

## **Principles for prospective research impact assessment in health and medical research: Embedding research quality within research impact assessment**

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### **Background**

The imperatives underlying the push for research impact assessment (RIA) in Australia and internationally vary, but include requirements: to be accountable; to advocate for health and medical research (HMR) expenditure; and, more importantly, to improve the value returned from HMR. The quality of research directly affects the probability of translation and consequently, the generation of health impacts. The majority of research impact assessments are conducted retrospectively and often with the intention to advocate for sustained funding. These approaches only passively contribute to improvements in the speed of translation. Prospective implementation of RIA represents a more direct and efficient method to improve the returns from research investment.

### **Objectives**

This research sought to outline how prospective implementation of RIA frameworks can meaningfully incorporate research quality.

### **Method**

This research synthesizes the insights from prior publications, including a literature review, capability analysis and qualitative research with researchers and medical research institutes.

### **Results**

The potential exists to heighten expectations upon researchers to address research quality as part of a prospective RIA process. One known example comprises the publication of accessible protocol papers, which: speeds the dissemination of research methods; reduces publication bias, and consequently the quality of meta-analyses; and reduces the probability of statistical searches for results e.g. p-hacking, which obfuscates and inhibits health gains. Prospective RIA seeks to incentivise researchers to consider all relevant factors pertaining to translation at inception e.g. protocol publication. Acknowledgement for research teams builds translation/impact track records and provides a mechanism to incentivise research quality and consequently, optimise the value generated from research.