



# 2006 GP & PHC RESEARCH CONFERENCE

## Evaluation of Pre-conference Workshops

### Workshop Evaluation

By Eleanor Jackson Bowers, Research Associate, PHCRIS

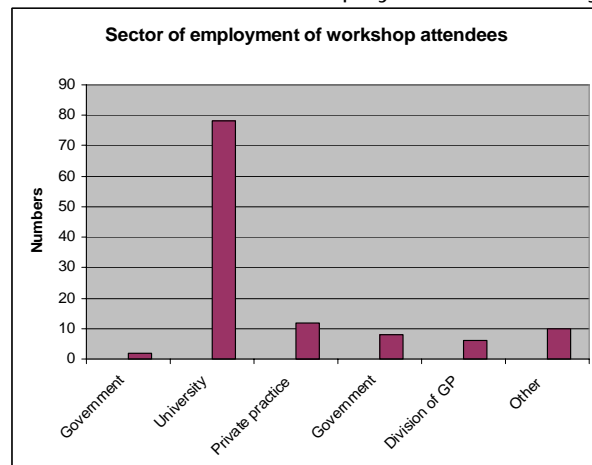
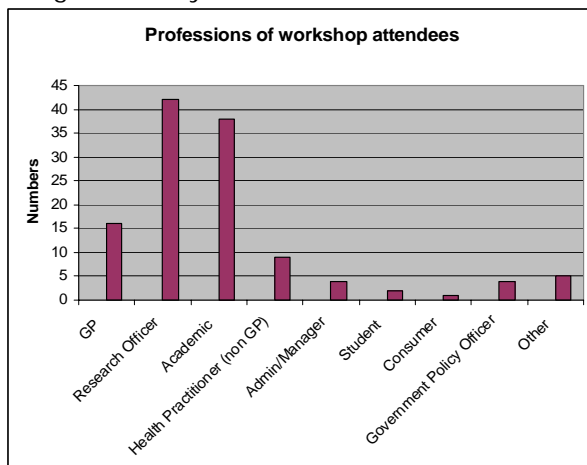
The 2006 General Practice and Primary Health Care Research Conference was held on 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006 at the Perth Convention Centre. Six workshops were held on the morning of 5<sup>th</sup> July prior to the opening of the conference in the afternoon. Workshop topics were selected or invited by the Conference Advisory Group. Registration was organised separately from the conference registration. The cost of each workshop was \$125.00.

A total of 172 workshop registrations were received. This evaluation is based on the 115 evaluation forms returned, which is a 66.8% response rate.

			<i>Numbers registered</i>	<i>Response rate (Nos)</i>
<i>Workshop 1</i>	<i>Maria Pirotta, Jon Emery and Jane Gunn</i>	<i>How to design the perfect randomised controlled trial</i>	26	20
<i>Workshop 2</i>	<i>Felicity Flack</i>	<i>Grant writing for success</i>	25	13
<i>Workshop 3</i>	<i>Ray Moynihan</i>	<i>Making medical journalism healthier</i>	19	15
<i>Workshop 4</i>	<i>Nick Glasgow, Larry Green</i>	<i>Contextualising decontextualised evidence for use in Australian Primary Health Care: APHCRI's approach in Stream Four</i>	22	10
<i>Workshop 5</i>	<i>Glenn Pearson</i>	<i>Indigenous Child Health Research</i>	16	10
<i>Workshop 6</i>	<i>Martin Roland</i>	<i>How on earth can you measure the quality of what really matters in primary health care?</i>	64	47

### Characteristics of the people attending

The attendees were overwhelmingly Academics, Research Officers and with the next highest group being GPs. Many of these GPs were also Academics. Most attendees were employed in a university.





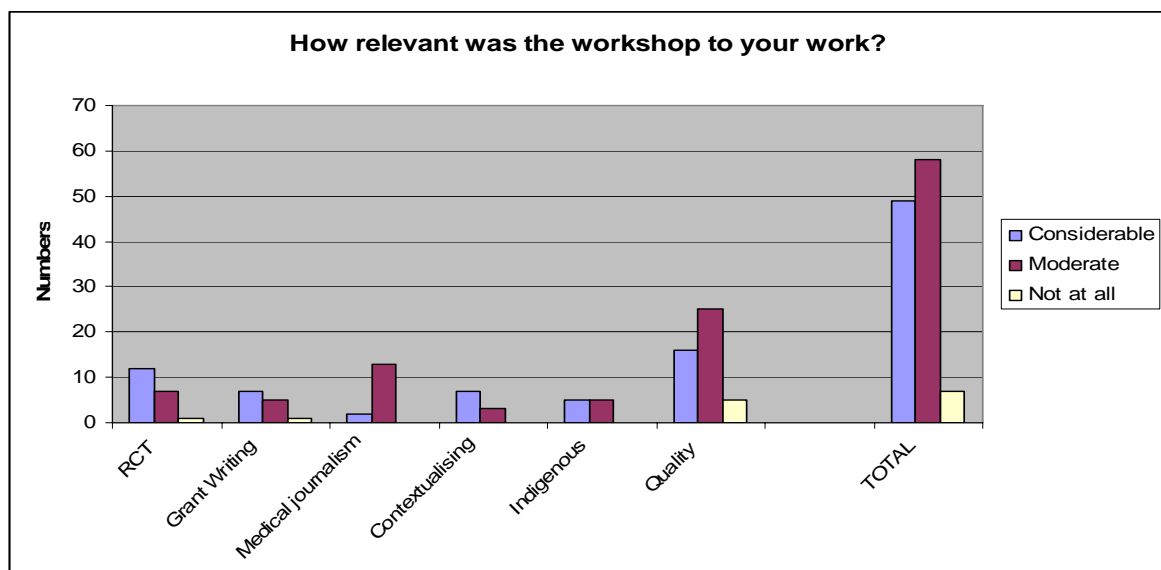
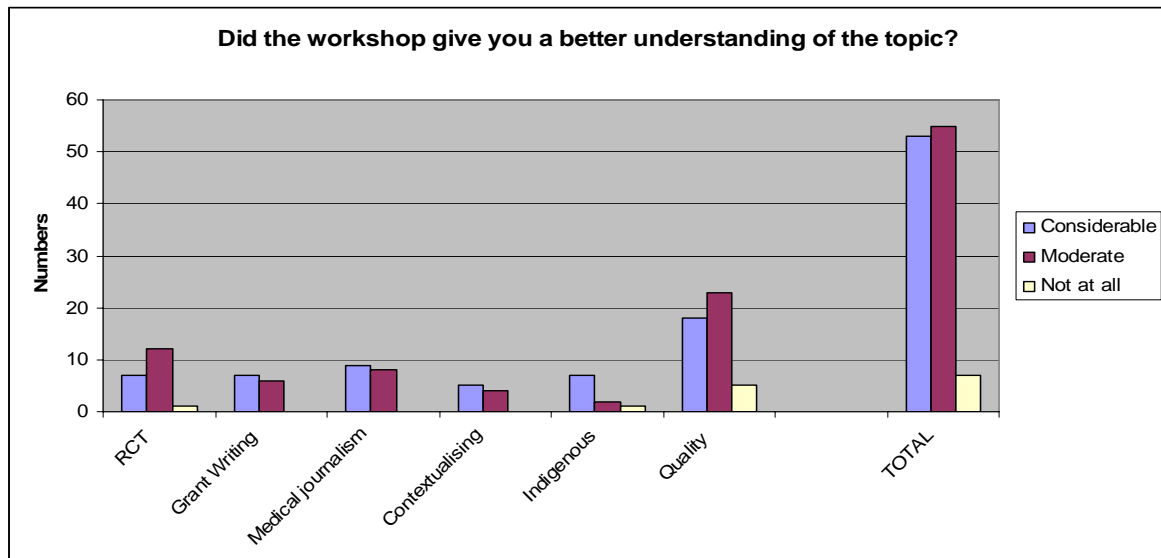
### What did you hope to gain?

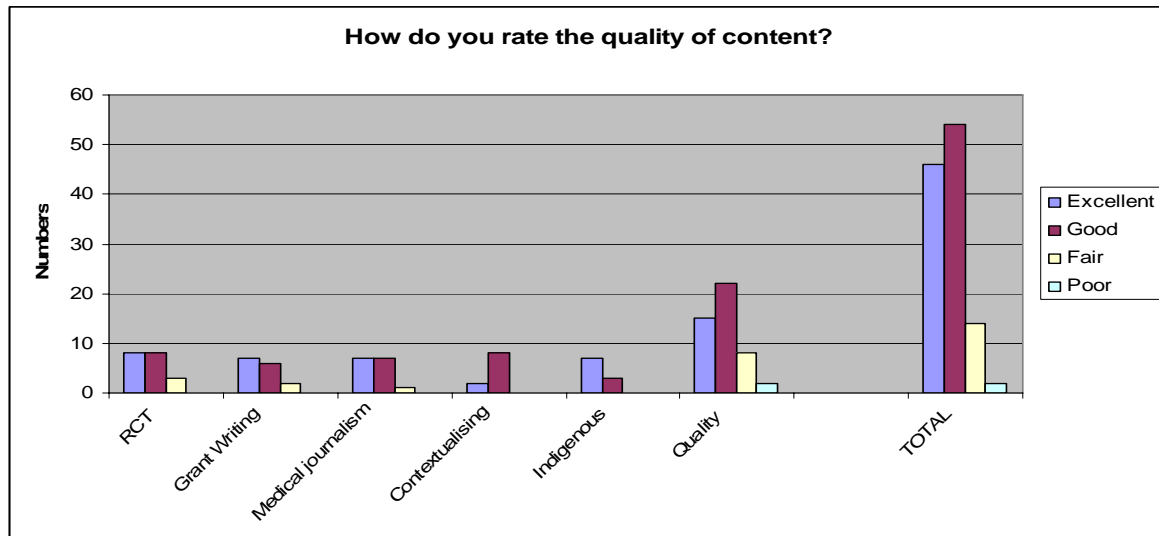
By far the most common reason given for attending a workshop was to gain skills in the area (n=42). Respondents also wanted to gain insight into issues surrounding the area of interest (n=29). Others were looking for inspiration in the area (n=8), seeking to deepen their interest in the frameworks and theories of the subject area, seeking networking opportunities in the area (n=5) or had an interest in the speakers presenting (n=2).

The workshops met the expectations of 64 people and 40 had their expectations partially met. Only four people were disappointed.

### Quality and relevance

One hundred and eighteen of the 115 respondents rated the workshops as giving them a moderately or considerably better understanding of the topic. The same number believed that the workshop was considerably or moderately relevant to their work. The quality of content was rated as Excellent by 46 respondents, good by 54, fair by 14 and poor by only two.





### What aspect of the workshop was most useful and why?

There was hearty endorsement of the format of discussing case studies, practical examples and exercises or working through the issues in small groups followed by general discussion. Thirty people gave comments to this question endorsing this format. However respondents also considered there needs to be a balance between small group and large group work, between theory and its application and between use of real examples and hypotheticals.

Participants' comments showed they appreciated the discussion, interaction and audience involvement and the resulting pooled ideas and diversity of opinion.

*The "opportunity to discuss issues with a wide range of people also made me realise how much we think in health silos and how important it is to engage a broader audience. I'm not sure if that was the aim of the workshop!"*

### What aspects of the workshop were least useful and why?

Presenters need to take into account the professional groups attending the workshop and where they work. One workshop presented clinical GP examples to an audience of academics and researchers from universities and this was not seen as successful.

There needs to be a balance between an interactive format and structure as some discussion can go off on a tangent or can be dominated by individuals. Similarly, the interactive format needs to be balanced by an introductory section of just the right length and the depth of analysis needs to be neither too deep and complex, nor too superficial.

### What aspect of their work do participants intend to change as a result of attending the workshop?

Most responses to this question indicated that participants were eager to apply their new learning and gave examples specific to the workshop they attended. There were also a number of respondents who will use their expanded knowledge of an area to target new research activities or intend to deepen their knowledge in a new area by following up references.



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### Workshop format

Most people enjoyed the interaction and the balance between small group and large group work and the balance between theory and practice. Although this was the dominant perspective it was not universal and the need for strong leadership, some structure and 'crowd control' was recognised.

A number of people observed they had difficulty hearing and seeing visual aspects of the presentation in the large rooms. Catering, particularly access to water on the tables, was mentioned by a few as lacking.

Handouts were missed by a number of people at some sessions.

### Suggestions for running a workshop

A summary of suggestions and comments received provides a picture of what people find useful and effective in a workshop.

- ⇒ Keep the numbers to a manageable level. Seating arrangement should not be too open. Ensure that people can hear and see.
- ⇒ Keep the scope of the presentation appropriate to the time available and keep to time.
- ⇒ Provide learning objectives at the start.
- ⇒ If numbers permit, have participants introduce themselves.
- ⇒ Have water available and accessible.
- ⇒ Start with keynote addresses or an introduction. Have more than one presenter so as to bring different perspectives to the discussion. However this section should not be so long as to restrict the opportunity for group work and discussion.
- ⇒ Have the presentation focus tailored to the professional groups in the audience. The GP & PHC Conference is primarily composed of an academic audience with most coming from universities. Practitioners are in a minority.
- ⇒ A balance between structure and freedom to interact is required. Provide plenty of opportunity for interaction and group discussion. Encourage exchange of points of view but set limitations, prevent the discussion heading off on a tangent and prevent individuals dominating the session.
- ⇒ Provide a balance of small group discussion and full group work. During small group sessions provide good examples from real life for discussion, rather than hypotheticals, or ask participants to provide real life examples for discussion.
- ⇒ After group discussions the presenter needs to summarise the issues. Tease out the issues in a participatory way. Be interesting and knowledgeable. Be inclusive. Present the issues around the topic. Have a balance between theory and practicalities. Provide hints and tips.
- ⇒ Provide references for further reading. Provide handouts, and printouts of Powerpoint slides.





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### More quotations...

*“Enjoyed fully. Loved the approach/style of speaker. Not a them-and-us focus- collaboration. As non Indigenous I did not feel excluded or the cause of any problems.”*

*“Workshop was very thought provoking and certainly adds to my continued learning as a non Aboriginal person.”*

*“Areas of research to investigate”.*

*“The mix of small group discussion and interaction with facilitator was a good idea- it was engaging for some participants”.*

*“Excellent, thought provoking. Good format.”*

*“Presenter was interesting and well informed on the topic. I would have found a structured session more useful”.*

*“Hearing about ethical issues, hearing others point of view and perspectives based on their own experience, to help me to think about these points in the future.”*

*“Clearer applications, more attention to funder’s requirements, more precision in grants.”*

*“I just wanted to hear the presenters speak on a topic of great interest to me.”*

*“V good lots of brainstorming, audience felt very involved.”*

*“Very truthful and level headed responses to our own often poorly informed questions.”*

*“The interactive process- generated lots of mind provoking questions.”*

*“The interactiveness was as a result of a lot of free flowing discussion. However this free flow also resulted in some discussion going out on tangent.”*

