

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Increasing access to sexual health services for young people

Dr Ann Dadich from the CInIS Research Group, together with NSW Sexually Transmissible Infections Programs Unit (STIPU), has been awarded a UWS Research Partnership grant to determine if a new resource for general practitioners improves the care they provide to young people regarding sexual health.

'Despite the importance of evidence-based practice, clinicians in the healthcare sector do not consistently use the evidence available to them - this includes GPs,' says Dr Dadich. 'The transition from "bench to bedside" is typically cumbersome. One estimate suggests that the transition can take some 15 to 20 years. The gap between research and practice is especially pronounced in the emerging area of youth health. This is despite international research indicating that particular issues, like sexually transmissible infections (STI), are prevalent among young people. Although the health of young Australians has improved in recent times, 20 percent continue to experience health issues, some of which might be life-threatening.'

To increase the provision of sexual health services, NSW STIPU recently developed a STI testing tool. The tool provides GPs with advice about how to introduce the topic of sexual health appropriately with patients; it helps them to identify patients who are at-risk of STIs; and it guides the selection and use of STI tests. Despite the apparent value of this resource, the research team is keen to test if it improves clinical practice. The research team is collaborating with the Nepean Division of General Practice, WentWest, and the Bankstown GP Division to invite GPs in Greater Western Sydney to use this new resource and help determine if it works. This will be achieved through a longitudinal study, which will compare clinical practice before and after the tool is used.



Results from this study will help to improve this and other tools that help to close the divide between research and implementation. The results will also help NSW STIPU to reduce the transmission and the morbidity associated with STIs.

Project Title: Knowledge translation in general practice for youth health

Funding has been set at: \$15,950

Contact Details: a.dadich@uws.edu.au,
<http://www.uws.edu.au/cinis>

April 2010

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http://www.uws.edu.au/research/researchers/funding_opportunities/internal_research_grants