



# Research Guidelines

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## Introduction

The Women's Centre for Health Matters conducts social research projects in order to identify the needs of women around the social determinants of health. For the purposes of these Guidelines:

- *Research* is defined as any gathering of data, information and facts directed toward gaining a greater knowledge or understanding about a subject<sup>1</sup>
- *Social research* is defined as research which gathers information about the attitudes, assumptions, experiences, and views of a particular group<sup>2</sup>
- *Researcher* means all staff members and students carrying out research under the imprimatur of the Centre

The research projects conducted by WCHM help to inform the planning, development and implementation of policy and/or of improving service delivery. WCHM's research findings are most commonly used to advocate with Government and service providers about policy and program initiatives to better suit and respond to the needs of women in the ACT and surrounding region. They are also used to build the awareness and capacity of other organisations to respond to their clients who are women.

WCHM is committed to encouraging and facilitating the involvement of women in our research but recognises that "research involving human populations is intrinsically difficult"<sup>3</sup> because:

- People are highly complex and language is imprecise
- Human beliefs, values, attitudes and motivations are hard to pin down
- Memory is fallible, and research respondents are not always able or willing to report their feelings or behaviour accurately or honestly
- There are considerable statistical problems in drawing valid inferences about.... human populations<sup>4</sup>

It is vital that WCHM researchers demonstrate rigour, transparency, consistency and ethical behaviour in all of our research undertakings. These Research Guidelines are intended to assist WCHM staff and students to undertake social research for the Centre in a way that supports the principles set out in the WCHM Responsible Research Framework, and to follow WCHM methods for achieving the aims of each research project.

*Unless proposed research has merit, and the researchers who are to carry out the research have integrity, the involvement of human participants in the research cannot be ethically justifiable.*<sup>5</sup>

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1 for WCHM, this is the social determinants of health and wellbeing

2 for WCHM, this is women in the ACT and surrounding regions

3 Social Research Association, Commissioning Social Research: A good practice guide, 2nd edn, Social Research Association, London, 2002, p. 9.

4 Ibid.

5 National Health and Medical Research Council, *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2007.

## Principle 1: honesty and integrity in data collection and analysis

Integrity and honesty requires WCHM researchers to maintain the accuracy of their data, and to ensure that research findings are reported truthfully, accurately and comprehensively.

This means they must ensure:<sup>6</sup>

- That data and information is not knowingly fabricated, or manipulated in a way that might lead to distortion, suppression or misinterpretation
- The design of research undertakings, does not predetermine an outcome,
- All relevant evidence is taken account of and presented
- The impact of their own personal values on the research is taken account of
- That methodology and findings are open for discussion and review

WCHM researchers will ensure honesty and integrity in data collection and analysis through:

- Adopting the “blind” method to recruit research participants, meaning that any person who suits the criteria for the research is eligible to participate
- Respecting the beliefs and perceptions of research participants, even when these run counter to the research hypotheses or major findings
- Reimbursing all focus group and interview participants with a gift voucher as recognition of their time and willingness to participate or any inconvenience caused
- Ensuring that participants are not identifiable by the information they provide
- Ensuring that where research requires the development of a personal relationship between the researcher and participants, they reflect on the impact that they may have on the participants and be clear about the terms of the relationship
- Providing all participants the opportunity to verify transcripts before analysis is complete<sup>7</sup>

WCHM typically collects data via surveys, interviews, focus groups and life story or oral history research. The following is a breakdown of each of these:

Surveys: Surveys are to be constructed using the online survey service Survey Monkey, with which WCHM has an account. WCHM surveys typically involve a combination of open questions and closed questions with rating scales. Rating scales to be used include:

- strongly agree / agree / neither agree nor disagree / disagree / strongly disagree
- always / very often / sometimes / almost never / never
- satisfied / somewhat satisfied / neither satisfied nor dissatisfied / somewhat dissatisfied / dissatisfied

Standard practice for WCHM surveys:

1. Clearly establish the purpose and goal of the survey so that they can be realised in the questions
2. Choose a title that summarises the survey’s purpose and goal and grabs attention
3. Consider how the data is going to be analysed and reflect this in the questions
4. Use plain English
5. Avoid:
  - a. jargon and technical terms
  - b. acronyms and abbreviations
  - c. biased words or phrases

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<sup>6</sup> The Institute of Employment Studies, *RESPECT Code of Practice for Socio-Economic Research*, RESPECT Project, United Kingdom, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> National Health and Medical Research Council, *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2007 p. 26-8.

- d. double barreled questions
  - e. vague or ambiguous words or phrases
  - f. double negatives
  - g. slang
6. Write short questions with singular and concrete meaning
  7. Do not ask questions in a way that leads respondents to a particular answer
  8. Word questions in a way that allows different people the same interpretation
  9. Ensure that the questions do not favour the question writer's biases
  10. Borrow questions from other successful surveys or look to them for inspiration
  11. Ensure that the answer options within rating scales are equally balanced so that respondents do not feel there are implicit biases or prejudices eg., exceptional/fair/poor (unbalanced) vs. good/fair/poor (balanced)
  12. Ensure that the questionnaire flows logically and that different sections are not too similar
  13. Focus on 'need to know' rather than 'nice to know' questions
  14. Do not include personal questions at the start of the survey because this may deter some respondents from continuing with the survey
  15. End the survey with easy questions
  16. Pilot the survey with people from the target group

Focus groups: Focus groups are a common method of research used by WCHM. Typically, a WCHM staff member will moderate the discussion accompanied by a student researcher or a second WCHM staff member.

Standard practice for WCHM focus groups:

1. Aim for no more than 8-10 participants
2. Record the discussion on a voice recorder
3. Prepare no more than 5-6 questions for a two hour focus group as this will allow ample time to discuss the main questions of the research in-depth
4. Ensure that all participants feel comfortable and are given the opportunity to contribute

Interviews: Interviews can be held with one or several participants and may be opted for where focus groups are difficult to organise. Similarly to focus groups, interviews are recorded with a voice recorder and then transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Standard practice for WCHM interviews:

- Structured—following a set list of questions
- Semi-structured—following an interview guide listing a set of issues to be explored
- Unstructured—involving spontaneous generation of questions driven by the interviewee rather than the interviewer

Life story or oral history: This type of research is generally conducted via interviews; however, the purpose is to capture the story of an individual woman rather than to capture her opinions and experiences in relation to particular issues.

WCHM conducts a great deal of qualitative research in order to emphasise the significance of particular contexts and settings. While it is not always our purpose to generalise the results of our qualitative research, we do aim to establish a detailed analysis that enables the identification of other circumstances to which the findings may be applicable.

## Principle 2: respect for participants

WCHM recognises that the consequences of participation in research may cause discomfort and inconvenience for some participants, so research projects should be designed responsibly to ensure appropriate methodology and to minimise any potential harm. Participants should not be worse off as a result of their involvement in the research.

The final results of projects should also reflect the concerns of the individuals participating in the research, and the information gained should be used for the benefit of the research participants and future people in similar situations.

Respect for participants requires WCHM researchers to demonstrate a respectful approach to the participants involved and the data and information they provide. Every human being has unique worth and the right to have their opinions, views and experiences validated.

This means they must ensure:<sup>8</sup>

- Research is conducted with respect for, and awareness of, gender differences
- Research is conducted with respect for all groups, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion and culture and with respect for under-represented social groups
- Special care is taken to protect the interests of vulnerable groups and to avoid their marginalisation or exclusion
- Participation in research is voluntary
- Decisions made by individuals about participation in research are made from an informed position
- All participant information is treated with appropriate confidentiality and anonymity
- Participants are protected from undue intrusion, distress, indignity, physical discomfort, personal embarrassment, or psychological or other harm
- Involvement in the research does not involve any unwarranted material gain or loss for any participants
- The concerns of relevant stakeholders and user groups are addressed

Researchers will demonstrate respect for participants through:

- Not discriminating against groups or individuals
- Taking care to avoid stereotypes
- Taking care to avoid speaking for participants based on assumptions about those participants
- Remaining impartial
- Refraining from expressing personal views, values and preferences
- Respecting individual beliefs, values, culture, goals, needs and desires
- Respecting others' right to have differing or opposing views
- Ensuring that participants know how to make a complaint or grievance
- Not exploiting relationships with participants for financial, political or material advantage

Prior to undertaking research, researchers should assess the risk associated with the research activities for the participants. Assessment of risk involves identifying any risks, gauging their probability and severity, assessing the extent to which they can be minimised, determining whether they are justified by the potential benefits of the research and determining how they can be

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<sup>8</sup> The Institute of Employment Studies, *RESPECT Code of Practice for Socio-Economic Research*, RESPECT Project, United Kingdom, 2004.

managed. Researchers should refer to the WCHM *Integrated Risk Management Policy* for additional guidance.

While most of the research conducted by WCHM would be considered low risk, there is the risk of emotional distress for some in the following ways:

- Psychological harm, which may arise from disclosing sensitive or embarrassing information or through reliving a traumatic experience
- Social harm, which may include discrimination in access to benefits, services, employment or insurance and social stigmatisation
- Economic harm, which may arise from direct or indirect costs on participants

It may be more common that participants experience discomfort as a result of anxiety arising from an interview or focus group. If this discomfort becomes distress, WCHM will ensure adequate and timely access to counseling. WCHM researchers must consider in advance how they will deal with disclosed information which suggests the participant might be 'at risk'.

Most often, however, participants in WCHM research will only be subjected to inconvenience, such as the time taken to complete a survey or attend a focus group.<sup>9</sup>

Research involving vulnerable groups: WCHM endeavours only to undertake research with participants who can speak for themselves (through an interpreter if necessary). That means that we do not interview carers on behalf of the person they care for, or service providers on behalf of their clients. We would interview these two groups for their own experiences and opinions.

When WCHM conducts research with young people, we ensure that the young person is mature enough to understand and consent to participate in the research, to the extent that additional consent from a parent or guardian would not be necessary.<sup>10</sup>

When WCHM conducts research with people with a cognitive impairment, intellectual disability, or mental illness we ensure that the vulnerabilities they may experience as research participants are accounted for. "The capacity of a person with any of these conditions to consent to research, and the ability to participate in it, can vary for many reasons including: the nature of the condition; the person's medication or treatment; the person's discomfort or distress; the complexity of the research project; fluctuations in the condition."<sup>11</sup>

When working with disadvantaged groups, researchers must recognise the barriers to participation for particular groups and act to address them to enable participation. Barriers may include a lack of access to transport or childcare, insufficient time or money to participate in research, language barriers, cultural barriers and fears about being discriminated against as a result of participating in research.

WCHM research is aimed at increasing women's involvement in societal processes and therefore should be genuinely inclusive of all participants throughout the entire research process.

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9 National Health and Medical Research Council, *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2007, pp. 16.

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 55-57.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

### Principle 3: honouring and acknowledging the intellectual property of others<sup>12 13</sup>

WCHM recognises the need to honour and acknowledge the intellectual property of others, and endeavours to ensure that any debts to previous research as a source of knowledge, data, concepts and methodology are fully acknowledged in all outputs.<sup>14</sup>

WCHM researchers must ensure that all those who have contributed to the research or materials are properly acknowledged. This means they must ensure that they cite other relevant work appropriately and accurately when disseminating research findings. Use of the work of other authors without acknowledgement is unethical.<sup>15</sup>

WCHM uses the footnote system for referencing the intellectual property of others. Referencing WCHM's work maintains its integrity and gives credit to those who write what is being sourced. It is also a legal requirement as repercussions can occur by failing to reference when ideas or words are borrowed from others, or when referencing is not done correctly.

The occasions where researchers must reference are detailed below.

**Direct quotes:** Direct quotes show where another person's original thoughts, words, ideas, images etcetera have been used word-for-word in the work.

Short direct quotes remain in text and are marked by double quotation marks. The direct quote is then footnoted.

Long direct quotes—citations over four lines—should be presented as a blockquote. A blockquote is indented and written as a separate paragraph. It does not have quotation marks around it but is still footnoted.

**Paraphrasing:** Paraphrasing is when another author's material is rewritten in different words without changing its original meaning. It is usually about the same length as the original, as opposed to a summary which is usually much shorter. It is important that the sentence structure and the vocabulary are not too similar to the original. Even though the original author's exact words are not used, the author must be cited as the source of the ideas. Paraphrasing also needs to be footnoted.

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12 Academic Skills and Learning Centre, *Referencing Basics*, Australian National University, 2010 <https://academicskills.anu.edu.au/node/65>

Accessed: September 30, 2010

13 Study and Learning Centre, *Referencing—Footnotes*, RMIT University, 2005

[http://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/content/1\\_StudySkills/study\\_tuts/footnotes\\_LL/index.html](http://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/content/1_StudySkills/study_tuts/footnotes_LL/index.html)

Accessed: September 30, 2010

14 National Health and Medical Research Council, *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2007

15 *Ibid.*

## **Principle 4: reporting data ethically, accurately and with integrity**

WCHM recognises the need to report data and findings in a manner that maintains ethical standards, integrity and accuracy.

This means WCHM researchers must ensure:<sup>16</sup>

- Research results are disseminated responsibly
- Their results are communicated in as clear a manner as possible and in language that is appropriate and accessible to the target groups for whom the research results are relevant
- Data is reported factually and accurately

WCHM researchers will report data ethically, accurately and with integrity by:

- Presenting survey findings in full
- Transcribing all focus groups and interviews verbatim (researchers may use their discretion to omit parts of the discussion that were tangential and unrelated to the research)
- Storing voice recordings as back-ups to transcripts
- Ensuring that participants have the opportunity to verify transcripts prior to the completion of analysis
- Where possible, giving participants the opportunity to ask questions, express feelings and opinions about the research, and comment on the findings
- Reporting negative findings or findings contrary to the hypothesis
- Acknowledging funders but ensuring that they have no influence on the content or presentation of results and that they are not able to delay the release of results

WCHM reports are to generally include an executive summary, introduction, literature review, methodology, survey findings, focus group and/or interview findings, discussion and conclusion with recommendations (which have been approved by the WCHM Board).

Survey findings are presented in full, while focus group and interview findings are presented in a narrative style—a neutral summary of the main topics supported with ample direct quotes of women participants' lived experiences.

The major themes and trends of both the survey and focus groups/interviews are presented in the discussion.

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<sup>16</sup> The Institute of Employment Studies, *RESPECT Code of Practice for Socio-Economic Research*, RESPECT Project, United Kingdom, 2004.

## Principle 5: storing and retaining data

WCHM recognises the need to ensure there are facilities and procedures in place for the safe and secure storage and retention of research data and materials, and for the ownership of, and access to, research data and materials.

This means WCHM researchers must ensure:<sup>17</sup>

- The security and confidentiality of personal data
- The protection of the anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of individuals participating in the research
- Data is stored properly and adequately in order to prevent misuse of data

WCHM researchers will:<sup>18</sup>

- Ensure that the presentation of data and findings does not allow the identity of individuals participating in a study, or informants, to be disclosed or inferred
- Store information through which individuals can be identified, separately from the remaining research material
- Store and retain research data in accordance with the applicable legislation

Retaining raw data is important because they provide evidence that justifies the outcomes of the research and can be used to defend the results if they are challenged.

WCHM does not dispose of completed surveys, voice recordings, consent forms or transcripts. These are all to be stored on the G: Drive—which can only be accessed by individuals with a WCHM logon—or in the locked cabinet in the Executive Director's office for paper copies.

All identifiers (name, address, phone numbers etc.) are removed and stored separately so as to minimise the links between responses and respondents' identification. Persons other than the researcher/s must not be able to link the information collected to individual participants.<sup>19</sup>

When WCHM partners with other organisations to conduct research a memorandum of understanding between the partners should cover:

- Intellectual property
- Management of the research
- Management of research materials and data
- Collection of data
- Transcription and interpretation of data
- Data storage
- Dissemination of research findings
- Confidentiality
- Copyright
- Conflicts of interest

For more guidance on working in partnership with other organisations refer to WCHM's Partnerships Framework. It is the researcher's responsibility to understand the arrangement held with a partner organisation and how this relates to existing WCHM policies and procedures, as well as the policies and procedures of the partner organisation/s.

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<sup>17</sup> The Institute of Employment Studies, *RESPECT Code of Practice for Socio-Economic Research*, RESPECT Project, United Kingdom, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

## Principle 6: dealing with research misconduct

WCHM will ensure that all allegations of research misconduct are dealt with in a fair, transparent and serious manner.

WCHM researchers will inform participants that any complaints about research misconduct should be notified to the Executive Director. After hearing the complaint, a course of action will be decided by the Executive Director.

Research misconduct can include but is not limited to:

- Fabrication of data
- Falsification of data
- Deliberate or reckless misrepresentation
- Stating or presenting significant falsehood
- Omitting a fact so that what is stated presents a significant falsehood
- Misappropriation
- Plagiarism—meaning presenting another’s documented words or ideas as one’s own without attribution or reproducing, copying, paraphrasing or summarising without acknowledgement
- Breaching confidentiality
- Interference with another researcher’s data, writing, hardware or software
- Intentional infringements on WCHM’s Responsible Research Framework
- Other practices that seriously deviate from those commonly accepted by WCHM<sup>20</sup>

A person who is the subject of an allegation should be treated fairly and given ample opportunity to respond. Likewise, a person who makes an allegation should be treated fairly.<sup>21</sup>

Complaints about staff research misconduct should be made to the Executive Director. Complaints about research misconduct against the Executive Director should be made to the Chair of the WCHM Board.

“Misconduct does not involve honest errors or honest differences in interpretation or judgment of data. Free scientific inquiry naturally includes proposing hypotheses that may ultimately prove false, offering interpretations of data that conflict with other interpretations, and making observations and analyses that may prove to be in error.”<sup>22</sup>

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20 Research Office, *Procedure: Responsible Practice of Research*, Australian National University, Canberra, 2009.

21 National Health and Medical Research Council, *Australian code for the responsible conduct of research*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2007.

22 Research Office, *Procedure: Responsible Practice of Research*, Australian National University, Canberra, 2009.

## Principle 7: respect for confidentiality, privacy and intellectual property

WCHM recognises the need to ensure that in collecting and disseminating the research and findings, the rights of all parties to confidentiality, privacy and ownership of intellectual property must be respected.

This means WCHM researchers must ensure:<sup>23</sup>

- The privacy and confidentiality of personal data
- The protection of the anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of individuals participating in the research
- Data is stored properly and adequately in order to prevent misuse of data
- That all those who have contributed to the research or materials are properly acknowledged

WCHM researchers will:<sup>24</sup>

- Ensure that the presentation of data and findings does not allow the identity of individuals participating in a study, or informants, to be disclosed or inferred
- Store information through which individuals can be identified, separately from the remaining research material
- Cite other relevant work appropriately and accurately

**Privacy:** The Commonwealth *Privacy Act 1988*<sup>25</sup> requires that individuals are provided details about what information is being collected, what purpose the information is being collected for, how the information will be used and if the information is to be disclosed.<sup>26</sup> Any web-based or email questionnaires must include a privacy statement in order to meet the requirements of Territory privacy legislation. This should be prominently displayed on the front page of the questionnaire, with a hyperlink to WCHM's privacy policy. Participants should also be offered an alternative to participating online. Researchers should refer to the WCHM *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* for additional guidance.

**Consent:** Consent is an ethical requirement of any research undertaken by the WCHM. Participants usually give their consent to participate in the research by signing a consent form. Where a participant is unable to read the consent form, an interpreter should be made available or the consent form should be made available in an alternate format. It is good practice to ensure that the participants are provided with verbal explanation in addition to an information sheet about the project before signing the consent form. It is important that research participants are given sufficient information to enable them to decide whether or not they wish to participate.

Consent must be obtained from all participants before research begins—regardless of the methodology being used—using the standard WCHM consent form and accompanied by an information sheet about the research project. The information sheet should contain all of the information that is contained on the consent form, including:

- The researcher's and supervisor's name and contact details
- The title and description of the project
- Details on how the identity of participants will be protected (both when storing the research data and in published form)
- How data will be stored

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<sup>23</sup> The Institute of Employment Studies, *RESPECT Code of Practice for Socio-Economic Research*, RESPECT Project, United Kingdom, 2004.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> If you would like to read the Commonwealth *Privacy Act 1988* you can access it at: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2011C00074>

<sup>26</sup> Research Office, *Key Ethical Concerns for the HREC*, Australian National University, Canberra, 2009.

- How participants can withdraw from the research and the implications of this, including whether it will be possible to withdraw data
- Payment to participants
- Alternative ways of participating
- Where applicable, provision of services to participants adversely affected by the research
- Complaints procedure
- The likelihood and form of dissemination of the researcher's results—including publication—and any expected benefits to the wider community<sup>27 28</sup>

In the case of surveys, the return of a completed survey constitutes consent, however, the questionnaire should commence with a front page of information that specifies the project in a way similar to a consent form. If the questionnaire is identifiable, a consent form should be completed and separated from the completed questionnaire immediately. Provided that a privacy statement is prominently displayed, completion of online surveys can be deemed as consent.

Consent forms, once signed and dated by the research participants, are stored in the locked cabinet in the Executive Director's office.

Confidentiality: The term "anonymous" is sometimes used incorrectly by researchers when they mean that identities will be suppressed in published material. If individuals are identified or potentially identifiable in the raw research data then it is not accurate to refer to them as "anonymous", even if they are not identified in any publications.<sup>29</sup>

The data collected at WCHM is typically re-identifiable, meaning that individual identifiers have been removed but that it remains possible to re-identify a specific individual. There are times when WCHM collects non-identifiable data, which have never been labeled with individual identifiers or from which identifiers have been permanently removed, such as hard copy surveys returned courtesy of another organisation. WCHM therefore uses the terms re-identifiable or non-identifiable when referring to the data it collects.

WCHM avoids the term de-identified data as the meaning is unclear. While it is sometimes used to refer to a record that cannot be linked to an individual, it is also used to refer to a record in which identifying information has been removed but the means still exist to re-identify the individual.<sup>30</sup>

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27 Research Office, *Key Ethical Concerns for the HREC*, Australian National University, Canberra, 2009.

28 National Health and Medical Research Council, *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2007 p. 20.

29 Research Office, *Key Ethical Concerns for the HREC*, Australian National University, Canberra, 2009.

30 National Health and Medical Research Council, *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2007 p. 26-8.

## **Principle 8: maintaining WCHM's intellectual property**

Intellectual property includes various classes of rights protected by legislation (such as copyright, patents, and registered designs), together with confidential information and trade secrets protected at common law or under contract.

The WCHM Constitution Clause 7.5 states: "The intellectual property of all products created by WCHM shall belong to and be vested in WCHM unless other arrangements are made under specific contracts."<sup>31</sup>

Ownership of any work created by WCHM staff as part of their employment—including by student researchers—is retained by WCHM. Those items include, but are not limited to, written works such as reports and program models, and audio visual material, and will remain the property of and for the use of WCHM in perpetuity.

No researcher working for the WCHM has the right to publish research findings in their own name outside of the direction of the Executive Director and/or the Board. Unless there is specific approval, they may not be used by staff or any other external person or body for any purpose, other than those purposes expressly approved by WCHM, at any time now or in the future.

All research materials are the property of WCHM and may not be used for external publication without the prior consent of WCHM or without acknowledging WCHM as the owners of that intellectual property.

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<sup>31</sup> Women's Centre for Health Matters, *Constitution*, Women's Centre for Health Matters, Canberra, 2010, p. 16.

## **Principle 9: disseminating research findings**

WCHM acknowledges the importance of, and encourages, communication of research findings to Government, other organisations, stakeholders, participants in the research and the wider community.

WCHM research is not peer reviewed. It is, however, influenced by project steering committees composed of individuals from Government agencies, community organisations or individuals relevant to the research being conducted. The steering committee ensures that the research is designed, undertaken and disseminated in a way that is appropriate to the research topic.

WCHM primarily disseminates research findings through published reports that are publicly launched. These reports are then made available from the WCHM website and are distributed to all WCHM board members, general members and relevant individuals or organisations within the ACT community.

WCHM research findings inform our submissions, grant applications, reports to funders and strategic planning and are therefore disseminated in a variety of mediums for sometime after publication.

There are times when preliminary findings are disseminated in order to generate discussion or promote the research taking place.

Research participants: It is common practice at WCHM to keep research participants informed of the research findings. This is harder to do with respondents of surveys, but focus group participants and interviewees are invited to the launch of the research in which they participated and provided a copy of the report. (Research participants are involved in earlier parts of the research process too, which have been outlined above.)

WCHM Board and members: WCHM Board and general members are kept up to date with the work being conducted at the Centre through its website, e-bulletin and email. They also receive invitations to all WCHM report launches and receive a copy of all WCHM reports.

Funders: Our funders are provided with updates of our research through routine reporting. They are also notified intermittently about WCHM research findings, are invited to all WCHM report launches and are provided copies of all WCHM reports.

Individuals or organisations mentioned in the research: It is courteous to notify any individuals or organisations that are mentioned in the research prior to the research being released. This is done at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Media: The media is often notified about WCHM report releases through a media alert and release, written by the author of the report and approved by the Executive Director. Most commonly, either the Executive Director, the report author if a WCHM researcher or the supervisor of a student researcher would liaise with the media. However, in keeping with the WCHM *Public Relations Policy* "the Executive Director is the first point of contact for WCHM for all media enquiries".<sup>32</sup>

Any other interested parties: WCHM keeps other interested parties engaged in WCHM research through the website, e-bulletin and email. All interested/support organisations receive invitations to WCHM report launches and can receive copies of reports upon request.

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<sup>32</sup> Women's Centre for Health Matters, *Public Relations Policy*, Women's Centre for Health Matters, Canberra, 2010, p. 3.

## **Principle 10: training in responsible research practices**

WCHM provides opportunities for staff to partake in training and development in research. These opportunities may include short courses run by other organisations, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, or staff undertaking additional research-based tertiary study.

Students working with WCHM are paired with a WCHM staff member who can guide them through their research project and provide them mentoring and research know-how.

## References

Academic Skills and Learning Centre, *Referencing Basics*, Australian National University, 2010

<https://academicskills.anu.edu.au/node/65>

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