

Perspective on Career Pathways & Opportunities in PHC Research

Professor Richard Reed
Head, Discipline of General Practice,
Director, Primary Health Care
Research and Development Program



inspiring achievement

Overview

- My research story
- Why do research
- Who are researchers
- How to discover if research is for you
- Steps in research

Overview

- Choosing a research tradition
- Finding a mentor
- Predictors of successful researchers
- What are the career options

My Research Pathway-

- Early exposure to biologic research – began at 16.
- University – Summer research project – became honours thesis – biochemistry.
- Second summer research project at Jackson Laboratory-Immunology.
- Third summer research project- Immunology- Hiroshima Japan.

Switched to Health Services Research

- Second honours thesis in General Practice – Manchester England.
- Did Masters Thesis in Health Services Research at University of Washington – 2 years full time. Predictors of early readmission to hospital by older people?

What do you want to Study?

Health Services Researcher

- University of Arizona – Flynn Foundation.
- University of Minnesota – NIH Fellowship.
- United Arab Emirates University. QI Research.
- Professor of General Practice, Flinders University.

Research Interests

- Quality Improvement in Primary Health Care
- Improving Care for People with Complex Chronic Disease in Community
- Prevention and Treatment of Diabetes Mellitus in Primary Care

Current Projects

- Root Cause Analysis – Admissions of People with Complex Chronic Conditions to Hospital. SAHS
- Clinical Trial of Chronic Condition Self-management in patient with Chronic Complex Conditions. DoHA.
- Consultancies – GPSA, APCC.

Current Projects-Collaborations

- Management of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea in General Practice- NHMRC (w Doug McEvoy).
- True Blue – Management of Co-morbid Diabetes and Depression, Beyond Blue (w James Dunbar)
- NHMRC Partnership – Prevention of Diabetes in Gestational DM (w James Dunbar)
- Research Impact Project (w PHC RIS).

Why Do PHC Research

- We want to learn the “truth”.
- We want to prove a point or change the PHC or broader health care system.
- We are clinicians and want to see understand things from a broader perspective.
- We think research is a high status activity.
- We want to be an expert.

Who are PHC Researchers

- People who do “research quality” evaluation.
- People who do “research quality” CQI
- People who do clinical research
- People who health services research
- People who do research on People (sociology/anthropology)

What is research quality?

- Careful attention to detail.
- Specification of hypothesis/predictions prior (usually).
- Thought given to alternative possibilities.
- Willingness to accept that you may be wrong.
- Subjected to peer review

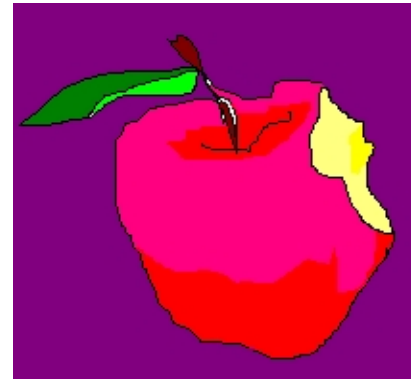
Suggested progression to become a Researcher

- Take A Nibble
- Take A Bite
- Eat the Whole thing



Take a Nibble

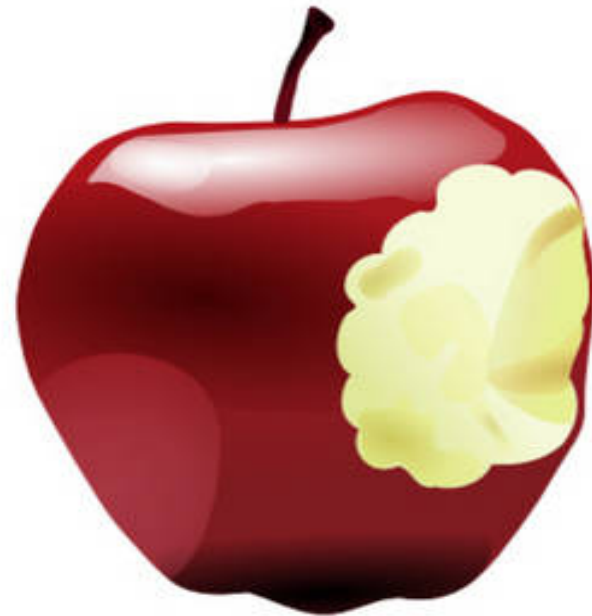
- Small project as part of a degree
- Audit for clinicians
- Literature review
- Group project
- Participate in data collection



Take a Bite -

Projects a year or less
full time

- Do a survey
- Join a research team
- Do an honours thesis



Eat the whole apple

- PhD
- Do a complete research project
- Join a team of a major project and stay for the duration.



Steps in Research

- Find an area you are interested in (Consider priorities).
- Identify a research methodology(s) and learn about it (usually discipline based).
- Review the literature.
- Identify a research question.

Steps in Research

- Round up a research team.
- Identify a population.
- Find Funding.
- Identify partners.
- Write a protocol.
- Have the protocol critiqued (iteratively).
- Get ethics approval.

Steps in Research

- Collect Data.
- Analyse Data.
- Write up Report.
- Submit Publication.
- Resubmit Publication.
- Resubmit Publication.

Research Methods (Traditions)

- Usually “held” by a discipline
- Specific way of seeing things

Research Traditions

- Biologic – Applied Basic Research. Reductionist.
- Quantitative – From Agriculture, Use regression. Most Social Sciences.
- Epidemiology – Empiricism, Clinical Research. Typically quantitative.
- Qualitative (Ethnographic) – Anthropology, Sociology, marketing (social)
- Health Service Research – Typically using mixture of above.

Options

- Do it your way
- Join a team

Mentors

- Content
- Methods
- Process



Individual Predictors of Success

- Socialization
- Motivation
- Content Knowledge
- Basic and advanced research skills
- Simultaneous Projects
- Orientation toward internal and external
- Autonomy and Commitment
- Work Habits

» Bland CJ, Academic Medicine 2005

Careers -

- Environment is very important
 - Research Institute
 - University Professoriate
 - State or Federal Government.
 - NGO's

Conclusions

- Research is fun.
- Research is challenging.
- Research is not for everyone.