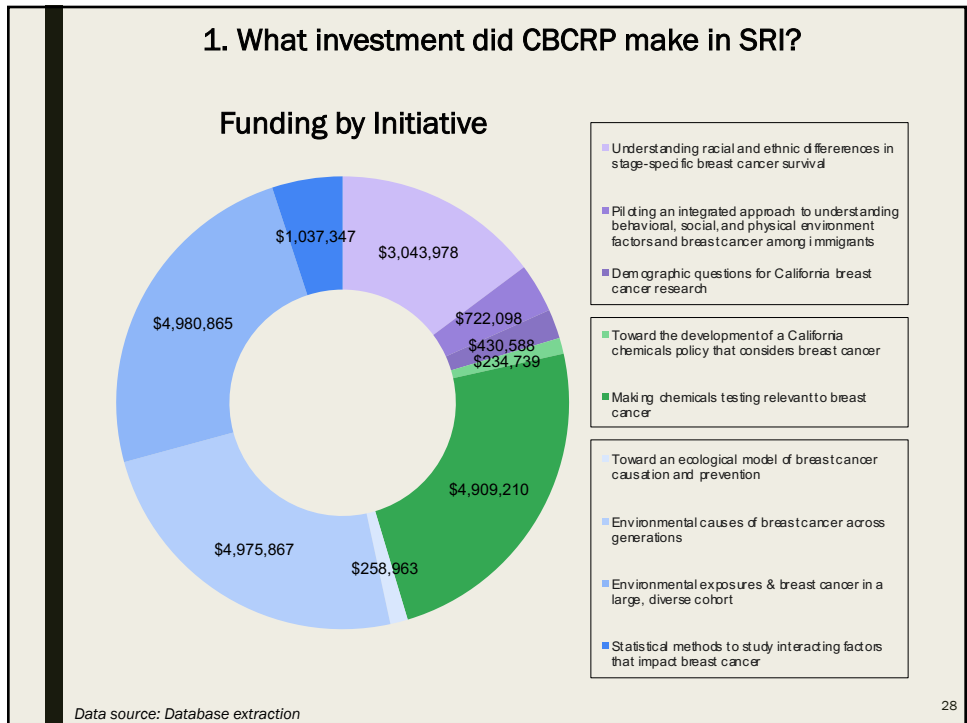
Data source: Database extraction

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Discussion: Process/Short-Term Q1

1. What investment did CBCRP make in SRI?

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2. (a) How were the SRI initiatives identified?



- SRI initiatives were structured after undergoing a formal 5-stage strategy process to identify gaps in research.
- During stage 4, a 40-person team used the Gaps document published during stage 3 to develop 10 concept proposals to present to the Steering Committee.

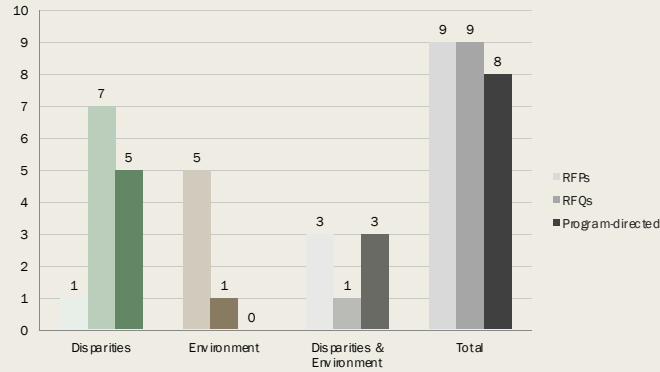
Data source: Document review

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2. (b) How were the SRI initiatives structured?

Grants Awarded by Funding Mechanism: RFPs, RFQs, & Program-directed Awards



Distribution of funding mechanism by topic area

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Disparities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8% RFP • 54% RFQ • 38% Program-Directed | <p>Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83% RFP • 17% RFQ • 0% Program-Directed | <p>Disparities & Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43% RFP • 14% RFQ • 43% Program-Directed |
|--|--|---|

Data source: Document review

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2. (b) How were the SRI initiatives structured?

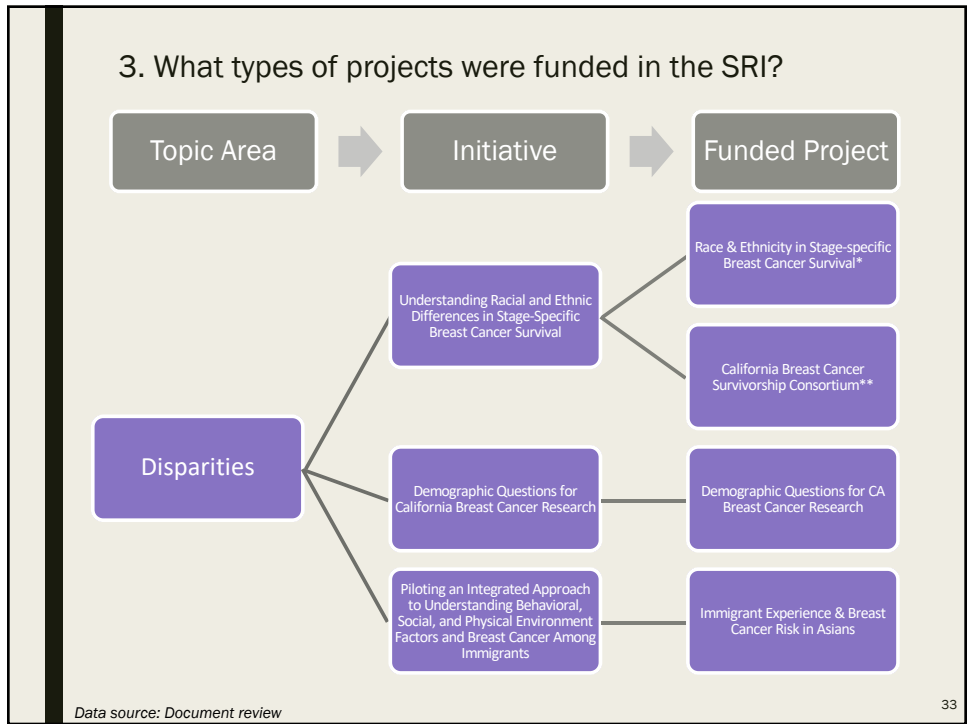
Topic Area	Initiative	Grants
Disparities	Understanding Racial and Ethnic Differences in Stage-Specific Breast Cancer Survival	11
	Demographic Questions for California Breast Cancer Research	1
	Piloting an Integrated Approach to Understanding Behavioral, Social, and Physical Environment Factors and Breast Cancer Among Immigrants	1
Environment	Toward the Development of a California Chemicals Policy that Considers Breast Cancer	1
	Making Chemicals Testing Relevant to Breast Cancer	5
Disparities and Environment	Statistical Methods to Study Interacting Factors that Impact Breast Cancer	3
	Toward an Ecological Model of Breast Cancer causation and Prevention	1
	Environmental Causes of Breast Cancer Across Generations	1
	Environmental Exposures & Breast Cancer in a Large, Diverse Cohort	2

There were 9 total initiatives with 26 funded grants

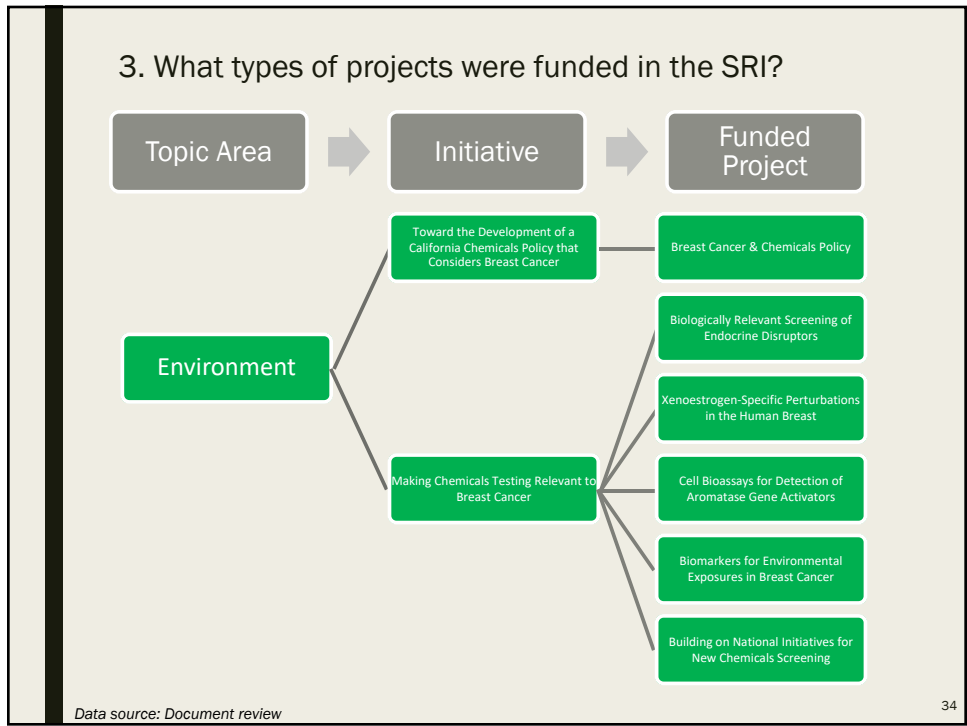
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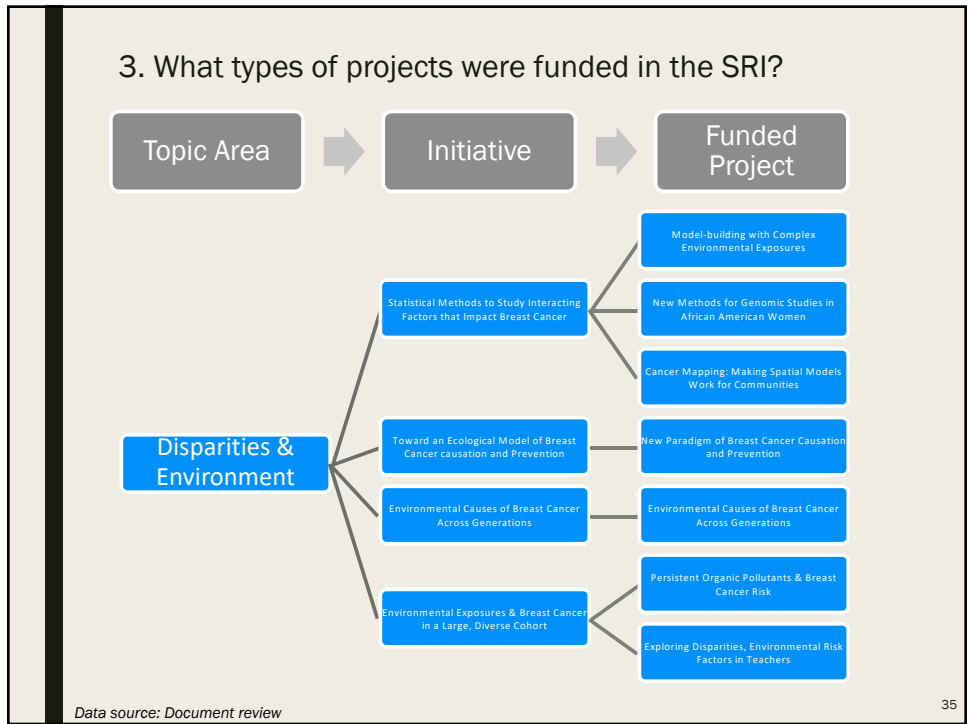
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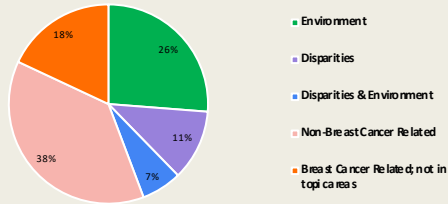
Discussion: Process/Short-Term Q2-3

2. (a) How were the SRI initiatives identified?
(b) How were the SRI initiatives structured?
3. What types of projects were funded in the SRI?

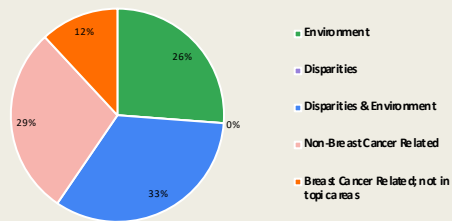
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4. Did SRI build on existing data but avoid duplicating funding strategies by other research funders?

Pre-SRI Project Count in Topic Areas



Post-SRI Project Count in Topic Areas



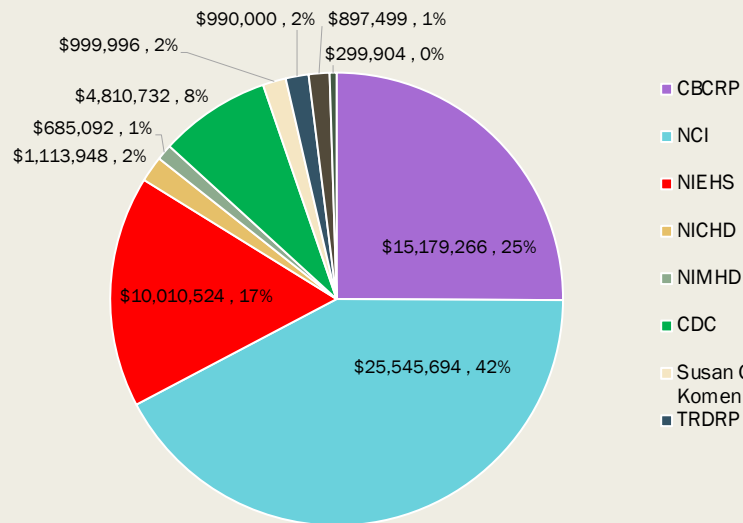
Data source: Database extraction

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4. Did SRI build on existing data but avoid duplicating funding strategies by other research funders?

Post-SRI Funding by Funders for SRI-Funded PIs



Data source: Database extraction

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4. Did SRI build on existing data but avoid duplicating funding strategies by other research funders?

- Of the 15 Principal Investigators interviewed, 8 received funding (from any funder) in environmental (chemical) exposures and breast cancer and/or health disparities and breast cancer within the last five years.
 - 7 of the 8 received this funding after their SRI grant, and 6 believed that their SRI grant helped to secure the new funding (non-CBCRP).
- As of August 2020,
 - 13 SRI PIs have received a combined total of \$37,355,258 in NIH and additional CBCRP funds, following the close of their SRI grants.

Data source: Interviews

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4. Did SRI build on existing data but avoid duplicating funding strategies by other research funders?

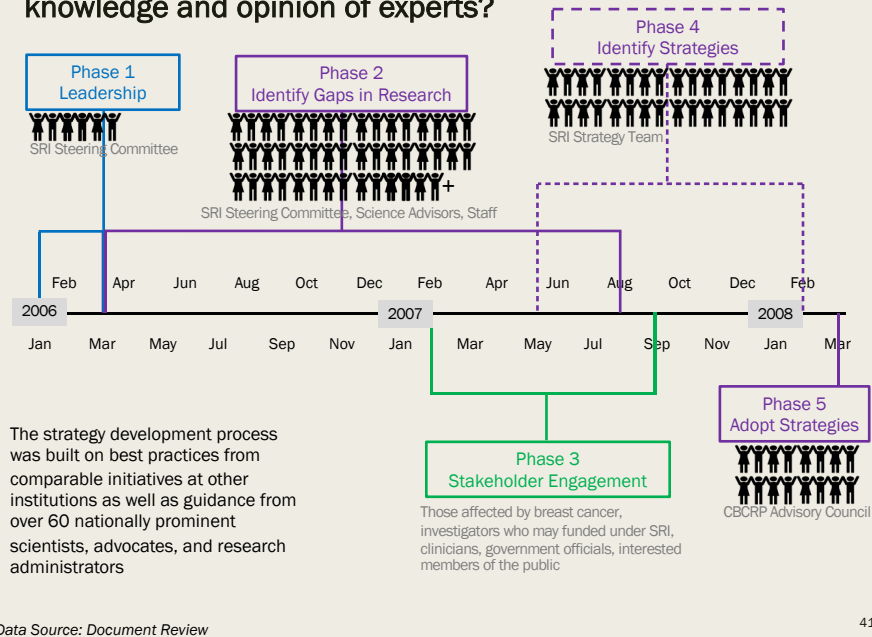
- Yes, SRI funded breast cancer research and prevention that were not prioritized by other funders.
 - In order to ensure that CBCRP's funding strategies were novel, a multi-year strategy development process was carried out to leverage California's unique and diverse geography, population and research resources.

Data Source: Document review

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5. Did SRI choose topics based on the most up-to-date knowledge and opinion of experts?



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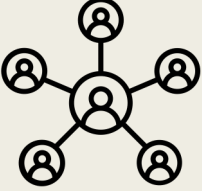
5. Did SRI choose topics based on the most up-to-date knowledge and opinion of experts?

- Yes, SRI chose topics that are seen as relevant (and even important) to the field, and topics that forged new paths in the field of breast cancer prevention.
- During SRI, there was one initiative that specifically focused on prevention, which developed frameworks and tools that mapped out risk and protective factors leading to breast cancer.
- SRI projects were also highly innovative and pertinent to understanding how environmental contributors and health disparities can lead to higher breast cancer risk in certain populations.
 - Some of these projects have developed new methods and technologies for breast cancer research.
 - For example, in one of the SRI funded projects, a novel statistical method was developed to investigate genetic differences in breast cancer among African American women while in another project innovative assays were developed to help identify chemicals that can contribute to breast cancer.

Data Source: Document Review

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Discussion:
Process/Short-Term Q4-5

4. Did SRI build on existing data but avoid duplicating funding strategies by other research funders?
5. Did SRI choose topics based on the most up-to-date knowledge and opinion of experts?

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ASSESSMENT OF
PROGRESS TOWARD
GOALS

MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES



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Medium Term Outcomes

1. Were the goals of each initiative met? Did the grants within these initiatives meet their goals?
2. Do the research findings from the SRI grants lead to increased knowledge to reduce the burden of breast cancer?
3. Do the research findings from the SRI grants lead to increased opportunities to move these fields forward in research and/or advocacy?
4. How did the structure of SRI impact the research initiated within each initiative?
5. How did the SRI funded grants leverage California's unique and diverse, geography, demographics, and research resources?

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1. Were the goals of each initiative met? Did the grants within these initiatives meet their goals?

Area	Initiative	Example of one RFP/RFQ Goal for Initiative
Disparities	Demographic Questions for California Breast Cancer Research	Develop recommendations for researchers in gathering demographic information when conducting research on breast cancer in California.
Environment	Making Chemicals Testing Relevant to Breast Cancer	Identify and evaluate a comprehensive cost-effective battery of assays for screening chemicals that incorporates the spectrum of mechanisms (tumor promotion, tumor initiation, tumor enabling and developmental disruption) by which chemicals are known or suspected to contribute to breast cancer.
Both	Statistical Methods to Study Interacting Factors that Impact Breast Cancer	What are the best methods for incorporating area-level measures of environmental, psychosocial, and other exposures to account for spatial variation, spatial auto-correlation, and multi-level effects?

Note: see Attachment 6 SRI Initiative Summaries and Funded Projects for full list of initiatives and goals

Data Source: Document review

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1. Were the goals of each initiative met? Did the grants within these initiatives meet their goals?

Topic Area	Initiative	Project Title	Publication Count	Total			
Disparities	Understanding Racial and Ethnic Differences in Stage-Specific Breast Cancer Survival	Race & Ethnicity in Stage-specific Breast Cancer Survival	0	17			
		California Breast Cancer Survivorship Consortium	11				
		Demographic Questions for California Breast Cancer Research	0				
Environment	Piloting an Integrated Approach to Understanding Behavioral, Social, and Physical Environment Factors and Breast Cancer Among Immigrants	The Immigrant Experience and Breast Cancer Risk in Asians	6				
		Toward the Development of a California Chemicals Policy that Considers Breast Cancer	3				
Environment	Making Chemicals Testing Relevant to Breast Cancer	Biologically Relevant Screening of Endocrine Disruptor	3		22		
		Xenoregion-Specific Perturbations in the Human Breast	4				
		Cell Bioassays for Detection of Aromatase Gene Activators	3				
		Biomarkers for Environmental Exposures in Breast Cancer	3				
		Building on National Initiatives for New Chemicals Screening	6				
Both	Statistical Methods to Study Interacting Factors that Impact Breast Cancer	Model-building with Complex Environmental Exposures	1			35	
		New Methods for Genomic Studies in African-American Women	12				
		Cancer Mapping: Making Spatial Models Work for Communities	1				
Both	Toward an Ecological Model of Breast Cancer Causation and Prevention	New Paradigm of Breast Cancer Causation and Prevention	1				
		Environmental Causes of Breast Cancer Across Generations	12				
Both	Environmental Exposures & Breast Cancer in a Large, Diverse Cohort	Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Breast Cancer Risk	8				35
		Exploring Disparities, Environmental Risk Factors in Teachers	0				
Total			74				

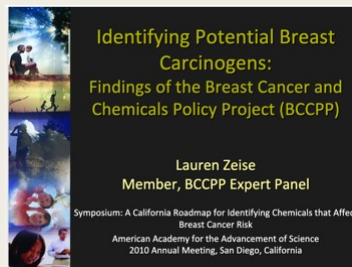
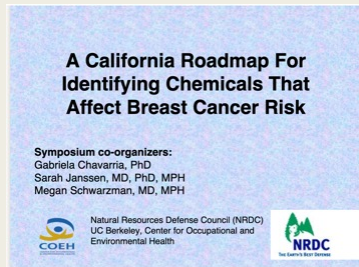
Data Source: Document review

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1. Were the goals of each initiative met? Did the grants within these initiatives meet their goals?

Example Presentations and Tools



Tools

- **California Breast Cancer Survivorship Consortium** combined multiple cohorts to probe research questions.
- **Demographic Questions for California Breast Cancer Research** developed new survey tools to gather data associated with breast cancer disparities more consistently
- **Biologically Relevant Screening of Endocrine Disruptors** resulted in a new assay that was included in Tox21.
- **Cancer Mapping: Making Spatial Models Work for Communities** developed a mapping protocol to produce more specific data for communities.

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1. Were the goals of each initiative met? Did the grants within these initiatives meet their goals?

SUMMARY

- It is difficult to answer objectively whether each initiative's goals were met.
- However, overall...
 - *All initiatives had their results published.*
 - *Some initiative findings were presented to policy makers and breast cancer advocacy communities which ultimately this informed chemicals policy in California.*
 - *Some initiatives developed key tools to prevent breast cancer and reduce potentially harmful exposures to chemicals that affect breast cancer risk.*
- In addition, CBCPI builds on these initiatives to deepen its knowledge.

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Discussion: Medium-Term Q1



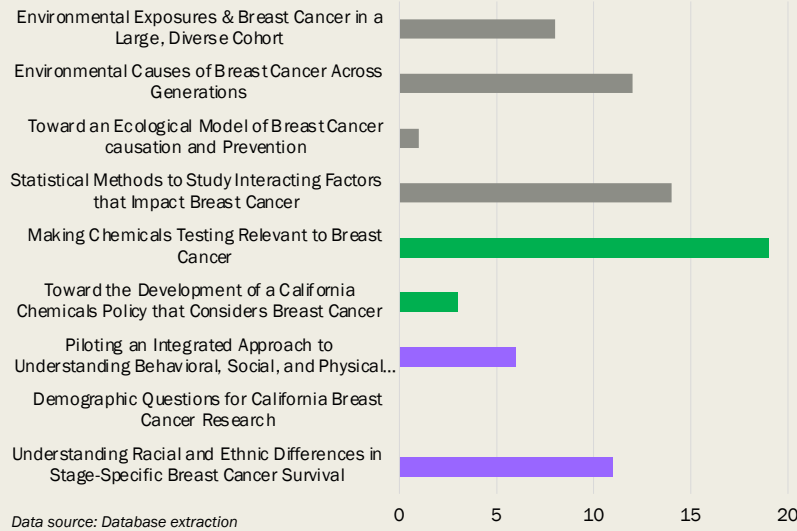
1. Were the goals of each initiative met?
Did the grants within these initiatives meet their goals?

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2. Did the research findings from the SRI grants lead to increased knowledge to reduce the burden of breast cancer?

Publications by Initiative

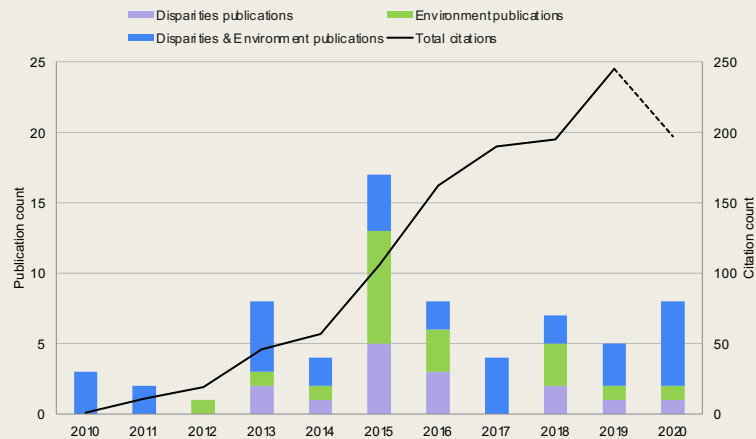


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2. Did the research findings from the SRI grants lead to increased knowledge to reduce the burden of breast cancer?

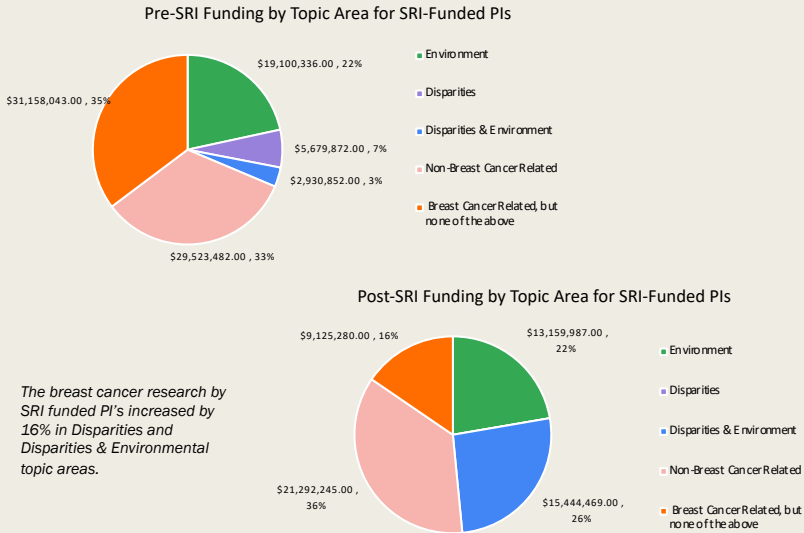
Publications and citations over time



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2. Did the research findings from the SRI grants lead to increased knowledge to reduce the burden of breast cancer?



Data source: Database extraction

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2. Did the research findings from the SRI grants lead to increased knowledge to reduce the burden of breast cancer?

Perspectives of SRI investigators on whether the grants led to increased knowledge to reduce the burden of breast cancer:

- SRI broadened the definition of prevention
- Environmental burden was noted across all three SRI topics and the impact of its exposures to be important for Breast Cancer
- For Environment/Disparities, some investigators noted:
 - Some studies had a focus on the link between endocrine disruptors and breast cancer
- For Disparities, some investigators noted:
 - SRI made it possible to Pool 'Big' data
 - Funding increased knowledge of the interplay of various factors leading to health/disease
 - Biological heterogeneity was an underpinning of disparities
- For Environment, some investigators noted:
 - Effects at different disease developmental stages or 'windows'
 - Changes in public policy as a result of this work

Data source: Interviews

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2. Did the research findings from the SRI grants lead to increased knowledge to reduce the burden of breast cancer?

SUMMARY

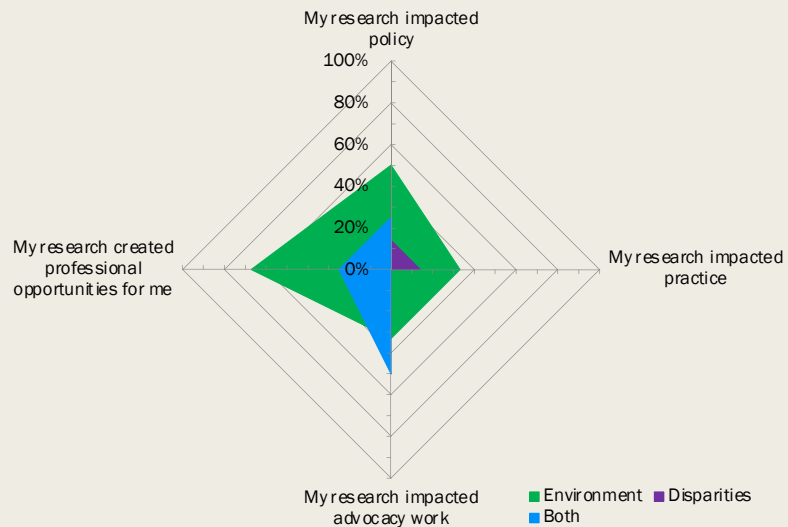
- The SRI grants led to 74 publications by 2021 with multiple citations.
- Breast cancer research by SRI funded PI's increased by 16% in Disparities and Disparities & Environmental topic areas.
- SRI initiatives have spurred researchers to add more breast cancer prevention research to their portfolios.
- SRI research broadened the field of research by making it possible to pool big data, expanding environmental research in breast cancer and affecting policy

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3. Do research findings from SRI grants lead to increased opportunities to move these fields forward in research and/or advocacy?

Investigators Perception of Impact



Data source: Survey

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3. Do research findings from SRI grants lead to increased opportunities to move these fields forward in research and/or advocacy?

Advocate Perceptions of Impact

Impact on Policy/Advocacy

"I've noticed a trend during this period of time (SRI) to make the researchers think of the research in **terms of policy**. Before, that was never really a component of discussion. I remember attending a meeting with the basic scientists that you guys put on and somebody brought up, "What is the public policy implications of these basic biology studies?" And you could just see people were like, "What are you talking about?" But it does seem over time the focus on public health outcomes and public policy has increased through these initiatives."

Impact on Pipeline

"I think CBCRP grants really helped initial first grants for the new investigators or the new populations that weren't getting the funding, and how they were about to kind of leverage to get more national funding."

Data source: Focus groups

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3. Do research findings from SRI grants lead to increased opportunities to move these fields forward in research and/or advocacy?





Areas investigators received funding for within the last 5 years (as of Feb. 2017)

Environmental (chemical) exposures and breast cancer

Yes   
No    

NCI
Avon Foundation
NIEHS

Health disparities and breast cancer

Yes  
No  

NCI
ACS
DoD
Avon Foundation
Komen Foundation

Data source: Survey

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3. Do research findings from SRI grants lead to increased opportunities to move these fields forward in research and/or advocacy?

PI Comments on Portfolio Changes

Expand Portfolio

“Not changing the focus of interest but more ways to address the question that are probably better, smarter, newer”

“Expanded, I would say, rather than changed.”

“I expect that it will in 2-3 years once publications come out and we do follow up studies”

Expand Science

“Made me more aware of issues. Opportunities for doing the type of research that we did are limited.”

“Now, we are speaking to an aspect of science we hadn’t appreciated as much before these grants”

Data source: Interviews

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3. Do research findings from SRI grants lead to increased opportunities to move these fields forward in research and/or advocacy?

SUMMARY

- According to PIs’ perceptions of impact, 50% of them found that their research in Environment, 5% in Disparities, and 15% in both Environment and Disparities, believed their research created professional opportunities; 35% of environmental and disparities PI, and 15% of environmental researchers stated that their research impacted advocacy work.
- SRI’s requirement for advocacy in their grants encouraged PIs to think about research in terms of its translational impacts on public policy and public health outcomes.
- Surveyed investigators indicated that they were funded by other well-known funding agencies 5 years after SRI grants were awarded; For environmental researchers, NCI, Avon and NIEHS and for Health Disparities researchers NCI, ACS, Avon, Komen and the DoD

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Discussion: Medium-Term Q2-3

2. Did the research findings from the SRI grants lead to increased knowledge to reduce the burden of breast cancer?
3. Do research findings from SRI grants lead to increased opportunities to move these fields forward in research and/or advocacy?

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4. How did the structure of SRI impact the research initiated within each initiative?

- 3 SRI funding mechanisms:
 - *Direct contract (Program-Directed): More focused than a grant, CBCRP invites an investigator with a certain asset to submit a proposal for specific work*
 - For example, CBCRP would invite a PI with unique data and/or important community partners to submit a proposal that may expand their research in an area of breast cancer that had been identified through the strategy process
 - *Cooperative agreements (RFQs): Substantial CBCRP involvement in carrying out the funded activities*
 - *RFA (RFPs): Very targeted with research question specified by the PI; minimal to no CBCRP involvement in carrying out the work*
- This diversity in funding mechanisms led to more grant applications and funding in the areas of Environment and Disparities than previous funding cycles (see the next 2 slides)

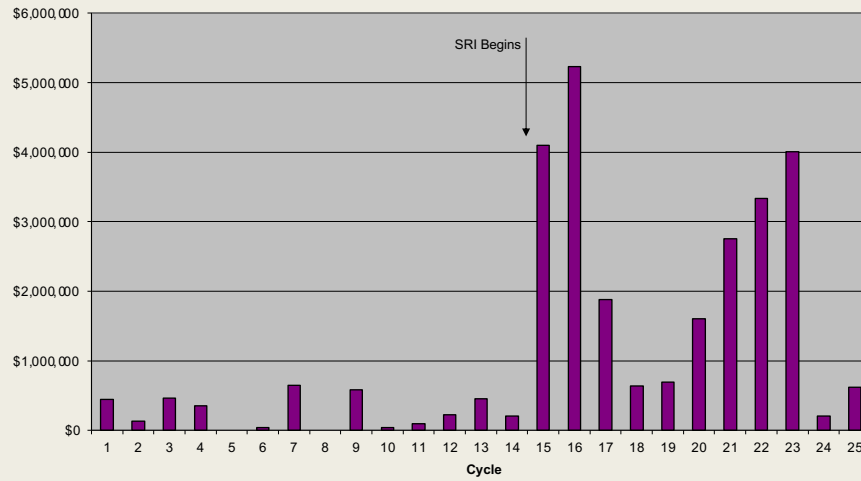
Data source: Document review

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4. Do research findings from SRI grants lead to increased opportunities to move these fields forward in research and/or advocacy?

CBCRP Disparities Funding Over Time



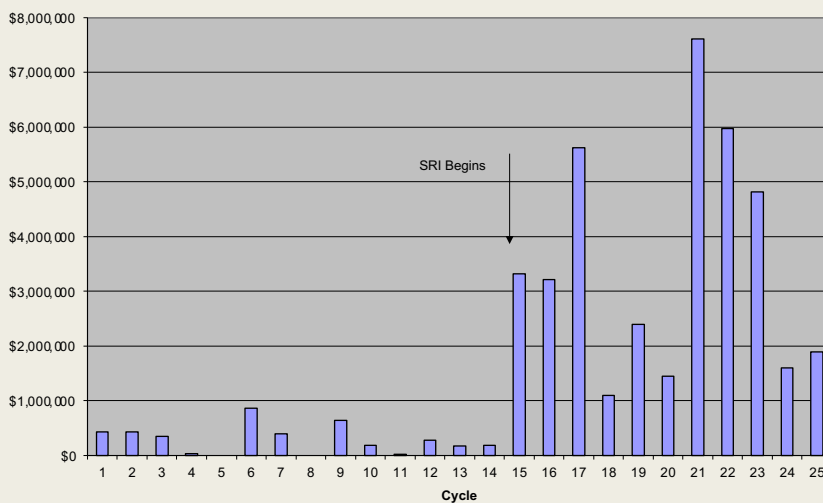
Data source: Database extraction

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4. Do research findings from SRI grants lead to increased opportunities to move these fields forward in research and/or advocacy?

CBCRP Environment Funding Over Time



Data source: Database extraction

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4. How did the structure of SRI impact the research initiated within each initiative?

Perspectives of key staff and consultants who oversaw SRI on the impact of SRI.

- SRI may have had impact on:
 - *Bringing the best researchers and advocates together*
 - *Providing funding in critical areas and to junior investigators*
 - *Advocates not only informing research but helping train or build capacity in researchers*
 - *Helping drive key areas of research (e.g., 'windows of susceptibility') or focus attention on policy or public health*
 - *Increasing the number of researchers pursuing environment and disparities researched because of the increased CBCRP funding in these areas*
- But, funding and job stability concern remain

Data source: Interviews

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4. How did the structure of SRI impact the research initiated within each initiative?

SUMMARY

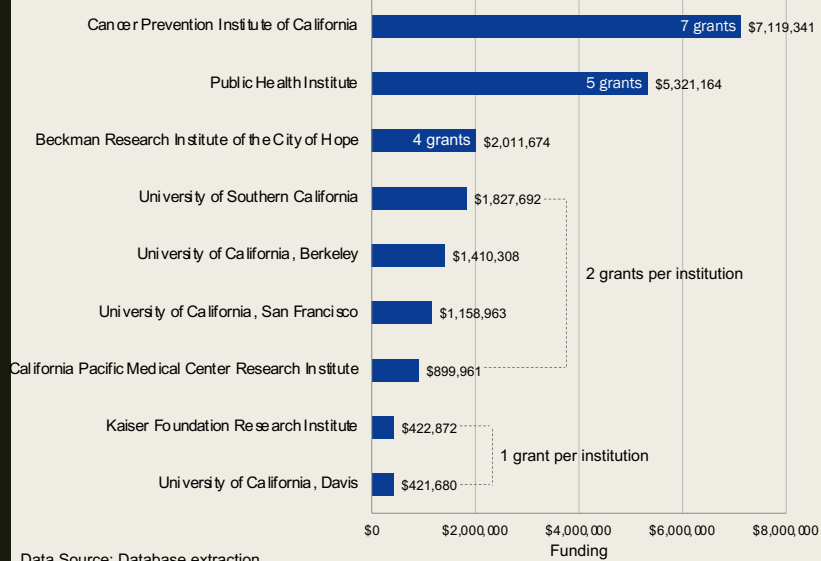
- The structure of the SRI increased number of applications for funding and funded projects
- The structure of SRI also helped drive key areas of research in Environment and Disparities

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5. How did the SRI funded grants leverage California's unique and diverse geography, demographics, and research resources?

Funding by Institution

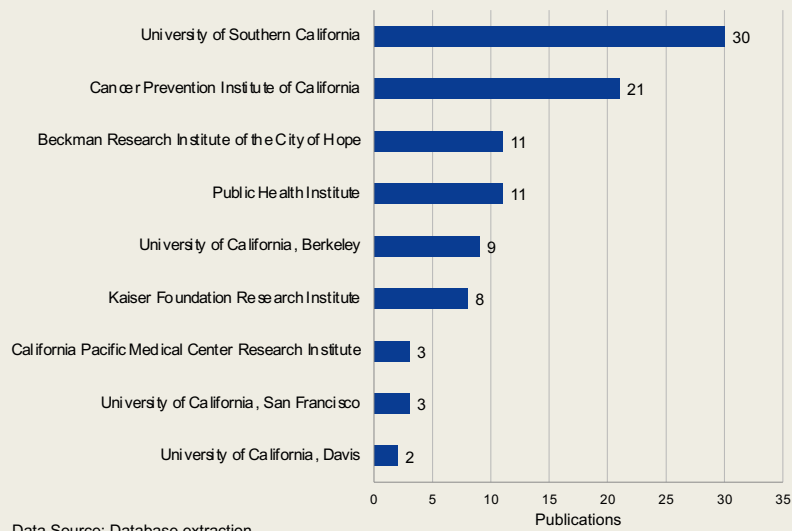


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5. How did the SRI funded grants leverage California's unique and diverse geography, demographics, and research resources?

SRI Publications by Institution



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5. How did the SRI funded grants leverage California's unique and diverse geography, demographics, and research resources?

Resources Utilized

	Environment	Disparities	Both	TOTAL
External Collaborators	2	2	4	8
Multidisciplinary Team		5	2	7
Large Data Sets		6	3	9
Registry		4	2	6
Chemical Catalog	1		3	4
Lab, Bench	4	6	1	11
Lab, Computational	1	8	3	12
Libraries	1		1	2
Office Space		7	2	9
TOTAL	9	38	21	

- Labs available in California are well-known and national/international leaders
- California scientists and advocates have necessary expertise and experience to conduct these studies
- Datasets and Cancer Registry available in California offer information on diverse populations

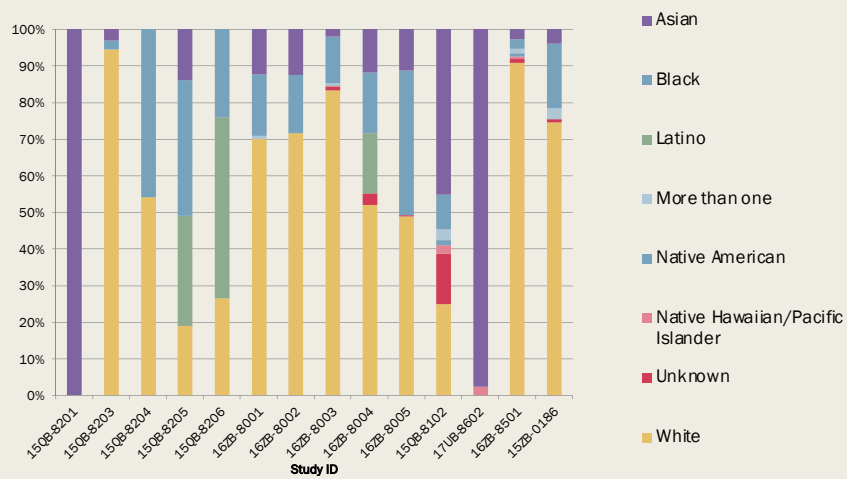
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5. How did the SRI funded grants leverage California's unique and diverse geography, demographics, and research resources?

Racial/Ethnic Composition of Study Participants



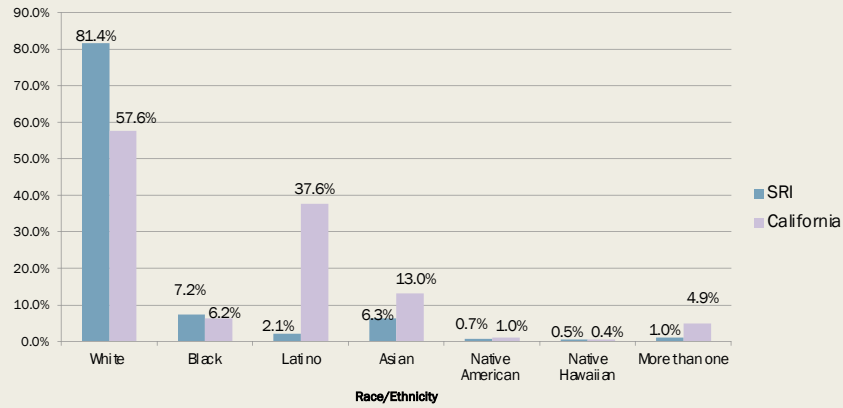
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5. How did the SRI funded grants leverage California's unique and diverse geography, demographics, and research resources?

Study Participants vs. California Census Data



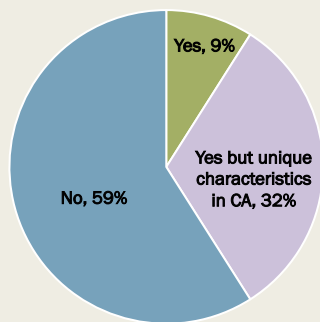
Data Source: Database extraction

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5. How did the SRI funded grants leverage California's unique and diverse geography, demographics, and research resources?

Investigator perspectives on whether study could have been conducted outside of California



- Some investigators believed that these studies could have been conducted outside of California
- However, these studies benefited from unique resources or characteristics
 - Diverse population
 - State based laboratories and test options available
 - Conversations pushed forward in California specifically (implications of existing policies, cancer incidence rates)

Data Source: Survey

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5. How did the SRI funded grants leverage California's unique and diverse geography, demographics, and research resources?

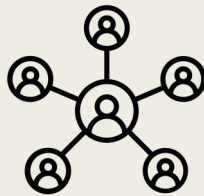
SUMMARY

- SRI grants were awarded to various institutions across the state of California for various projects that yielded a high number of publications.
- Resources utilized included external collaborators, multidisciplinary teams, large data sets, registries, chemical catalogs, bench research, computational labs, libraries and office spaces across California.
- Study participants were fairly diverse across the various projects

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Discussion: Medium-Term Q4-5



- 4. How did the structure of SRI impact the research initiated within each initiative?
- 5. How did the SRI funded grants leverage California's unique and diverse geography, demographics, and research resources?

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NEXT STEPS

Preparing for our Next Meeting

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Remaining Timeline



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Agenda for Meeting #2

- Summary of First Meeting
- Assessment of Progress Toward Goals
 - *Long term outcomes*
- Committee Conclusions and Recommendations
- Next Steps

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