

Abstract Title

Strengthening consumer and community involvement in health research across Australia – where are we and where might we go?

Authors

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Abstract

Background

The Australian Health Research Alliance (AHRA) comprises seven NHMRC-accredited Advanced Health Research Translation Centres and two Centres for Regional Health, representing 70-80% of health research and health care delivery across Australia. Strengthening consumer and community involvement (CCI) in research is one of four national initiatives being addressed by the Alliance. There are many potential benefits associated with greater consumer involvement in health research including improved relevance, accountability, quality and outcomes; decreased costs; more effective research translation; and improved public confidence in research.

Objectives

To undertake an audit of CCI activities and resources across Alliance members;
To describe CCI initiatives from leading international research agencies;
To develop one or more national models for enhancing CCI in health research across Australia.

Method

Alliance members completed an online survey to capture existing activities and resources associated with CCI. Targeted interviews were undertaken with researchers who have demonstrated leadership in CCI to provide case studies of good practice. Examples of CCI activities undertaken by international agencies such as the National Institute for Health Research, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the National Institutes of Health were also documented. These findings informed draft recommendations for one or more recommended models for CCI in health research, which were discussed at a national workshop, resulting in final recommendations.

Results

The audit project commenced in May. It and the identification of local and international examples of good practice will be completed by September. The national workshop is planned for October, allowing for final recommendations by November.