

Victorian Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation & Development (PHC RED) Partnership
Funded by the Department of Health and Ageing

BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY
IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Building Research Capacity with PHC RED Fellowships – Impacts & Outcomes

MONASH University
Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences

THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

The Vic PHCRED Fellowship Program

- ✓ Enable GPs and other primary care practitioners to gain a better understanding, and undertake and use research findings
- ✓ Intended for those wanting to develop their research skills in a supportive environment

Year	Submissions	Awarded
2002	19	7
2003	20	6
2004	23	10

Overview	Department	Monash (DGP), Melbourne (DGP), & Rural Health (UoM)
	Tenure	9-12 months (3mth probation)
	Selection Process	Competitive
	Resources	On-site desk space, computer access, email, library access, Education Program
	Allocated supervisor	Regular meetings with PHC RED Coordinator, supervision by appropriate academic & immersion in academic environment
Expectations	1 day/week @ department, do a literature search, write/ present a research paper(s), or develop high standard research proposal	

Different Funding Schemes 2002 – 2004 (all at 0.2 fraction)

Year	Source
2002	7 from PHCRED departments
2003	2 from PHCRED departments, 4 from Dept of Human Services (DHS)
2004	10 Researcher Development Program (RDP), 1 from DHS

Impact – what have they learnt?

- ❑ The rudimentaries of doing research
- ❑ The nature of research – it's not a one-day per week experience, it can be a slow extended process (ethics applications can take a long time)
- ❑ Researchers have to be very organised with their time/workload
- ❑ It's difficult deciding where the balance lies between doing research and managing one's other roles
- ❑ It's virtually impossible to obtain funding beyond the Fellowship
- ❑ Fellows are interested in furthering their research skills & being part of research projects

Where are the 2002/03 Fellows?

- ❖ 1 obtained a \$30,000 grant to continue her research
- ❖ 1 is working as a research assistant in a PHCRED department
- ❖ 2 are writing up their research for publication
- ❖ 2 are in the process of collecting their data (2003 Fellows)
- ❖ A few have taken on honorary status with their departments, and continue to work on their research while seeking further funding
- ❖ At least four are exploring other research fellowship opportunities and funding
- ❖ 1 discontinued due to family circumstance
- ❖ 2 have finished and won't continue but have benefited greatly from their Fellowship year.

Impact – what have we learnt?

- ❑ It's been an excellent collaborative opportunity for the two Departments of General Practice.
- ❑ Fellowships are a great way to build research capacity – our key PHCRED objective
- ❑ It has been an opportunity to link up with other stakeholders like DHS and Divisions in sponsoring or supporting these Fellowships
- ❑ Our Fellows are a group of people in the primary care workforce who actually have a handle on research in a more comprehensive way

What we learnt(contd)

- ❑ It takes time to build and nurture this growth, with each Fellow requiring a different level of academic support
- ❑ Infrastructural support for RDP Fellows is a cost borne by the departments
- ❑ Fellows require some level of "middle-funding" support to bring them up to a level of being able to be successful in acquiring more competitive grants
- ❑ There is no agreed point of view on whether a day per week is the most effective model – a) it is what most novice researchers are willing to offer, but b) even Fellows agree that after the experience, they are aware that it is just not enough time to carry out research properly

Collaborative Links

- GPs and other primary care workers have had a chance to be introduced to doing research
- A combined effort between PHCRED and Divisions, and other primary care organisations
- An inter-university initiative with all three partners collaborating – joint advertising and selection process

Sustainability

