



e-newsletter

The latest in DHBRF news and information

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Research Theme Health Services Management

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1. Introduction

Of integral concern to the DHBs of New Zealand is **health services management**. Evaluation of management services is essential to validate all processes at the administration level, ensuring the best value for money, speed in processing and fairness of care.

The definition for **health services research** that appears in the HRC guidelines for

applicants is:

“Health services research is research that contributes to the better health of the population through the evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the provision, organisation and delivery of health care and the study of health needs. Research based on the analysis of data from secondary sources of health information is also included.”

While the description of the HRC Health and Disability Sector Management and Services Research Portfolio strategy says:

“Research in the portfolio is concerned with the planning, management, organisation, workforce, financing, purchasing and provision of health and disability services. It aims to improve the health and independence of individuals and populations through research into the most effective and efficient ways of providing health care and of delivering disability services. This includes the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of services and equity of access to these services. It does not include clinical trials of new and existing treatments or the development of new technologies, except technology assessment in relation to existing services.”

In this issue of the DHBRF enews an article has been contributed by Dr Gary Jackson, Manager Clinical Planning Counties Manukau District Health Board and Governance Group member. An expert in public health medicine with a keen interest in evidence-based health care management, Dr Jackson writes about the priority of a research-supported health system, to enable relevant interventions and systems to be in place for specific populations.

Also included is a profile of research by Dr Amohia Boulton, a postdoctoral fellow in health services management research. Dr Boulton’s current programme builds upon her earlier research which highlighted some key areas of concern in terms of mental health services contracting, noting that high level policy does not always match the intention or practice of service delivery in the community.

In addition to these specific contributions, we have profiled the various Health Services Research centres around the country – many universities have groups specialising in this area. These groups research broad themes and offer extensive study options for people interested in furthering their qualifications in health services and health management. There are links to all their websites for more information.

Finally, there are publications to download from these research teams, as well as a list of recently published peer-reviewed journal articles by HRC funded researchers in this field.

Next month's DHBRF e-news is on the theme of **Improving Nutrition, Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Obesity**. Key priorities for the health of New Zealanders, of vital relevance to our health systems, and areas New Zealand researchers are excelling. Please email ahaggie@hrc.govt.nz if you have any contributions on this topic that may be of interest to newsletter readers.

2. Dr Gary Jackson on Health Services Management Research

Dr Gary Jackson is Manager Clinical Planning at Counties Manukau DHB and a member of the DHB Research Fund Governance Group. Gary trained in public health medicine and has been a specialist for over 15 years, including time spent working overseas. He has been at CMDHB (and its forerunners) since 1998 working in areas varying from health needs analysis to strategic planning to future health capacity planning and development. Gary has a particular interest in the generation, collection and analysis of information to support evidence-based health care management.



In this issue of the DHBRF e-news Gary Jackson highlights the importance of health services research to the New Zealand health system, and specifically the value of assessing the utility of healthcare interventions and their applicability to a local population. Health services research can evaluate how interventions fit within a whole system, and determine how to translate research findings into local actions – all with the aim of improving the health of our population.

Download Gary Jackson's full article [here](#).

3. Researcher Profile: Dr Amohia Boulton

Dr Amohia Boulton is a postdoctoral research fellow at Te Pūmanawa Hauora, the Research Centre for Māori Health and Development at Massey University. Amohia is a member of the HRC Māori Health Committee with extensive experience in the field. One of her current research focuses is a comparative analysis of the policy and contracting environment for indigenous health. Amohia was recently profiled in the [HRC Panui newsletter](#).



Recent research carried out by Dr Boulton examined performance measurements for Māori mental health providers. A publication resulting from this work is titled "**Taking account**

of culture: The contracting experience of Maori mental health providers” and the abstract can be [downloaded here](#).

4. Health Services Management at New Zealand Institutions: Research and Training

Health Services Research Centre School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington

The Health Services Research Centre (HSRC) is led by Director [Dr Jackie Cumming](#). The Centre’s work recognises that health care delivery in the 21st century faces enormous pressures, from ageing populations, changes in technology, and developments in political and social landscapes. The development of effective responses to these and the myriad of other challenges faced daily by sector decision makers, cannot happen other than by discerning, disciplined health services research and evidence gathering.



The Health Services Research Centre has a track record for synthesising evidence, and for producing high-quality primary research. They have an excellent knowledge of the sector’s history and a grasp of strategic context, to produce the relevant commentary advice the health sector requires.

Projects span the fields of Maori health, health system research and evaluation, priority setting research and evaluation, access research and evaluation and Pacific health. The Centre places high priority not only on undertaking research but also on disseminating the results in a readily accessible form to a variety of audiences.

The [HSRC website](#) contains more information about the staff, research themes and a public seminar series, while publications can be accessed [here](#).

Many of the HSRC staff are involved in teaching and coordinating [School of Government degrees and courses](#), which cover themes of public policy, public management and strategic studies, at undergraduate, postgraduate and post-experience levels.

Centre for Health Services Research and Policy School of Population Health, University of Auckland



The Centre for Health Services Research and Policy (CHSRP) is a multi-disciplinary research centre at the School of Population Health, University of Auckland, led by Acting Director [Associate Professor Toni Ashton](#). CHSRP undertakes research with a primary focus on the funding, provision, evaluation, organisation and management of health services; and the development and implementation of health policy. Their mission statement says:

“CHSRP aims to advance understanding of the structure, processes and effects of health services and health policy, with a view to the more effective management and delivery of services and a more efficient and equitable health system.”

Research areas are broad and include evaluation of health services and systems, analysis of specific policy issues, development of the conceptual and theoretical components which underlie health services and health policy research, analysis of health data, design and execution of health services and system studies, and design and implementation of health quality and service monitoring processes.

Recent research studies have included:

- A social network analysis of a DHB chronic care system.
- A system dynamics review and action plan for a DHB chronic care management program.
- Evaluation of ‘Let’s Beat Diabetes’
- Economic analysis of stroke treatment and rehabilitation
- Evaluation of a Healthy Housing programme
- Use of the public and private sectors for surgical procedures
- Comparative analysis of the funding and organisation of services for end stage renal failure

The [CHSRP website](#) contains further information, including details of [recent publications](#). Teaching by CHSRP staff is undertaken as part of the [School of Population Health degrees and courses](#), at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as through short courses designed for health professionals, managers and others working in the health sector.

Health Services Research and Evaluation Group Department of Management, University of Canterbury

The Department of Management at the University of Canterbury includes the Health Services Research and Evaluation Group (HSREG) under the direction of [Dr Terri Green](#). HSREG is an interdisciplinary research group in health services which works on both publicly-funded and contract research. The objectives of HSREG are:

- To undertake research into the effectiveness and efficiency of health services in New Zealand.
- To bring together interdisciplinary teams to undertake such research.
- To collaborate with similar research groups.

Current research projects include Costs and Quality of Life for people waiting for CABG (coronary artery bypass surgery), and the Economics of Colorectal Cancer Control. More information about the group can be found on the [HSREG website](#).

As part of the Department of Management, HSREG members are involved in teaching [management courses at the University of Canterbury](#). PhD and Masters supervision is also provided.

New Zealand Social Statistics Network and Social Statistics Research Group Department of Sociology, University of Auckland

The New Zealand Social Statistics Network (NZSSN) is based within the Social Statistics Research Group (SSRG), Department of Sociology, at the University of Auckland and is led by Director [Professor Peter Davis](#). The group will soon be formally constituted as a research centre:



The Centre of Methods and Policy Application in the Social Sciences (COMPASS).

The SSRG comprises a team of researchers with a wealth of experience and expertise in a range of disciplines and research methodologies, across social sciences, health and statistics. The group undertakes broad research including a number of health focused projects. Current projects include researching Primary Care in an Ageing Society (PCASO), and Improving Hospital Outcomes. Recently completed health services research investigated national primary medical care and hospital restructuring. The Mission of SSRG states:

“To undertake and facilitate social science research of international standing that is both theoretically informed and empirically grounded, utilises a wide range of research methodologies, and has relevance to social policy.”

NZSSN aims to assist in the development of quantitative social science research in the academic, government and private research sectors, and hosts research methods courses, seminar series' and workshops. Inaugural members of the network include senior staff from the Departments of Political Studies, Sociology and Statistics at the University of Auckland and Social Sciences at AUT.

Further information about seminars, workshops, and specific research projects can be

found on the [NZSSN/SSRG website](#). A list of recent publications can be found [here](#). The [2009 NZSSN Summer Programme](#) of short courses are currently under development.

Departments of Public Health and Primary Health Care & General Practice University of Otago, Wellington

Health services and health services management research is undertaken by a number of groups at the University of Otago, Wellington. [Professor Tony Dowell](#) is Head of the Department of Primary Health Care & General Practice, and [Professor Philippa Howden-Chapman](#) is Acting Head of the Department of Public Health. [Professor Peter Crampton](#) is Dean and Head of Campus.

The [Department of Primary Health Care & General Practice](#) carries out a wide range of primary care teaching and research. The department's areas of research include mental health in primary care, health services research, women's health and evidence based practice. The department contributes to undergraduate teaching, coordinates ethics and professional development across the School and has an active [postgraduate programme](#) for general practitioners and other primary care professionals.

Examples of [Health Services Research projects](#) include the cancer patient journey, evaluation of the secondary care prioritisation system for elective surgery, evaluation of primary mental health initiatives, utilisation of primary health care and clinical practice variation.

The [Department of Public Health](#) is distinctive in its breadth of academic disciplines, research interests, and its links with national and regional health agencies. Research areas include Maori health, health promotion and policy, health inequalities, housing and health research, and health services research. The department contributes to the undergraduate medical course, but the majority of its teaching is to public health [postgraduate](#) students.

[Health Services Research projects](#) cover a range of topics related to the organisation and funding of health systems, with a particular focus on primary care health systems research. Examples of research projects include studies of non-profit community-governed primary care, research into the development of new measures of community participation in governance, and together with the Department of Primary Health Care the development of national primary care performance indicators, and studies of primary care funding.

Recent publications from the [Department of Primary Health Care & General Practice](#) and the [Department of Public Health](#) can be found by clicking on these links, and visiting the sites for individual researchers.

5. Advance Notice: DHBRF Translational Research Initiative in Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes and Obesity

The next DHBRF research priority is to fund small-scale translational research projects with the objective of reducing the incidence or impact of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and/or obesity. Partnerships between DHBs and/or PHOs are central to these projects in which findings will be quickly disseminated through the Health Sector.

The research is being administered by the HRC through a modified application process, in which we hope to provide opportunities for DHBs and Primary Care Providers to undertake and lead translational research. With a funding pool of \$1.5 million we anticipate funding between ten and twenty projects.

The Request for Proposal, application forms and explanatory forms will be posted on the HRC web site in the near future. Individuals or organisations interested in undertaking small scale translational research within cardiovascular disease, diabetes and/or obesity are welcome to register their interest with Ms Katie Hart at the HRC on (09) 303 5081 or, khart@hrc.govt.nz. All registered parties will receive notification of the release of the Request for Proposal documentation.

6. "What is the State of Health Services Research In New Zealand?"

A recent article published by Dr Paul Brown and Associate Professor Toni Ashton in the New Zealand Medical Journal asks the question "What is the state of health services research in New Zealand?" Following the 2007 Health Services Research Conference and the DHBRF Workshop, a number of issues were highlighted regarding the practice of health services research, suggesting that while there is some good research currently being conducted, more needs to be done. The authors point out that there is a limited capacity in the public sector to conduct this work but barriers exist to commissioning academic and private researchers.

[Download](#) the article to read a discussion of suggested ways that we might better coordinate and conduct health services research in New Zealand in the future.

7. Recent Publications by New Zealand Researchers

New Zealand has an excellent track record in producing research results for presentation in international journals. Some recent Health Services Management and Health Services Research publications from HRC funded researchers that may be relevant to DHB core business have been highlighted for [download here](#).

8. Useful Links

Some websites of interest in the area of Health Services Management and Health Services Research include:

[Health Services Research Association of Australia and New Zealand](#)

[International Health Economics Association \(iHEA\)](#)

[Health Services Research Centre, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington](#)

[Centre for Health Services Research and Policy, School of Population Health, University of Auckland](#)

[Health Services Research and Evaluation Group, Department of Management, University of Canterbury](#)

[New Zealand Social Statistics Network and Social Statistics Research Group, Department of Sociology, University of Auckland](#)

Departments of [Public Health](#) and [Primary Health Care & General Practice](#), Wellington School of Medicine and Health Science, University of Otago

[National Health Committee](#)

[New Zealand Health Information Service](#)

[Health Services Consumer Research](#)

[INNOV'08 Weaving Innovation Into Health](#)

[Innovation Live: 12 November 2008, QEII Conference Centre, London](#)

Innovation Live, a ground-breaking event exploring what's new in the field of health innovation, is for anyone with an interest in transforming healthcare through the development of new services and innovative ways of working. The day will combine practical examples of where innovation has made a real difference, with the latest thinking on how to develop and encourage innovation at all levels.



9 . Next DHBRF e-newsletter:

The next issue of the DHBRF e-newsletter will focus on the theme of **Improving Nutrition, Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Obesity**. If you have a proposed newsletter item relevant to this theme please email ahaggie@hrc.govt.nz

10 . About the purpose of the DHBRF e-newsletter:

- Provide DHBs with information relevant to DHB core business i.e. funding and planning activities
- Identify research that could inform planning for public health services
- Identify less relevant research which may have more of a biomedical focus
- Monthly communications focus on one of the priority population health goals as outlined in the New Zealand Health Strategy
- Information is taken from an annual HRC report identifying publications produced by New Zealand research teams or funded by the HRC between May 2005 – June 2006

Information included represents highlights of findings of high-quality research, readily available at the time of writing

11 . Subscribe/unsubscribe

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12 . Contact Us:

To contact us telephone Aroha Haggie at the HRC on (09) 303 5207 or email: ahaggie@hrc.govt.nz



Check out the HRC's website on www.hrc.govt.nz