

POSTER ABSTRACT

Realist Research Design and Evaluation for Integrated Care RIC SIG - Part 1: Establishing a Special Interest Group

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Background: Realist philosophy and methodology is increasingly being explicitly used in the field of integrated care to research the extant context, structure and mechanisms at play, and to design and evaluation interventions. Philosophic realism is the view that entities exist independently of our perception or our theories about them. While the realist philosophy underpins much of modern health and social science, it is only recently that this philosophical approach has been popularised within main stream health and social science literature. Realist research methodology is increasingly being described in research areas that are relevant to the study of integrated care, namely, organisational management, information science, social epidemiology, economics, and health services evaluation. Importantly realist approaches are increasingly being used in mixed method research designs and to elucidate the processes at play in experimental and quasi-experimental studies.

Realist researchers seek to explain the underlying “cause” or mechanisms that generate observed phenomenon. The realist understanding of how the world is ontology includes the notion of a hidden or “real” domain where mechanisms generate forces that result in the phenomena which we observe. Realists also view the world as consisting of strata or layers of reality which may interact with other layers to produce new mechanism. This approach is proving useful for studying and developing theory about complex health and social care systems, and then designing and evaluating possible interventions. Over the last number of years a number of realist studies have been presented at the International Foundation of Integrated Care conferences including: realist studies of context and mechanisms; realist design of integrated care interventions; realist synthesis of literature; and realist evaluations of integrated-care interventions. The methodologies, and the dialectical debates, are

complex, and therefore, deserving of special consideration within the Integrated Care community.

This preliminary workshop will support evaluators and researchers to use realist methods in integrated care and other complex evaluations. Because realist evaluation was initially developed using smaller-scale programs, methods need to be modified for large scale programs, while remaining consistent with underlying methodological principles. The workshop will discuss the value of and the dilemmas involved in using realist methods for large and complex programs, and demonstrate strategies to address the dilemmas.

Aims and Objectives:

- 1- Present and discuss the basic tenants of realist research, design and evaluation as it applies to the large scale and complex programs such as integrated care
- 2- Discuss the scope and purpose of a Realist Research, Design and Evaluation for Integrated Care Special Interest Group RIC-SIG
- 3- Modify the scope and purpose of a Realist Research, Design and Evaluation for Integrated Care - SIG

Format: Group Discussion

Target Audience: Integrated care practitioners and researchers who are familiar with realist research including the current focus on critical realism and realist evaluation

Learning and Takeaway: The workshop will define the scope and purpose of a SIG for Realist Research, Design and Evaluation for Integrated Care

Keywords: theory; evaluation; design; realism
