



Research Collaborations to promote Development, Health & Wellbeing

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Overview

- Lessons from Lead
- Growing up in Australia
 - The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children
- Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
 - The Alliance
 - ARACY



Overview

- What are we learning about the process of collaboration from these major endeavours?
 - Their establishment
 - Growth and elaboration
 - Policy relevance



Lead & Child Development

Background

- <1970s – cross-sectional studies suggested link between lead and IQ, adverse perinatal outcomes (eg stillbirth rates)
- Direction of causality uncertain
- Lead industry critical of studies claiming causal links on basis of tooth lead – Needleman, 1979
- Longitudinal studies recommended



Lead & Child Development

Background

- Port Pirie cohort study (NHMRC) began in April 1979
- Aim: I_x link between lead exposure and perinatal outcomes and developmental outcomes at age 2 years in 3 yr birth cohort
- Initial Research team:
 - Epidemiology (Tony McMichael)
 - Environmental & occupational health (Peter Clark)
 - Paediatrics (Graham Vimpani)
 - Biostatistics (Peter Baghurst)
 - Biochemistry (Evelyn Robertson)



Lead & Child Development

Progress

- Research Team expanded (Neil Wigg)
- Funding from SA Health Commission
- 4 rounds of NHMRC funding
- Study continued on under different PIs in the 1990s looking at outcomes in 12 year olds



Lead & Child Development

The broader scene

- US Environmental Protection Agency (Criterion Assessment Office) identified 8 cohort studies in US, Mexico, UK, Yugoslavia, Australia (Sydney & Port Pirie)
- Convened workshop in Durham NC in 1981



Role of US EPA

- Recognised policy implications of research
 - Paint standards
 - Lead in gasoline
 - Smelter/mining communities
- Encouraged global collaboration between different research groups
 - Achieved agreement on core outcome measures:-
 - Ages of follow-up developmental/IQ assessments – 2,4,7 yrs
 - Use similar instruments – Bayley, (McCarthy), WISC



Role of US EPA

- Convened two more follow-up workshops over next 5 years
- International conference in Edinburgh 1986 presenting 4 year old results
- Continuing dispute between industry sponsored scientists and lead advocates



Outcomes in the 90s

- International consensus workshop in Melbourne, Australia sponsored by Commonwealth Health & WHO in 1991
- Best estimate *“for every 10µg/dL rise in cumulative blood lead exposure there is a fall of 2-3 IQ points.”*
- Policy to remove lead from petrol begun by Ros Kelly when Minister for Environment in 1992.



Australia's state borders: Where collaboration failed

- It's not only the rail gauges....
- Environmental lead abatement program began in Port Pirie in 1983
- Dogs dying of seizure disorders in Broken Hill found to have high blood lead by visiting veterinary student from Adelaide in early 1990s.
- Broken Hill and Boolaroo (Newcastle) environmental clean ups began in 1992
- How many IQ points were lost by NSW children in the intervening decade?



History

- Much long-term concern about the lack of nationally representative cohort study of outcomes for Australian children and young people to track developmental trajectories and causal pathways
 - UK
 - New Zealand
 - Canada



History

- Women's health cohort study funded by Health mid-1990s
- **Millennium Generation national cohort study** proposal developed by Queensland consortium in late 1990s (Nicholson, Spence, Najman et al) – two national workshops in Brisbane, some funding from ANU (NCEPH), concerned to get national buy-in on governance
- National collaborative planning group established led by Jan Nicholson – ex Christchurch study
- Some key groups not engaged – concerns about lack of clarity of aims, *"longitudinalism for longitudinalism's"* sake



Fraser Mustard and the influence of the CIAR

- Mustard visited Australia in 1999
- Promoting *the early years* and advantages of the CIAR model of interprofessional, inter-institutional research for addressing “wicked problems” that represented the “paradox of modernity” (Rutter)
- *Developmental Health & the Wealth of Nations* by Keating & Hertzman (1999)
- Supported advocates for C’wlth investment in early childhood & Australian longitudinal data in 1999 prior to launch of SFCS



History

- HILDA study sponsored by FaCS late 1990s
- \$20 million funding over 9 years (enabling follow-up for 7 years) for LSAC announced by PM as part of Stronger Families & Communities Strategy April 2000
- National collaboration around MGS began to deteriorate following this announcement
 - Lack of track record and established research centre
 - Southern state suspicion of Queensland - Johberg?? Nazareth??
 - Politics – ownership, risk management
 - No one acknowledged as credible overarching leader with whom all players would be prepared to cooperate
 - Who could provide this leadership?



The Commonwealth DFACS announces in October 2000 that Expressions of Interest to undertake LSAC will close in March 2001



Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth

Working together to enhance the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people.

The planets align.....



Fraser Mustard and the influence of the CIAR

- Mustard visits Australia again October – November 2000
- Mustard, Oldenburg, Hayes, Parry, Vimpani have series of meetings in Perth in Oct-Nov with Fiona Stanley around feasibility of establishing a national research partnership for development, health and wellbeing like CIAR
- Could this group tender for LSAC?



Workshop at Australian Institute of Family Studies, February 2001

- People invited included those thought likely to be interested in bidding for LSAC and others possibly interested in a National Research Partnership
- Two issues on agenda
 - Collaborative bid for LSAC?
 - Form national research partnership for development(al) health and wellbeing?



Consortium established:

- Australian Institute of Family Studies (Vic) – lead agency
- Australian Council for Educational Research (Vic)
- Telethon Institute for Child Health Research/Curtin Centre for Developmental Health (WA)
- Queensland University of Technology
- Macquarie University (NSW),
- Charles Sturt University (NSW)
- Murdoch Children's Research Institute (Vic)
- Centre for Mental Health Research & NCEPH (ANU)
- Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW
- Professors Graham Vimpani (University of Newcastle) and Michael Sawyer (University of Adelaide) are consultants



Expertise covers:

- Sociology
- Developmental psychology
- Education
- Mental Health
 - Psychiatry
 - Clinical psychology
- Paediatrics & Child Health
- Epidemiology
- Child care
- Family studies
- Biostatistics
- Economics
- Political savvy



Governance

- Australian Government Steering committee
 - Two non-government representatives
- Consortium advisory group (CAG) comprises collaborators & consultants
- Multiple design teams – health, family functioning, child care, education, child development, sociodemographics – family and social constructs, sampling
- Project Operational Team (POT) comprises full and part-time AIFS study employees
- Survey work undertaken by social market research agency (I-View)



"Growing Up in Australia aims to provide the database for a comprehensive understanding of children's development in Australia's current social, economic and cultural environment, and to become a major element of the evidence base for future policy and practice regarding children and their families.

"Growing Up in Australia will deliver the first ever comprehensive, national Australian data on children as they grow up. The data on the first wave will be released in April 2005, and will be made widely available to researchers."



Issues relating to collaboration

- Most of the MGS players on board
 - Concerns around post-birth recruitment strategy
- Agenda set by FaCS and Commonwealth
- Budgetary constraints
 - Limited range of research questions
 - Some respondents dropped – non-resident parents
 - Some cutting edge biomarkers dropped – salivary cortisol
- Data owned by Commonwealth
 - Survey consortium don't own rights to data analysis
- Compromise – art of the possible



Issues relating to collaboration

- How can we continue to collaborate in data analysis phase when existing research funding systems encourage competition rather than collaboration?
 - CAG meeting May 14, 2004



Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth
Working together to enhance the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people.

- Formed after February 2001 meeting
- Initial \$400K grant from Sir Ian Potter Foundation, 25 April 2001
- Presentation to PMSEIC by Fiona Stanley, June 2001
- First staff appointed late 2001
- Follow-up strategic planning meeting Brisbane, November 2001
- Company established 2002 with Fiona Stanley as CEO and high profile Board



Main program initiatives (2004 budget)

- Research Directions Project - \$417K
- Clearing House of Effective Interventions working group - \$40K
- National Data Network working Group - \$1,646K
- Communication strategy - \$204K



Research Directions Working Group – Homel and Carter

Professor Graham Vimpani (Chair)

Dr Judy Cashmore (child welfare)

Ms Carey Drake-Brockman (ARACY)

Mr Richard Eckersley (ANU)

Professor Ross Homel (criminology)

Professor Frank Oberklaid

Professor George Patton

Professor Peter Saunders (SPRC, UNSW)

Dr Dorothy Scott (social work)

Professor Fiona Stanley AC

Mr Mark Sullivan (Secretary, FaCS)



Main program initiatives

- An overall multidisciplinary advisory group will be established to provide advice to the Board on projects and emerging directions & establishment of multidisciplinary Alliance teams
- Each planning initiative overseen by multidisciplinary working group



Multidisciplinary teams

- Multidisciplinary and cross-sector teams will be specifically recruited to achieve an Alliance objective. Once the objective is achieved the team will be dissolved
- Teams will receive seed funding and administrative support from the Alliance in the establishment phase after which time they will be required to secure project resources from other sources
- The Multidisciplinary Teams will be virtual and team members are expected to remain in their usual place of employment while working on an Alliance project, although face to face meetings are also likely to be required
- The Multidisciplinary Teams will be evolutionary, with their nature changing over time in response to Alliance developments and requirements



Issues

- Top-down formation v bottom-up evolution of groups who then seek to work as one of the Alliance nodes
- Time, expertise, money and patience to form and maintain groups
- Trust
- Empowering, facilitative leadership



Multidisciplinary teams

- While it is expected that each team will be unique, a model of good practice will be developed by the Alliance to:
 - standardise general operations, such as accounting and reporting
 - ensure quality and congruence with corporate goals
 - reinforce the status of the work produced as an Alliance activity
- There are many issues to do with Multidisciplinary Teams which have yet to be addressed such as:
 - node identification and selection
 - data and information security, including privacy and confidentiality
 - legalities of the collaboration
 - intellectual property rights
 - incentives
 - protection
 - accountability requirements
- These issues will be addressed in the model of good practice and in Board policies still to be developed



Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth

Working together to enhance the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people.

- A considerable amount of time, money, expertise, work and patience will need to be invested by the Alliance to establish and nurture a broadly representative network between previously disparate groups in an environment of trust and goodwill that supports and encourages the free exchange of information and knowledge, innovation and lateral thinking, and commitment to action.
 - Draft Business Plan, November 2003



The extent to which effective collaboration is facilitated

- The Alliance's commitment to collaboration will be reflected in practical strategies to support full and equal participation by different disciplines and sectors e.g. recognising and responding in practical ways to differences between sectors where one group may initially be reluctant to contribute their views in the presence of another
 - Draft Business Plan, 2003




The extent to which effective collaboration is facilitated

- To do this the Alliance will need to address complex issues such as how best to:
 - foster trust and authenticity
 - promote mutual understanding of the different cultures, languages, practices and requirements in different disciplines and sectors
 - provide incentives to collaborate and demonstrate its applied value
 - ensure clarity of expectations.



The extent to which effective collaboration is facilitated

- To maintain credibility with the commitment to broadly based collaboration, the Alliance will need to ensure that a full range of expertise and perspectives is represented on all committees and working groups, and in Multidisciplinary Teams.
- The way in which the research agenda and other projects are framed, and the choice of spokespersons, will also be important in conveying the collaborative message.



What have I learned about collaborative research?

- Importance of distributed ownership and leadership
 - Clarification of roles
 - Publication policy
- Skilled leadership group



Collaboration is facilitated by:-

Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970)

“Servant leadership is the essence of quantum thinking and quantum leadership”

Danah Zohar, Rewiring the Corporate Brain



Servant leadership

Listening

- Identifying and clarifying the will of the group with the group

Empathy

Healing

- Using opportunities “to help make whole” those with whom we work



Servant leadership

Awareness

- Ability to view situations from a more integrated holistic position
 - challenges rather than gives solace

Persuasion

- Lead by convincing others rather than coercing them by organisational status
 - ability to build consensus



Servant leadership

Conceptualisation

- Ability to “dream great dreams” and think beyond day-to-day realities but stay grounded

Foresight

- Learn from the past, understand realities of present, and likely consequences of decisions for the future



Servant leadership

Stewardship

- Vs ownership – holding something in trust for others
- Importance of succession planning

Commitment to people's growth

- Mentoring

Building community

- Encourage sense of meaning through relationships



Collaboration is facilitated by:-

- **Servant leadership**
(Greenleaf, 1970)
 - Listening
 - Empathy
 - Healing
 - Awareness
 - Persuasion
 - Conceptualisation
- Foresight
- Stewardship
- Commitment to the growth of other people
- Building community



Collaboration is facilitated by:-

Alignment of the planets

- The essence of good timing

The right team

- Succession planning as the task evolves
- Learning when to let go

“Success has many parents, failure is an orphan”

Facilitative and distributed leadership

- Containable egos