

getting started in research

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Start at the beginning

Think about:

- What is the purpose of the research
- What is the problem to be studied
- What is the research *question*
- How will you answer the question

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Searching the literature

- Think of key words to use as your first search approach
- Link key words together to refine your search
- Limit your timescale for searching at first (eg last 10 years)
- Medline, psychINFO, CINAHL, ASSIA, AMED, Cochrane library

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Identify

- Background to your area of interest
- Who has done what already
- Related areas/topics of interest
- What more needs to be done
- What the pitfalls are – learn from others' mistakes
- Generation of ideas and modification of your first ideas/questions

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Think about

- How you will access papers – cost will be a factor
- When will you read the papers?
- Allocation of time for thinking and reading
- Do you have a journal club in your workplace to help you read, critique and understand the papers?

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Accessing the literature

- Searching the databases:
 - ◆ Through Trust R&D department
 - ◆ Through local university
 - ◆ Through StHA research development schemes
 - ◆ Through local hospital library
- Finding the papers:
 - ◆ University libraries
 - ◆ Trust libraries
 - ◆ Inter-library loans
 - ◆ Professional library

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Doing it...

- Make notes, use card indexes, write down the full references as you read them
- Be systematic in approach
- Make cross references to different aspects of what you read
- Make critical points of the research you read – summary points

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Thinking about research methods and design

- What are you doing in clinical practice already that will help you?
- Think about outcome measures that could be used
- What assessments are part of normal clinical practice? Are they standardized?

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Initial work

- Look at the audit data of the kinds of case/problem you wish to research
- What do you know already of numbers per year, problems, assessments used, outcomes?
- Investigate other outcome measures and assessments that might be appropriate to use

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First enquiries

- Think about how you could carry out initial enquiries in the area:
 - ◆ Case studies
 - ◆ Pre and post-test evaluations
 - ◆ Single case experimental design

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Before you DO anything

- Any research within the NHS (and in social care contexts) **must** have ethical approval
 - ◆ Find out the requirements, timescales etc of your local LREC
 - ◆ Think about ethical issues that are involved in your research

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Nearing the end of stage 1

- Talk to manager and agree place of research
- Write research proposal
- Get supervisor advice/guidance
- Refine proposal, supervisor to approve
- Complete ethics application forms
- Supervisor to approve ethics forms
- Address revisions required by LREC

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Getting to stage 2

- Establish research sponsor
- Allocate time to undertake the research
- Talk to colleagues for support
- Start 2nd stage – recruitment and data collection

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