

# Emerging Research Workshop

by Belinda O'Sullivan, Monash University, B. Physio (Hons), MPH (Hons), Grad Dip App Epi (NSW Health) PhD Candidate (MABEL)



In late July, the Health Services Research Association of Australia and New Zealand hosted a one-day workshop for early career researchers and supervisors, held at the University of Melbourne. The workshop enabled small group interaction between highly experienced health service researchers and Association members at an earlier stage of their research career. The commitment of the Association to investing and developing its research community was very evident across the activities of the day, speaking as someone who is new to the Association.

It was my first experience of the novel approach where students or post-doctoral fellows present papers followed by detailed feedback from senior health service researchers. Being half-way through my PhD, this format provided really valuable insight not only into the conduct but also into the communication of research, highlighting the need to provide adequate background, justify study measures, explain results, acknowledge limitations and their effects and ensure policy and practice implications are carefully thought through. The format really helped me understand the sorts of issues reviewers are likely to raise which I think will undoubtedly help me critique my own work better, prior to journal submission. Reviewers very sensitively guided authors across the key aspects that might help strengthen their work whilst being very encouraging. What I noticed is that they had read widely, such that they were able to place the work in a much broader context, always a challenge for early

career researchers! The presenters are to be congratulated for putting their work out there for everyone to benefit. I imagine the feedback they received will really help to shape their work. The day ended with a round table session which provided a unique opportunity to hear tips from the experts Jane Hall, Professor of Health Economics in the UTS Business School, and Terri Jackson, Principal Research Fellow at the Northern Clinical Research Centre of the University of Melbourne and Northern Health in Melbourne () about career pathways, from their own experience. For me, this was a call to action, as it was clear that one needed to be not only extremely dedicated but also well prepared to make a research career happen following a PhD. The typical pathway was outlined but we were urged to place the typical career trajectory into the context of our own lives and interest areas. It came through that collaboration with policy makers and other researchers are important at all stages of career. It was insightful to discuss the benefits of overseas post-doctoral opportunities against local avenues that can be equally broadening, such as the Fellowship with HSRAANZ, a one year program which increases exposure to the Australian healthcare system to broaden perspectives concerning policy-relevant research and research translation. The first step post PhD though, is to get a job, as the Australian Fellowship has no dedicated funding at this stage.

It is unusual to gain such direct access to leaders in the field and I think this experience has really consolidated my concepts about academic career pathways. It has inspired me to not only to complete my PhD, but also to package my learning across clinical, policy and research settings to open doors in the future.

The presentations were:

**“Integrating Problem Solving Therapy in a low vision rehabilitation setting: A pilot study exploring feasibility, acceptability and client outcomes”**

**Presenter** – Edith Holloway, PhD Candidate, Research Assistant, Centre for Eye Research Australia

**Discussant** - Cathy Mihalopoulos, Associate Professor in Health Economics at Deakin University

**“A mixed method multidisciplinary service improvement project in the early detection of delirium at Toowoomba Hospital. “**

**Presenter** – Heather Hoey, RN/Nurse Researcher, Critical Care Ward, Toowoomba **Discussant** – Terri Jackson, principal research fellow at the Northern Clinical Research Centre of the University of Melbourne and Northern Health in Melbourne.

**“The association of patient-assessed chronic illness care with glycaemic control is modulated through patient activation in type 2 diabetes”**

**Presenter** – Eindra Aung, PhD Scholar, School of Population Health, University of Queensland

**Discussant** – Grant Russell, Head of School of Primary Health Care, Monash University, Director of the Southern Academic Primary Care Research Unit (SAPCRU) and Professor of General Practice Research.

**“Creating a culture of cost-effectiveness in Australian health services”**

**Presenter** – Elizabeth Martin, PhD Candidate/Research Assistant, The Centre of Research Excellence in Reducing Healthcare Associated Infections

**Discussant** - Jane Hall, Professor of Health Economics, UTS