

Beyond academia:

Whose responsibility is it to translate research to optimise its value to society?



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NHMRC CENTRE OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE
Stroke Rehabilitation and Brain Recovery

In partnership with our Community



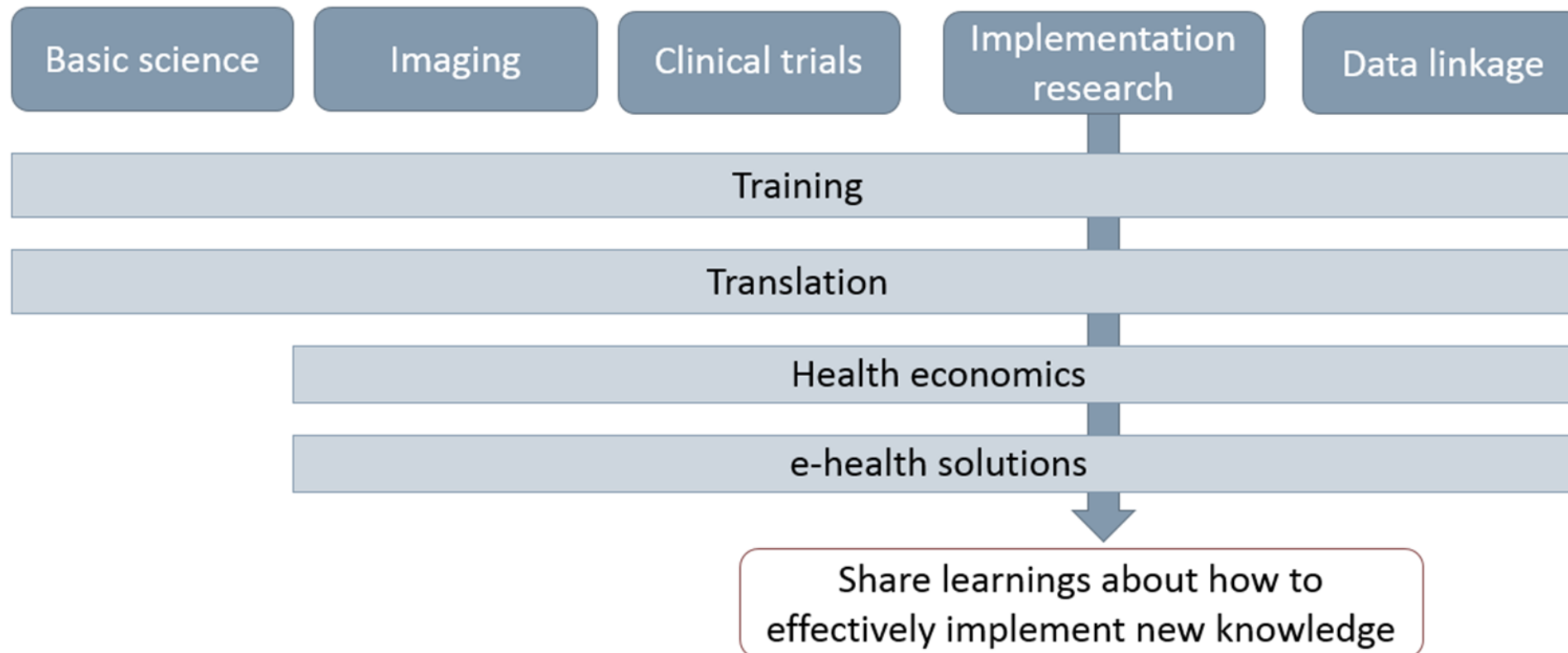
Health
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HMRI
Hunter Medical Research Institute

NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence (CRE) in Stroke Rehabilitation & Brain Recovery (2015-19)

Mission: to pursue collaborative translational research & build capacity
86 researchers associates, broad network of affiliates



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What does translation look like for different researchers?
- How important is research translation?
- Who do researchers feel should be responsible for research translation?
- Do researchers feel they have the skills and knowledge to translate their research?

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Summary of Methods

Paper Survey

- Convenience sample of stroke researchers (n=55)
- Demographic data & agreement with statements (tick boxes & Likert scales)

Interviews

- Participants purposively selected to represent breadth of research within CRE and seniority (n=22)
- Data thematically analysed

Side-by-side comparison

Further analysis through comparing consistency and meaning of responses



Descriptions of research translation

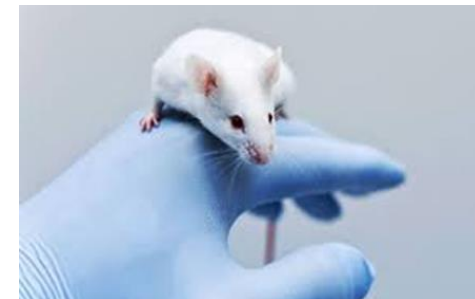
❖ Translating to other research

e.g.

- Between animal and human models
- Providing imaging or other physiological data to help identify clinical signs of stroke and recovery
- Developing clinical interventions more rigorously following trial

❖ Translating to clinical practice and policy

“I think part of [research translation] is to move forward...to say [to other research groups] ‘here’s an idea... Could this be a value add?’”



Importance of research translation

- ❖ Almost all survey participants agreed translation was important (n=54, 98%)
- ❖ Translation was seen as a precursor to impact
- ❖ Impact was measured by:
 - Incorporation into clinical guidelines (n=44, 80%)
 - Number of clinicians using research (n=42, 76%)
 - Number of academic publications (n=40, 74%)

“When you're setting up a study...if it's not going to change clinical practice ... should you be doing it? If it's working toward another study that's going to change clinical practice that's acceptable, but it has to have that aim in mind”



Importance of translation (continued)

- ❖ Most common sign of project completion 80% = published a peer-reviewed publication, 60% = incorporated into guidelines or practice and 11% = research money ran out
- ❖ Translation not consistently conducted and seen as a lower priority than conducting new research



“Translation needs to be undertaken by others otherwise the research team is not going to do any more research”

“Often...the funding runs out, the papers will get written... but then there’s very little [translation activity], you’re already moving on to the next thing because you have to”

Responsibility for research translation

- ❖ 75% of researchers agreed it was their responsibility, 60% = clinicians; 32% = someone else on the team
- ❖ Marked disagreement regarding who should be responsible for translation to clinical practice

“I honestly think...because we are leading the research...it is the researcher’s responsibility”



Responsibility for translation to clinical practice

"I think the [state bodies] have got some responsibility... and the Stroke Foundation - to run it from a national level"

"I actually do think it's everyone's responsibility, but that's not to say I'm going to do implementation..."

"[Clinicians] should be looking at the literature, and the key opinion leaders in that area should be working out how they can improve their practice"

"It should be a co-responsibility between the researchers and the clinical setting"

'It's the responsibility of the team that does the research ...but they're not going to be able to do it all themselves because that's another whole science, translating it properly. But they need to initiate the process and that might be to engage a team of people to do it'

Skills & resources

- ❖ 65% of researchers believe they do not have the skills to translate their research
- ❖ 70% believe that every research team should include a researcher with expertise in translation
- ❖ 98% reported that they do not have adequate funding to support translation of their research
- ❖ Able to translate to other research (publishing and presenting results) but not confident translating research to clinical practice or policy

"[Research translation] is not really where my skill sets lie"

"Implementation is such a complex area, it's naive of me to say I can do that. It needs implementation experts involved in that..."

Summary (Responsibility for research translation)

- ❖ Neither clinicians nor researchers have a clear mandate to drive translation to clinical practice or policy
- ❖ Researchers busy conducting research – lack of skills, knowledge, funding, confidence, and networks to coordinate translation to clinical practice
- ❖ Clinicians busy providing clinical care – inadequate time to keep abreast of literature or to coordinate how to implement research evidence



Whose role???



Summary (Importance and skills)

- ❖ Awareness of the growing need for all researchers to demonstrate **impact** ¹
- ❖ Awareness that translation is necessary for impact, BUT
- ❖ Attitudes, skills and actions not fully aligned to maximise translation

“the demonstrable effect from...research...that ultimately improves healthcare delivery, human health and quality of life”¹



Conclusion

Issue 1

Inconsistency about responsibility for translation

Recommendations

- ❖ Recognise & incentivise research translation and generation of impact in academia
- ❖ That the concept of translation is broadened to incorporate translational activities all along the research pipeline
- ❖ Develop structures to encourage co-production between researchers and end users upfront
- ❖ Partnerships via clinical stipends for clinicians to work on a research project
- ❖ Offer “researcher in residence programs” (embed researchers in health services & policy organisations);



Conclusion

Issue 2

Lack of skills and resources to translate research.

Recommendations

- ❖ Encourage research funders to dedicate resources for research translation;
- ❖ Provide practical workshops and training sessions;
- ❖ Identify, adapt and promote research translation templates
- ❖ Promote the application of impact assessment frameworks
- ❖ Create translation positions within academia
- ❖ Incorporate research translation and impact into all undergraduate and post-graduate research courses;



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