

EXPLORING RESEARCH CAPABILITY & CULTURE IN ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN MENTAL HEALTH

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The Problem

Mental health disorders contribute substantially to the **disease burden** and are the **leading cause of disability**

To respond to growing demands, mental health decision-makers must commit to the implementation of **evidence-based practice (EBP)**

Enhancing **research engagement and capacity** within the clinical environment is required for EBP to be **successfully and sustainably implemented** in mental health settings

Low engagement by mental health AHPs with allied health-wide research surveys resulted in uncertainty about research capacity and culture within this workforce

The Project

AIM

Explore research capability and culture of AHPs working in mental health

Identify barriers and enablers to research capability and culture in this workforce

METHOD

Explanatory sequential mixed-methods study

- 1 Research Culture & Capability tool
- 2 Focus groups

The Key Findings



Current research capacity of AHPs and culture within Mental Health teams is low

- **High RCC survey attrition**
- **High proportion of 'unsure' responses**
- **Below average (<5) median scores** were reported by AHPs against **multiple measures across domains**.
- **High average (>7.5) median scores** were on **three measures only**, all in the **Organisation domain**
 - Senior manager research support
 - Organisational planning guided by evidence
 - Promotes clinical practice based on evidence
- **Few differences** between **professional groups** or **mental health programs** were evident

Enablers of research capacity & culture

Active & regular consumption of research evidence

"Being a new clinician, definitely using research as kind of something to fall back on, especially in situations that I'm not necessarily used to being in, I think can be really helpful"

Research activities relevant to patient care

"What would be really important for me is just seeing the actual real-life change and the value that it would have to a certain population. I wouldn't want to do something just for the sake of, you know, having some research"

Collaborative, social learning opportunities

"They've got someone that's walking with them on the journey...But I think it is, from where I sit, if we could deal with the loneliness aspect of it..."

Limited research governance

"...You get allocated [a project], but that's the extent it...there's not really any sort of formal check in to see how it's going and where the projects at"

Low motivation

"I suppose sometimes, like people will say, 'I'm really encouraging of it', but then it never really goes beyond that initial conversation"

Low confidence

"It could be incredibly daunting you know, there's not a manual and it's very easy to go, 'You know what, too hard basket! I've got too many other things on my plate'"

Barriers to research capacity & culture

The Recommendations



Environmental restructure to increase AHPs' opportunity to engage in research



Motivation for and reinforcement of research to support AHPs to develop a positive research attitude



Education & training to develop AHPs' research capability



Strategic themes for enhancing research culture and capability for allied health at Monash Health



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