

Recording Excellence in Primary Care Practice

In this issue of the *Australian Journal of Primary Health* we publish papers that reflect the diverse approaches to knowledge characteristic of primary health care. There are articles on policy and management at the system level (for example, Primary health care research and evaluation development strategy in the Northern Territory), critical reviews of programs and community activities (for example, Motor racing in Australia: Health damaging or health promoting), and the community experiences of health and health services (for example, Communication and control in the co-construction of depression ...). The range of research valued in primary care is reflected in these articles.

Knowledge in primary care is created by practitioners reflecting on and reviewing practice, as much as it is the product of formal research. In the Community Health Live and Professional Practice sections of this Journal we publish papers that articulate clearly the experience and learning of primary care practitioners, and their community partners, in the health project. The paper, 'On you feet, on your back' describes an innovative community outreach project to identify and meet health needs of street workers in Melbourne. The paper, 'Racism and injustice ...' provides an account of the experiences of young Indigenous women attending licensed premises in Adelaide. Andrews provides an account of a particular strategy for integrating health promotion into routine service provision in primary health care, and Black and Buckley describe an approach to consistency in priority setting in HACC services.

The *Australian Journal of Primary Health* is committed to publishing both research articles and

practice papers. We are keen to encourage and support practitioners to systematically record and publish innovative work in primary health care. The Journal is a means of disseminating innovative practice and maintaining records of it for the future. How often have we muttered to ourselves 'Once upon a time there was a project that achieved what we are trying to do. I wonder if anyone can remember it!' The *Australian Journal of Primary Health* is a far better archive than memory for recording diverse and complex practice.

Research articles and practice papers are similar and different. Both need to be carefully and systematically written in a style, and with a structure, that is accessible to readers and builds upon existing knowledge. They differ in scale and depth. Learmonth (2000, p. 744) describes the difference I am referring to in her discussion of research and practice in health promotion. Research is larger in scale and more academically rigorous. It is focussed on new knowledge, is more structured and generalisable, is resource intensive and may involve support from specialists outside the practice context. Practice papers, which Learmonth describes as evaluation, are smaller in scale with narrower questions and a focus on process and early effects of interventions. The projects are a part of practice, require fewer resources, and are less likely to need external assistance to complete. The knowledge contained in practice papers is not as deep or academically rigorous as that in research articles, but it is more immediately relevant to other practitioners grappling with similar issues. Primary health care requires both kinds of knowledge.

Rae Walker and Hal Swerissen
Editors

Reference

- Learmonth, A. M. (2000). Utilizing research in practice and generating evidence from practice. *Health Education Research* 15(6):743-756.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Special Issue

Australian Journal of Primary Health

The Management of Chronic Disease in Primary Care Settings

Volume 9, Number 2, 2003

The Australian Journal of Primary Health is planning a special edition for its second issue in 2003. The special issue will focus on current policy, practice, and research issues in the management of chronic disease in primary care settings.

Papers with a focus on the implementation and effectiveness of chronic disease self-management programs are particularly encouraged.