Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development Program
What is PHCREDS?

Menzies Research Institute (MRI) and the University Department of Rural Health (UDRH), University of Tasmania, are funded under the Research Capacity Building Initiative of the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation & Development Strategy (PHCREDS) to build research capacity in primary health care.

In building research capacity, the strategy offers opportunities for research training, support and experience spanning the full research development continuum primarily targeting early and mid-career researchers. A related PHCREDS objective is forming strategic partnerships with other organisations (both government and non-government) to further enhance primary health care research capacity.

Major components of the strategy include:

• The Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI): tasked with providing leadership in primary health care research;
• The Research Capacity Building Initiative (RCBI): funding University Departments of General Practice and Rural Health to provide training and support in primary health care research for early career researchers;
• The Primary Health Care Research and Information Service (PHCRIS): providing support in the area of dissemination and knowledge exchange.

The Menzies Research Institute (MRI) and the University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) are the Tasmanian PHCREDS partners. MRI and UDRH both employ a Program Coordinator, who is largely responsible for developing and delivering the academic component of the program. There is also a State-wide Coordinator, which is a joint appointment with the UDRH and the MRI, who manages state-wide activities, communications and marketing, and strategic relationships with stakeholders.

Why develop your research skills?

The first step in understanding the research process is learning the basic tools of research. Once you have an understanding of these tools, you can then move on to consider the other issues involved in undertaking research. These include personal (have I got the time and/or commitment to do this?), practical (have I got the necessary resources to undertake this research?) and theoretical and methodological issues (what is the framework of my research?).

PHCREDS can help provide the skills and support to launch YOUR research career. Developing research skills provides the opportunity for primary health care (PHC) practitioners to make a valuable contribution to evidence-based knowledge.

Research Training can help you develop:

• skills and knowledge to share within your profession and the wider community;
• the capacity to support and teach others.

Becoming a researcher also offers practitioners the opportunity to:

• conduct original and independent research;
• contribute to knowledge, and thus to policy and practice;
• apply existing skills and knowledge to new problems;
• develop an appreciation of local, national and global issues relating to professional research and practice.
PHCRED is a capacity building program which focuses on building research capacity within the primary health care setting. The PHCRED strategy does not directly fund research projects; rather it aims to increase the pool of primary health care researchers by up-skilling early and/or mid-career researchers and supporting them to undertake high quality research.

**Education and Training:**
MRI and UDRH offer general practitioners and other PHC practitioners research opportunities including research mentoring and supervision, as well as a range of short courses.

MRI and UDRH offer a variety of research training opportunities relevant to the needs of the stakeholders in their local region. PHCRED partners support organisations, such as the General Practice Network, General Practice Training Tasmania and the Department of Health and Human Services to promote and develop research capacity. This includes assistance or advice relating to research or evaluation design, project management and grant writing.

**Funding opportunities:**
PHCRED Tasmania offers a selection of fellowships, bursaries and opportunities aimed at financially supporting PHC practitioners undertaking research activities. All funding opportunities are available to support GPs and PHC practitioners through their transition into research.

PHCRED Tasmania offers travel grants each year, as well as scholarships to individuals commencing an Honours degree within the area of primary health care. There are also other scholarships which are offered on a year-to-year basis, sponsored by local organisations and government bodies.

Contact PHCRED Tasmania for more information regarding education and training, and funding opportunities currently available in your local region.

**Research mentoring and supervision:**
Academics are available within the Tasmanian PHCRED team to provide research mentoring and supervision for early to mid-career level GP and PHC researchers. Being mentored ensures you have access to academics that are able to spend time providing reassurance, constructive reflection and honest feedback on your work. PHCRED Tasmania has the capacity to provide both formal and informal mentoring to entry level PHC researchers. Informal mentoring is restricted to one-off help for a single research issue, whilst formal mentoring provides ongoing assistance to see a project through to completion.

Making the decision to undertake further study or research can be daunting. Our mentors are accessible, helpful academics who can provide constructive and honest feedback in a safe and supported environment.

To access mentoring and supervision for your research project, contact the State-wide Coordinator who will provide you with advice on how to access the expertise relevant to your area of study.

**What does PHCRED offer?**

Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development Program
Workshop Program
Each year PHCREH runs a number of Research Skills training workshops aimed primarily at PHC practitioners engaged in, or committed to embarking on research or evaluation activities within their professional practice.

The annual workshop program covers the major steps in the research and evaluation process, and may include in any year:

- Designing a research project: research questions and methodologies;
- Data Collection tools: surveys, focus groups and interviews;
- Introductory data analysis;
- Intermediate qualitative research;
- Intermediate quantitative research;
- Writing skills;
- Conducting rigorous evaluations.

There is no charge to participants for attending workshops. Funding for each workshop is provided by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing under the PHCREH program.

Workshops and training are intended to meet the learning needs of PHC practitioners, so let us know how we can assist you!

Research Development Program (RDP)
Each year PHCREH funds the appointment of four part-time fellowships to PHC practitioners under the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing Researcher Development Program (RDP). The RDP is primarily aimed at PHC practitioners who are either research novices or early career researchers; have a special interest in developing research skills; and who possess a special interest in contributing to the primary health care evidence base.

The primary aim of the RDP is to increase the number and range of people with knowledge and skills in primary health care evaluation and research. RDP aims to enhance research capacity amongst PHC practitioners, consumers and graduates of other relevant disciplines working in primary health care by providing financial support to undertake primary health care research and access to existing research capacity/infrastructure support. Supervision, mentorship, regular research meetings and training are part of the research capacity building program offered to RDP Fellows and Scholars.

A Call for Applications is made in October or November of each year, and successful applicants start in early February to undertake research projects part-time over 9 to 12 months during that calendar year.

“I had great support and encouragement from all staff, academic and administrative, during my RDP fellowship. My RDP experience was TOTALLY brilliant and I got so enthused that I have applied to start a research Masters. My small research study has led me on to other areas, including now working as a research nurse at the Menzies Research Institute which I can honestly say I love, warts and all! As they say from little things, mighty things do grow…”

– 2006 RDP fellow
PHCREDS

PHCREDS Tasmania

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