

# **Transdisciplinary practice: how can allied health identify and shape the potential and limitations?**

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## **Background:**

Transdisciplinary practice extends clinicians to practice beyond the scope of their traditional professional boundaries. Transdisciplinary practice is identified as an alternative model of healthcare delivery with the potential to address future healthcare demand, and is predicted to increase in prevalence.

Despite the imminent uptake of transdisciplinary roles, it remains mostly unfamiliar territory to allied health clinicians. There is limited internal discourse within allied health, at both the individual clinician and professional body level. When coupled with restricted dialogue with external bodies advocating for transdisciplinary practice, allied health's input as a key stakeholder in healthcare reform is limited.

This presentation aims to describe the potential benefits and limitations of transdisciplinary practice, and identify potential strategies to encourage discourse and maximise outcomes for allied health.

## **Methods:**

This presentation is based upon the experience of the author working as a transdisciplinary allied health clinician in a metropolitan health service, combined with debate in the transdisciplinary healthcare literature. Current and potential benefits and challenges of transdisciplinary practice for consideration will be drawn from both sources.

## **Results:**

The potential and challenges of transdisciplinary practice will be presented under the following themes: education and training methods, responsibilities and standards; defining scope of practice; determining who should and could undertake transdisciplinary roles; equity of role release and uptake; degree of power and influence of healthcare, economic and other stakeholders, and the concordance between stakeholder input and priorities.

## **Discussion:**

There is a clear impetus for allied health to pursue advocacy and engagement in the development and shaping of transdisciplinary roles. Widely embracing and augmenting the positives, and proactive identification and management of the challenges will ensure transdisciplinary practice achieves its inherent potential to transform healthcare, whilst meeting allied health's needs.