

# Increasing Research Participation: McMaster Physician Assistant Research Kickstarter Workshop

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## Background

Performing research is an important part of clinical work that can improve quality of patient care, enhance analytical and clinical decision making skills (1,2). Despite these benefits, many health care professionals do not perform research as part of their practice. In order to strengthen skills and knowledge around research, McMaster University hosted a Physician Assistant (PA) Research Kickstarter Workshop for practicing PAs in June 2019.

## Objectives

- 1) Identify research barriers amongst practicing Canadian PAs;
- 2) Explore how to best educate PAs to support research within their own practices;
- 3) Evaluate the utility of workshop sessions

## Methods

Workshop participants were invited to participate, yielding a total of 20 PAs (19 CCPAs, 1 PA student).

Data collection occurred in 3 phases:

*Phase I:* Pre-workshop survey

*Phase II:* Participant focus group

*Phase III:* Workshop session evaluations

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative descriptive content analysis. Verbal consent was collected from each participant.

## Results

### Common Barriers to PA Driven Research



1. **Unfamiliarity with research methodology**
  - Knowledge base in statistics is poor
  - Lack of research experience
2. **Accessing funding to support research**
  - Financial constraints
  - Grant writing experience
3. **Workplace or Employer Support**
  - Faculty, clinic or organizational support and permission to conduct research
4. **Access to Scholarly Data**
  - Access to existing literature
  - Collecting or accessing electronic data
5. **Time Restrictions**
  - Time to completion
  - Protected time for research during work
6. **Navigating Research Ethics**
  - Obtaining patient records
  - Access to datasets, patient charts, etc.

## Conclusion

The identified barriers to PA research are consistent with other studies that examine barriers to research in medicine and other health professions. Many of these barriers can be addressed through continuing professional development initiatives, such as the PA Research Kickstarter Workshop. PAs are encouraged to start conversations around research in their workplace settings as many of the identified barriers can be overcome by networking with other PAs and by garnering employer support.

**Table 1: Participant Specialties**

Specialty	# of participants
Family Medicine	6
Surgery (General, Ortho, Neuro)	5
Emergency Medicine	2
Critical Care	1
Hematology	1
Oncology	1
Other (medical writing, education, etc.)	4

**Table 2: Effectiveness of Workshop Sessions**

Workshop Session	% satisfaction
Overview of Research Methods	100%
Working with Data & EMRs	95%
Understanding Research Ethics	80%
Using Data & Literature	100%
Quality Improvement Projects	100%
Writing & Submitting Papers	95%
Knowledge Translation	100%

## References

1. Hagan, J. L., Armbruster, P., & Ballard, R. (2019). Barriers to research among faculty at a health sciences university. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 7(1), 44-48.
2. Rothberg, M. B. (2012). Overcoming the obstacles to research during residency: what does it take?. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 308(21), 2191-2192.