

The Five Weekend Research Program

A Facilitators Workshop


Hong Kong June 5, 2009

Workshop Program

Introduction

- ◆ **Weekend 1:** Seeking and refining a research question.
- ◆ **Weekend 2:** Literature searching, systematic reviews and quantitative methods.
- ◆ **Weekend 3:** Qualitative methods and designing your study.
- ◆ **Weekend 4:** Developing a proposal, ethics considerations, whether to seek a granting agency and budgeting.
- ◆ **Weekend 5:** Presenting your completed project proposal to your colleagues for final feed back.
- ◆ **Discussion\Conclusion**

The Discussion About Each Weekend

- ◆ An introduction to present the content and past experience with the module.
 - ◆ Break into groups of 2 to 5 persons to discuss problems or barriers anticipated in dealing with the proposed content in each setting.
 - ◆ Each group briefly reporting on identified problems.
 - ◆ The whole group discusses strategies to overcome problems
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Introduction

- ◆ Traditionally, research has not been viewed as an important part of clinical practice by family physicians.
- ◆ Family Medicine residents have tended to have a negative opinion about conducting any kind of research during their training.¹
- ◆ Deans of medical schools in the United States feel that Departments of Primary Care or Family Medicine are strong in teaching and very weak in the area of research².
- ◆ Ninety six percent of students graduating from Canadian Medical Schools state they would never consider family medicine as a career if they were interested in research³.

Introduction

- ◆ Over the past decade a number of strategies to address the perceived deficiency in family medicine research have been developed in different countries.⁴⁻⁸
- ◆ All of these strategies have been designed to build research capacity in academic departments of Family Medicine.
- ◆ The WONCA Working Group on Research and have adopted the policy that every family practice in the world should have development of new knowledge as part of the practice.⁹ The American Academy of Family Practice have adopted a similar policy for the US.¹⁰

Introduction

- ◆ How can these two extremes be reconciled?
- ◆ This is particularly important in South America where there is very little tradition of academic Family Medicine.
- ◆ Research capacity building in family practice is an important step to building the academic credibility of the discipline.^{10,11}
- ◆ You are here today to learn how you may participate in one strategy to address this issue of unleashing the power of research in primary care on your region or country.

Introduction

- ◆ We have developed and run 15 Five Weekend Programs in Ontario Canada over the past 7 years.
- ◆ Most of these programs were run by facilitators who participated in a similar one day workshop and then proceeded to successfully run 1 or two full 5 weekend programs.
- ◆ The objective of this session is to share with you the experience gained from this work with you and have you proceed to run as many of these programs as you can in your country or region.

Introduction

Requirements to Develop a Program

- ◆ Two facilitators are required. Their role is to lead sessions and provide support and guidance to participants. One should be an MD and the other an MD researcher or a researcher with research experience.
- ◆ A meeting place ideally with food and drinks available. It is important to establish all 5 dates at the first meeting.
- ◆ Support from an academic institution to provide librarians, statisticians, grant writers and other research skills that may be required.
- ◆ Funding. The cost is entirely dependent on the cost of facilitators time as well as facility and consulting costs. Often these are provided without cost.
- ◆ You need between 5 and 10 participants. 8 participants is the ideal number, 10 is maximum.

Introduction

- ◆ It is very important to create a supportive learning environment. This environment will lead to stimulating interest in research in practitioners, making practitioners better consumers of research information, have participants benefit from learning in a collegial group, benefit from intellectual stimulation.
- ◆ All our participants feel they are better clinicians as a result of the program.
- ◆ It is the Facilitators responsibility to create this comfortable learning environment.

Objectives for the Program

On completion of the program
the participant will have:

- ◆ A better appreciation of the benefits of research conducted in the context of family practice.
- ◆ Become more sophisticated as a consumer of research published broader medical literature and will be better able to critique the literature and determine it's relevance to their patients and the context in which they practice.
- ◆ Become more proficient in literature searching and be able to produce a systematic review related to their research question.
- ◆ A basic knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods and how to use them appropriately.
- ◆ Be comfortable presenting and discussing their work with colleagues.

Introduction

The format for each 2 day session

(weekends were used to minimize intrusion on clinical practice time)

- ◆ **Session 1:** ½ day Friday afternoon; Each participant is allowed 15-20 minutes to discuss what they have achieved in answering their research question during the two months since the last session. The group then provides suggestions for 15 min.
- ◆ **Session 2:** Full day Saturday. Participants receive the core instruction for that module. This is presented in discussion small group models. Individuals are encouraged to bring discussion about their own question into the forum.
- ◆ **Session 3:** Sunday morning, 2-3 hours; each participant is asked to develop a plan as to what they will do during the next 2 months. The plan needs to include time lines, resources needed and any other needs. Each participant is allowed 10 minutes to present their plan and receive feedback from colleagues.

Introduction

Questions

First Weekend

- ◆ The first weekend is 1 1/2 days as there is no feedback session.
- ◆ It is important that each individual introduces themselves, describes any research background they may have and also describes their practice and the environment they work in.
- ◆ It is important for the facilitator to set the stage for a relaxed and comfortable learning environment at this very first meeting.

First Weekend

Seeking and refining a research question

Each participant is asked to discuss their question and explain why they are **interested** in answering the question. He other participants should be encouraged to ask questions.

Almost every question is too broad or difficult to answer so the process of refining must begin with the very first discussion.

It is important to explain to each participant that refining a question is a difficult process and their question s likely to change several times through the program.

First Weekend

- ◆ The facilitators may decide to present a paper included in the facilitators hand book on refining a paper.
- ◆ There needs to be a discussion about access to internet and literature searching.
- ◆ If participants are unfamiliar with literature searching methods they should get some very basic instruction in doing a literature search.
- ◆ These instructions are in the facilitators package.
- ◆ The first assignment will be to find out what the literature says about answering their question.

First Weekend

- ◆ Each participant is asked to draw up a work plan to determine what they need to do to refine their question.
- ◆ How will they do their preliminary literature reviews?
- ◆ If access to the internet is difficult, a plan to do the literature search needs to be developed. All plans should have a timeline for completion and a list of resources required.
- ◆ Each participant will present their plan to the group for discussion and suggestions.

Small Group Discussion

- ◆ What problems and barriers do you see in completing the first module of the five weekend program?
- ◆ Can you identify ways of solving these problems that are likely to be successful.
- ◆ Will you need outside support to succeed in this module? If yes, where will you get the help?
- ◆ Please discuss with a group of others and have one individual give a brief report of your discussion.

First Weekend

Small Group Discussion

Feedback from Small Groups

Second Weekend

Literature searching, systematic reviews and quantitative methods.

First ½ day of feedback

All of the participants will spend 15-20 minutes describing what they learned about work found in the literature on their question and how they plan to modify their question as a result of their findings.

Facilitators should encourage a discussion about each project by all participants. Depending on the number in your group this process could take up to four hours.

Second Weekend

- ◆ The core content of this weekend is learning to do a careful literature search and what makes a good quality systematic review.
- ◆ In most cases we used a medical school based librarian. In some cases the University had a computer lab where each participant had their own computer and followed directions of the librarian.
- ◆ This session can also be completed on a one to one basis with a librarian. The objective is that each participant does a careful literature search and then writes up a systematic review on their refined research question.

Second Weekend

- ◆ The literature search program usually requires 4 or more hours.
- ◆ The remainder of the day is spent reviewing quantitative research methods as applied in the family practice setting.
- ◆ The facilitators package has several papers and textbook sections to support you in discussing quantitative methods. You may also wish to bring in an expert to cover this material.
- ◆ The participants need to assess whether a quantitative method will help answer their question.

Second Weekend

- ◆ They should project time lines and spend a few minutes presenting their plan to the others for feedback and suggestions.
- ◆ On the final half day each participant will need to plan their literature search, the criteria they will use to select the papers in their systematic review and the steps they will take to complete and write up their review.

Small Group Discussion

- ◆ What problems and barriers do you see in completing the second module of the five weekend program?
- ◆ Can you identify ways of solving these problems that are likely to be successful?
- ◆ Will you need outside support to succeed in this module? If yes, where will you get the help?
- ◆ Please discuss with a group of others and have one individual give a brief report of your discussion.

Second Weekend

Small Group Discussion

Feedback from Small
Groups

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Third Weekend

Qualitative methods and designing your study

All of the participants will spend 15-20 minutes presenting an over view of their systematic review. They should discuss any further modification to their question.

Facilitators should encourage a discussion about each review by all participants. Depending on the number in your group this process could take up to four hours. Each participant should have a written version of their review.

Third Weekend

- ◆ The session on qualitative research can be led by one of the facilitators if they have experience with qualitative research or may require bringing in a researcher with this experience.
- ◆ Our experience is that physicians have little knowledge about qualitative methods.
- ◆ If well presented in 3 or 4 hours they become very excited that qualitative approaches offer excellent ways to answer their question.

Third Weekend

- ◆ The second half of this day is devoted to facilitators assisting each participant trying to decide which of qualitative, quantitative or combined methods could be used to best answer their question.
- ◆ Each participant can present to their colleagues where they are in their thinking and seek advise and direction.
- ◆ This type of consultation with the group is very helpful and gets all participants contributing to every project.

Third Weekend

- ◆ During the final session each participant needs to develop a plan about how they will determine the best methods to answer their question and how they will test the feasibility of what they propose.
- ◆ They should project time lines and spend a few minutes presenting their plan to the others for feedback and suggestions.

Third Weekend

Small Group Discussion

Feedback from
Small Groups

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Fourth Weekend

**Writing up a paper, grant proposals,
ethics considerations, budgeting,
and preparing a presentation**

All of the participants will spend 15-20 minutes presenting their plan for answering their question which includes their actual question and the method they have chosen to answer it.

Facilitators should encourage a discussion about each proposal by all participants. Each participant should have a written version of their plan.

Fourth Weekend

- ◆ This weekend covers a number of topics that can be presented by facilitators or outside consultants.
- ◆ A session discussing writing a paper, preparing a presentation, the ethics review process and discussion about possible ethical problems with each proposed project needs to occur.
- ◆ If funding is required for a project a discussion on developing budgets needs to occur.
- ◆ If there are granting agencies to apply to then procedures need to be discussed.

Fourth Weekend

- ◆ In the final half day each individual needs to present their plan for preparing their final presentation and writing up their paper. They need to determine what further assistance they need to prepare for the final presentation day.
- ◆ They should project time lines and spend a few minutes presenting their plan and problems they foresee to the others for feedback and suggestions.

Fourth Weekend

Small Group Discussion

Feedback from Small
Groups

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Fifth Weekend

Presenting the completed proposal to your colleagues (and others) for feed back.

After 10 to 12 months of hard work this should be a celebratory occasion. We usually allocate $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to each participant for their presentation and then 15-20 min for discussion and feedback. A schedule should be developed well in advance of the day. Some of our groups have opened the presentations to the public and held them in halls with hundreds in attendance.

Fifth Weekend

- ◆ Most groups hold a more private presentation usually inviting someone from outside the program to attend. These individuals are asked to make comments about each proposal.
- ◆ We usually hold a celebratory dinner and present each participant with a certificate.

Discussion

- ◆ After completing 12 programs in Ontario we held a presentation day at the annual meeting of the College of Family Physicians of Ontario.
- ◆ Sixteen participants volunteered to present their papers and 8 others had posters about their project on display. This was a very impressive demonstration of the power and contribution of primary care research to improving health care in our communities.

Discussion

Feedback from facilitators include:

- ◆ Facilitators found the strategy very stimulating and rewarding.
- ◆ Some questioned the order in which content was presented. It was argued that content from sessions 2-3 and 4, especially ethics should be presented on the first weekend and then revisited later in the program.
- ◆ Most found the process worked well.

Discussion

- ◆ Feedback from participants was very positive.
- ◆ Most referred to the value of the group process and gaining new friends.
- ◆ A number stated that the experience directly affected how they practiced medicine, how they read medical literature.
- ◆ Some described a change in the ways they practiced.
- ◆ Most talked about their thinking about research dramatically changing.
- ◆ A few decide to go on and take masters degrees and become academic Family Medicine researchers.
- ◆ Many who had not been involved in clinical teaching joined faculties.

Discussion

- ◆ It is disappointing that follow up support promised by our government did not happen.
- ◆ We had hoped that support to see a number of projects through a pilot phase that would lead to being able to get grant funding did not occur.
- ◆ If grant funding is not available for your participants then efforts should be made to develop projects that can be completed without funding.

Conclusions

- ◆ It is my hope that your experience to day has convinced you that you can facilitate a five weekend program in your own region or country.
- ◆ Taking on this project will be stimulating, exciting and fun. Based on feedback from our facilitators you will find the outcome very personally rewarding.
- ◆ The program can be run at very modest cost and requires simple facilities.

Conclusions

- ◆ If those of you here today have been convinced that this idea can work where you are based and you actually facilitate one or two five weekend programs over the next two years, you will make a significant contribution to changing the perception that family medicine has no research potential.
- ◆ The Five Weekend program will develop research projects that are of value to your country and to improving the health of your fellow citizens.
- ◆ Your plan to run programs will move the world closer to having generation of new knowledge being part of every family practice.