



The opportunities and challenges of collaboration in health management research: The Australian experience

Assoc Prof Godfrey Isouard



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Health Services Delivery Management

Strengthening the management of primary health care and district health services in uncertain times: International perspectives



Today's Presentation

- Background- the Aust research context
- Challenges- research collaboration
- Selected approaches to research collaboration
- The way forward- the opportunities ahead

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Background- the Aust research context

Current trends- research in Australia

- concentration of research
- collaboration important
- quality
- competition
- National Research Priorities (ARC)
- National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP)

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Background- the Aust research context

Australian Research Council (ARC)

- mission- deliver policy/programs to advance Aust research/innovation globally to benefit community
- peer review-external/select advisory/College Experts
 - current review
 - (4400- 6500, since 2001)
 - academic workload
 - transparency/feedback
 - nature of research changing
 - track record

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Background- the Aust research context

ARC funded Research Centres

- ARC Centres
- ARC Centres of Excellence
- Coop Research Centres (CRC)- collaboration through commercialisation and technology transfer
- National Research Centres

University Centres and Groups

- Research Institutes
- University Research Centres
- University Research Groups
- Research nodes

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National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP)

DISCOVERY

- strong capability in fundamental research ('blue sky')..new ideas/knowledge
- individual/team
- networks/collaborations

LINKAGE

- encourage cooperative approaches
- partnerships- business, industry, community orgs etc
- partnerships lead to transfer of skills, knowledge and ideas

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Background- the Aust research context

Examples: Grants 2008

- ARC Discovery Grant- Braithwaite & Westbrook. \$1.58M over 5 years.
 - **examine nationally: communities of practice & clinical networks as building blocks in providing effective health services.**
 - largest ARC Discovery grant of 2008
- ARC Linkage- Westbrook, Braithwaite and SSWAHS \$2.306M -
 - **investigate capacity of IT to support innovations health delivery**
 - largest ARC Linkage grant of 2008
- NHMRC Braithwaite Westbrook Coiera Runciman Day; \$8.4M 5 yrs
 - examine patient safety nationally**

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Background- the Aust research context

Australia's National Research Priorities (NRPs)

vision- research can contribute to future prosperity

- deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits to Australia
- considered part of review of National Innovation System

1. An environmentally sustainable Australia
2. **Promoting and maintaining good health**
 - > a healthy start to life
 - > ageing well/ productively
 - > preventive healthcare
 - > strengthening social and economic fabric
3. Frontier technologies and transforming Aust industries
4. Safeguarding Australia

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Challenges- research collaboration

Hunter & Brown 2007 Durham Uni- reviewed HMR Europe 1995-2005
The European Journal of Public Health 2007 17(Supplement 1):33-37

- definition of health management
- paucity of research
- underinvestment in research and infrastructure achieving sustainable, long-term funding
- often no critical mass of researchers

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Challenges- research collaboration

- disconnect between academics and health service professionals

There are many interactions between Aust jurisdictions and their hospitals and primary care organisations, but these are often loosely coordinated and with little understanding of how universities and research institutes can help deliver better and more efficient health care.

Brooks, PM MJA 2009; 191 (1): 26-27

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Challenges- research collaboration

- **Developing countries Asia Pacific**
 - need emphasis on health management
 - various political, economic and sociocultural factors
 - existing research and capacity building often poorly resourced/ not sustainable
 - knowledge translation
 - lack authority/ org support to influence new policy
 - imbalances in health worker skills, quality and density
 - worker attrition a difficult issue (Pacific islands)
 - poor retention (salaries, incentives and supervision)

Health in Asia & Sth Pacific, WHO 2007
Fraser, Briggs & Taytiwat APJHM 2008

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Selected approaches to research collaboration

Collaborative health management research

1. organisation based research
2. cross- institutional research
3. collaboration between institutions
 - embedding community engagement principles

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Selected approaches to research collaboration

1. Organisation (university) based research

- centres focus on health management/system research
- critical mass of researchers around common themes
- supports researchers (host centre) in developing teams
- attract large grants and highly valued

Some issues

- generally- reduced cross institutional research
- specialised areas of health management- no critical mass of expertise/often isolated.

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Selected approaches to research collaboration

2. Cross- institutional research

Health Management Research Alliance (HMRA)

- Griffith University- Business and Health Schools
- Program of SHAPE

Society for Health Administration Programs in Education (SHAPE)

- academics- health management education and research
- researchers- university based research groups + HMRA

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Selected approaches to research collaboration

HMRA

- project based alliance
- cross-institution collaborations
- critical mass around priority areas
- distributed leadership model
- projects led depending where expertise was
- multiple leaders on many sites
- qualities- shared responsibilities, dispersion, distributed, democracy
- attracting diverse research funding through the HMRA

Day & Fulop 2009 APJHM

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Selected approaches to research collaboration

HMRA Research Priority Areas

2009- 2011

- safety, risk and voice in health organisations
- health leadership
- skills retention and replacement
- collaboratives and clinical networks

Day & Fulop 2009 APJHM

Issues

- scarce initial funding
- fluid, multi-site model requires close monitoring, accountability
- not part of an established 'in house' research team

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Selected approaches to research collaboration

Day and Fulop (2009)

The HMRA can operate along side organisation based research centres

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Selected approaches to research collaboration

3. Formal collaboration between institutions (MOU)

- two organisations (universities, health services etc)
 - education and research
 - establish a joint centre for research
 - joint proposals to research funding agencies
 - joint publications
 - exchange of students

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Selected approaches to research collaboration

many examples of collaboration between institutions

- UNE and Naresuan University
 - rural based universities
 - health and medical education and research
 - National Centre of Expertise on Hospital and HSM (WHO)
 - building health management and research capacity
 - scholarships for senior staff

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Selected approaches to research collaboration

Important to consider embedding the principles of
'community engagement' into any proposed
collaborations in health management research

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Selected approaches to research collaboration

Universities play an important role in engagement

AUCEA

Increasingly, universities are playing an integral role in their regions, contributing to the sustainability, wellbeing and economic vitality of their communities while becoming catalysts for positive change and development.

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Selected approaches to research collaboration

Engaged research (selected guiding principles of AUCEA)

- the community is a genuine partner
- mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and expertise
 - meets academic and community needs
 - creates society- accessible, outward reaching, inclusive
- collaborate on the basis of equality and mutual benefit
- improved social, environmental and community well-being
- work together to monitor research, measure impacts and evaluate outcomes

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Selected approaches to research collaboration

Benefits of collaboration

- transfer of knowledge, experience, and skills
- critical mass in research skills, facilities and larger infrastructure
 - Example: rural unis trying to form critical mass to meet significant health management research issues of region
- learning capacity of members- increased
- lead time for research outputs- decreased
- early integration of researchers and industry
- cost efficiencies through shared resources and risks
- **recognition of health management as an important profession**

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The way forward- the opportunities ahead

LESSONS LEARNED:

- all three approaches (organisation based, cross institutional, collaboration between institutions) provide a sound framework for productive collaborative research, and can operate along side each other if needed
- there is value in including the principles of engagement

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The way forward- the opportunities ahead

Some final thoughts

1. How to progress collaboration in HM research?
2. How do we ensure that health management research and innovation becomes and remains an integral part of the health system in the Asia Pacific region?
3. As a collective group we represent some of the key stakeholder groups in health care in Asia Pacific region- Our combined efforts in research collaboration can make a 'real' difference in terms of working towards improvements to our health systems

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The way forward- the opportunities ahead

Conference provides the opportunity to:

- form an Asia Pacific network of interested colleagues to collaborate in health management research

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The way forward- the opportunities ahead

My recommendation

That we consider developing a formal 'Declaration' at this Conference to form an Asian Pacific Health Management Network.

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The importance of collaboration in health management research: The Australian experience
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Thank You
Discussion and Questions

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