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Fostering Research Culture: Formation of Research Committee in Allied Health Department

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Introduction

As the requirement for physiotherapists to provide justification for treatment techniques and physiotherapy services grows, the ability of physiotherapists to conduct clinical research becomes paramount. Indeed, a positive research culture helps not only building research capacity but also increasing the research skills and productivity of staff. Although physiotherapists are engaged in the conduct of clinical research, there is still a lack of support for research.

Objectives

Setting up a Cluster Physiotherapy Research Committee assists physiotherapists to implement the evidence based practice as well as mentor them to understand, evaluate, and conduct clinical research. It acts as an advisory platform to provide research-related advice for clinical research/program and makes appropriate recommendations to Department on research issues and trends.

Methodology

A research committee included the following members: 1. Cluster Coordinator/ Department Manager, 2. Physiotherapists with Doctor of Philosophy, 3. Physiotherapist representative from each unit, 4. Academics from the University. All members were responsible for reporting research related issues discussed at the meetings to staff in their units and informing their unit in-charge. They also brought the issues to the Research Committee and placed on the agenda of the meetings if necessary. The members met every three months regularly to discuss the research matters in different units. The Research Committee shall, at least biyearly, review its own performance.

Result

Totally four meeting were hold (From January 2017 to January 2018). Under the committee, different measures were established to facilitate and support

physiotherapists on issues of clinical research (e.g. journal club in each unit, departmental research skill training, 3. database of past studies, 4. sharing on clinical studies). Moreover, a central registry of current departmental clinical studies was created to monitor, review and oversee quality assurance. In addition, a cross-sectional survey was conducted to identify and understand the research capacity and culture of the Physiotherapy Department in NTWC to guide the strategic and priorities in research development of the Department. To conclude, the research committee fosters a positive research environment in the Department. It provided governance and leadership on conduction of clinical research. Last but not least, it created an organizational culture that values and supports clinical research.