

Abstract Title: Long term outcomes of a supported funding initiative to promote allied health research activity: A qualitative realist evaluation

Hilder, J¹, Mickan, S^{1,2}, Noble, C^{1,2}, Weir, KA^{1,2} & Wenke, R^{1,2}

¹ *Gold Coast Health and Hospital Service, Gold Coast, Australia*

² *Griffith University, Gold Coast, Australia*

Background

Allied health professionals (AHPs) can both produce and implement research evidence; however lack of protected time to undertake research is described as a common barrier for clinicians. One strategy to address this barrier is the provision of funding for clinicians to have protected time to undertake research while another colleague maintains their clinical workload. To date, limited research has evaluated the impact or mechanisms of such funding initiatives. In the current economic environment, it is important that funding is used efficiently and judiciously, and that mechanisms and contexts which may assist with maximising outcomes of this funding initiative are identified.

Objectives

We aimed to describe the long term outcomes of a Gold Coast Health funding initiative to promote allied health research activity and to identify key mechanisms and contexts that facilitated these outcomes.

Method

We used a qualitative research design informed by a realist evaluation, to conduct ten semi-structured interviews with AHPs who had participated in the funding initiative 1-3 years ago. Questions explored the outcomes, mechanisms and contexts of the funding initiative. Data was thematically coded into context-mechanism-outcome configurations.

Results

Preliminary data analyses indicates a number of long term impacts of the funding initiative including increased research outputs and research skills, as well as participants acting as a research knowledge broker within their clinical teams. Mechanisms which facilitated these outcomes included supportive team leadership and research mentoring. Specific contexts influencing the outcomes and implications for stakeholders will also be described.