

## EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE: CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH RESEARCH (CNIN FEBRUARY 2010)

Research can have a powerful influence on health decisions and on practice. This in turn affects health consumers who are the end users of health care and health research.

### *Types of involvement*

Consumers have the opportunity to be directly involved in health and medical research in many ways such as:

- Participants in trials and research studies.
- Consumer representatives on research projects or as members of Research Management Boards or Research Grants panels.
- Members of specific research and consumer groups such as the [Consumers Health Forum](#) or the [Cochrane Consumer Network](#).



In 2004, the National Health and Medical Research Council and Consumer Health Forum released a [Model Framework for Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research](#). This framework provides guidance on how to support consumer involvement across the research cycle from determining what topic or subject to research through to how research is communicated and applied within the health system.

One example of the consumer role can be seen in [Cancer NSW's Guidelines for the preparation and review of research grant applications](#). Applicants need to address specific consumer criteria in their applications. These are assessed by a Consumer Review Panel as well as a research panel.

### *Role of consumer representatives*

Many research groups or project teams include consumer representatives. Experienced consumer representatives can provide an alternate view to health care professionals and service providers. They articulate consumer perspectives and represent their views in decision-making processes. As a result decisions can be more robust and/or more likely to be accepted by consumers. Representatives are usually nominated by, and accountable to, an organisation of consumers.

[From passive subjects to equal partners](#) outlines the process of a joint research partnership in mental health services.

### *Finding out more*

[Statement on Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research \(NHMRC\)](#)  
[Health Issues Centre](#)  
[Consumer Health Forum](#)

CareSearch is an online resource funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to help clinicians and consumers find relevant evidence about palliative care. Available now at [www.caresearch.com.au](http://www.caresearch.com.au)