Beyond the usable report: whose responsibility is it to translate research outside the academic sphere to optimise its value to human society?

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Background
Impact by health researchers have traditionally been measured by metrics such as h-index and citation counts. These metrics represent dissemination of knowledge among scientists rather than translation beyond academia. Translation of research to different contexts is an important precursor to realising more comprehensive impacts of research on society. But whose responsibility is it?

Objectives
To explore the opinions about research translation (RT) held by pre-clinical and clinical stroke rehabilitation researchers.

Method
A mixed method study involving a paper-based survey administered to attendees at a stroke forum and semi-structured interviews conducted with researchers affiliated with the NHMRC-funded Centre for Research Excellence in Stroke Rehabilitation and Brain Recovery.

Results
While 98% of researchers believe RT to be important, 80% considered a research project complete when the paper was published. Researchers felt personally responsible for translating their research to other projects but held differing opinions about who was responsible for translating findings to clinical practice and policy. Options offered included clinicians, clinical leaders and managers, implementation scientists, a team approach, peak bodies such as the Stroke Foundation and state clinical and funding organisations. Less than half of researchers reported that they had the skills and knowledge to translate their research beyond academia.

Conclusion
There is a lack of consensus amongst health and medical researchers about whose responsibility it is to translate research beyond academic outputs like peer-reviewed publications. This, and the lack of translation skills, pose significant barriers to realising the potential impact of research on policy, practice and the community.

249 words