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Creating Practice-based Evidence: A guide for SLTs

Practice-based evidence is defined as “gathering evidence during the course of everyday clinical activity” (p.2). This text aims to encourage and provide speech pathologists with practical advice and information about how to conduct small-scale research projects within everyday clinical contexts. Research in this setting can positively contribute to the evidence base used to inform clinical practice and for promoting and developing a research culture among the profession: a priority for speech pathology service providers and professional organisations all over the world.

The topics covered are appropriate and targeted for the busy clinician. The text begins with a basic overview of evidence-based practice and practical tips for all aspects of the research process, from the moment a research idea or question is identified right through to sharing research findings. The steps within the research process are then contextualised into clinical topics - whether or not intervention makes a difference to clients’ impairments, how intervention impacts on clients’ quality of life, what other people’s perceptions and experiences of speech therapy services are, evaluation of professional training programs, and what the demographics of service users are.

The text helps the clinician to identify what needs to be considered when planning a research project as well as the resources available. The processes of practice-based evidence are described in relation to the wider contexts of research and professional practice. As the text is written in the United Kingdom, policies and frameworks of the National Health Service NHS) are referred to throughout, with a focus on public and patient involvement in research.

A resource list at the end of each chapter refers the reader to resources such as the UK Clinical Research Network - a common research network formed by each of the four UK Health Administrations - and to the National Institute for Health Research, a public database for high-quality clinical research studies. Many of the resources can be accessed by clinicians working in Australia or other countries, and would have practical relevance.

The writing style of the text is accessible to the everyday clinician, though there was overlap of content covered in several chapters. Non-technical terminology allows for an easy read and through the use of the second person point of view, the voice is like a mentor sharing expert advice.

Overall, the text is an excellent foundational resource for the practising clinician as well as any level researcher who has an interest and passion in helping move the profession forward in regards to collecting evidence to support clinical practice.