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# RURAL RESEARCH TRANSLATION MENTORING: THE EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF EMERGING RESEARCHERS, MENTORS, AND MANAGERS



An initiative of:  **Western  
Alliance**

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I acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we meet today,  
the Gunditjmara People, and I pay my respects to their elders past and  
present



- Translating research into clinical practice can be challenging in rural and regional settings
- STaRR mentored research training program to build research translation capacity and capability
- Little is known about mentorships for emerging researchers working in rural and regional healthcare settings





Aim: to explore mentorships for rural and regional emerging researchers; how they function, develop, and contribute to research translation capacity and capability building





- Qualitative study
- Interviews with STaRR mentors, emerging researchers, managers
- Interviews audio-recorded, transcribed
- Framework (thematic) analysis

*Q. How have your skills in research changed since you participated in the STaRR program?*

*Q. Which research skills in particular, that you gained from the training, have been useful and applicable to your research and other work?*

*Q. What was the mentoring element like for you?*

*What worked well?*

*What could be improved in future?*

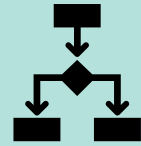


18 

Participants

7 

Member  
organisations

4 

Themes

## THEME 1 - MENTORS PLAY AN EDUCATIVE ROLE



"We were meeting regularly to get her support with either all the team or parts of the team, just to ask her just all the questions . . . around research methodology, which [implementation] frameworks to kind of pick and, depending on what we were going to put into research and what we were going to keep as kind of quality improvement . . . trying to figure out how we were going to tackle the project." Emerging Researcher 1

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"I don't think I realised it would be as intensive as the mentoring can be - it can be like trying to help someone get a masters through fortnightly mentoring, where I don't have a curriculum to follow . . . It can be very, very intensive and they need a lot of help because they don't know what they're doing a lot of the time . . . it's a teaching role at times." Mentor 3



## THEME 2 - MENTORING IS ENHANCED BY A COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT



“What I’ve done is draw in others who also have expertise in a particular area or capacity to get involved as well. Had them take over as mentors where that suits better . . . I think being able to be flexible, in terms of working with our network and perhaps seeking the most appropriate - someone who can provide additional mentorship, even if it’s perhaps less formal.” Mentor 4

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"Our managers have been really supportive of the project and have advocated to the executive for some additional funds to help us move this project along, because it is such an important area of practice." Emerging Researcher 5

## THEME 3 - ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES CAN INFLUENCE MENTORSHIPS

"There absolutely are organisational factors . . . I didn't even really know this before, but there is just such a vast difference between a metropolitan teaching research hospital, which is a research institution in and of itself, so it has a department, a director, rooms, top software, teachers. If you kind of go all the way to the other end where you've got a **rural hospital** where research comes up, but none of that [infrastructure] exists." Mentor 3



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“[Mentor] had a really big impact on the idea development, and I guess project design as well, in the initial phases. . . trying to make the project achievable within the constraints of our time and caseloads. We would have regular meetings previously when we were in that development phase with [Mentor]. She would provide advice or just give us ideas to work within that space” Emerging Researcher 5

THEME 4 - MENTORSHIPS CAN HELP DEVELOP  
RESEARCH NETWORKS AND COLLECTIVE  
RESEARCH AND TRANSLATION CAPACITY



“My mentor also had lots of connections with universities which was really helpful and health services . . . definitely being connected with other researchers and projects that are happening was helpful . . . I wouldn't have had any [other] way of finding out about [the research].” Emerging Researcher 8

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"Getting to know additional work that's happening in the region and being able to link up others in the region with mentees has been a really great experience . . . being across what they're [emerging researchers] doing, where they work and what their goals are. If that overlaps with some other work that might be happening in the region or another part of my role, I've made an introduction." Mentor



Individual, organisational, and regional capacity and capability building through:

- Collaborative learning environment
- Mentors' deepened understandings of the rural healthcare context
- Instrumental and educative role
- Strengthening and broadening of rural research networks





- Mentoring is essential to building research capacity and capability
- Mentors are a critical and finite resource
- Need to support, maintain and strengthen our mentor network
- Develop a tool to inform mentorships and measure outcomes





RESEARCH

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# Research translation mentoring for emerging clinician researchers in rural and regional health settings: a qualitative study

Olivia A. King<sup>1,2,3\*</sup>, Alesha M. Sayner<sup>3,4</sup>, Alison Beauchamp<sup>5,6</sup>, Emma West<sup>1,7</sup>, Drew Aras<sup>1</sup>, Danielle Hitch<sup>8,9</sup> and Anna Wong Shee<sup>3,4</sup>

## Abstract

**Background** Building clinician and organisation-level research translation capacity and capability is fundamental for increasing the implementation of research into health practice and policy and improving health outcomes. Research translation capacity and capability building is particularly crucial in rural and regional settings to address complex problems impacting these socially and economically disadvantaged communities. Programs to build clinicians' research translation capability typically involve training and mentoring. Little is known about the features of and influences on mentorships in the context of training for emerging clinician-researchers working in rural and regional healthcare settings. Research translation mentorships were established as part of the Supporting Translation Research in Rural and Regional settings (STaRR) program developed and delivered in Victoria, Australia from 2020 to 2021. The study sought to address the following research questions: 1) What context-specific types of support do research translation mentors provide to emerging researchers?. 2) How does the mentoring element of a rural research translational training program influence research translation capacity and capability development in rural emerging researchers and mentors, if at all?. 3) How does the mentoring element of the program influence translation capacity and capability at the organisational and regional level, if at all?

**Methods** We conducted a qualitative descriptive study. Interviews with individuals involved in the STaRR program took place approximately 12 months after the program and explored participants' experiences of the mentored training. Interviews were undertaken via telephone, audio-recorded, and transcribed. Data were analysed using a team-based five-stage framework approach.

**Results** Participants included emerging researchers (n = 9), mentors (n = 5), and managers (n = 4), from five health services and two universities. We identified four themes in the interview data: (1) Mentors play an educative role; (2) Mentoring enhanced by a collaborative environment; (3) Organisational challenges can influence mentorships, and (4) Mentorships help develop research networks and collective research and translation capacity.

**Conclusions** Mentorships contributed to the development of research translation capabilities. The capabilities were developed through mentors' deepened understanding of the rural and regional healthcare contexts in which

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# Mentorship Lights the Path: Enhancing Research Translation in Rural Health Settings

By Geeta Pillai • 17 hours ago



Mentorship Lights the Path: Enhancing Research Translation in Rural Health Settings

Amid the verdant landscapes of Victoria, Australia, a quiet revolution is taking place. It's not a political uprising or an economic overhaul, but a quiet transformation in the field of healthcare research. The Supporting Translation

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Supporting Translation of Research  
in Rural and Regional health settings

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