

Not enough time for research? The use of a supported short-term clinical backfill initiative in promoting local research capacity of allied health professionals

Wenke, R¹, Mahoney, J¹, Mickan, S^{1,2}

1 Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service, 1 Hospital Boulevard, Southport, Qld, 4215, rachel.wenke@health.qld.gov.au

2 School of Allied Health Sciences, Griffith University, Southport Qld 4215,

Background: Building research capacity of primary health care allied health professionals (AHPs) is currently a priority for healthcare services at a national and international level. Within the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service (GCHHS), a recent service evaluation of research capacity revealed that lack of clinician time had the most significant impact on AHP's ability to undertake research.

Methods: The current paper will describe the feasibility of a short-term clinical backfill initiative that provided funding for AHPs to undertake research activity within work time in order to promote research output and individual research capacity within the GCHHS. Nine AHPs (n=9) from five different professions participated in the backfill initiative, with data being collected within a service improvement framework. Following an initial EOI process, successful clinicians received up to four weeks of protected time to undertake research activities including manuscript write up, data analysis and preparation of ethics applications. Additional support and mentorship, including the development of an implementation plan was provided from an Allied Health Research Fellow. Evaluation included pre-post measures of individual research capacity using a 15-item self-report Research Capacity in Culture (RCC) survey, a post implementation satisfaction survey, and monitoring of research outputs achieved.

Results: Preliminary analyses demonstrated meaningful improvements on a number of items of the RCC, including self-report of increased confidence in areas not directly targeted within the backfill period. Overall satisfaction with the initiative was extremely high, with positive comments from AHPs regarding the initiative. Research outputs arising from the initiative will also be presented.

Discussion: The preliminary findings support the feasibility of implementing a local clinical backfill funding model to promote individual research capacity and research output in AHPs. The short-term funding should be supported by local mentorship and guidance. Local barriers to implementation including finding of suitable clinical backfill will also be described.