



# Interprofessional Research Collaboration

A perspective from  
physiotherapy

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## Research collaboration

- The newer players in the game
  - Physiotherapy
  - Speech pathology
  - Audiology
  - Occupational therapy
- Clinical disciplines with teaching & clinical practice emphasis
- Predominantly female
- 5 physiotherapists with RHDs in Victoria 1990 - none in the discipline!

## 1991- The challenge for Physiotherapy at Melbourne

- Research university
  - 7 female professors in 150 years
- Faculty with long established strong research disciplines
  - 1 female professor
- Paternalistic, (chauvinistic, antagonistic), dominant medical culture
- Primary responsibility for establishing undergraduate educational program - 6 weeks!
- Secondary responsibility for postgraduate education & research programs
- Freedom to develop the School

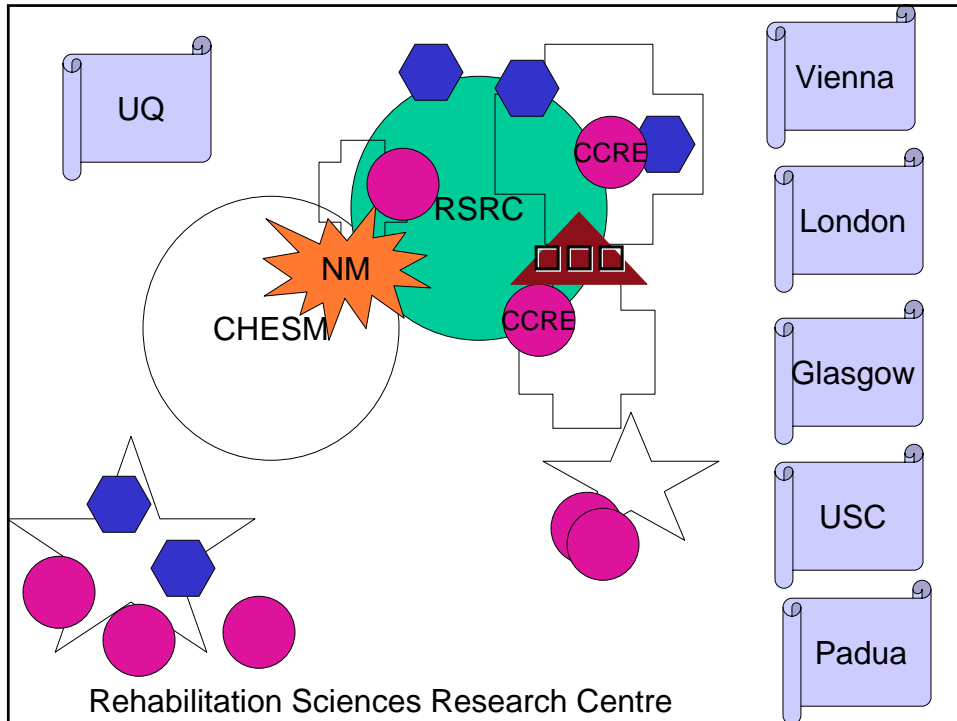


## School Profile

- 1991
  - 3 academic, 2 general staff
  - 40 undergraduate students,
  - 1 postgraduate student
  - 1994 first PhD in physiotherapy in Victoria
- 2005
  - 4 Professors, 31 academic, 15 RO, 16 general staff
  - ~370 undergraduate students,
  - ~125 postgraduate students
  - ~60 research higher degree students







## A physiotherapy perspective

- What are the key issues that must be addressed to achieve a successful collaboration?
  1. People
  2. Infrastructure
  3. Funding



## Key issues

### 1. People

- Leader/s - guiding, inspiring, strategic planning, goal setting, quality monitoring, marketing & staff/student recruitment
- Collaborators - professional relationships with mutual respect & recognition of intellectual contribution
- Mutual benefit for all parties, equity in workload
- Regular meetings & timelines

### 2. Infrastructure – equipment, space & staff

### 3. Funding knowledge & skills in grant acquisition



## Benefits of being a physiotherapy researcher

- opportunity to be a leader
- unique knowledge & skills for multiprofessional research teams

*clinical research has tremendous opportunities for cutting edge research - possible to be a pioneer*

- develop knowledge of direct benefit to community
- research in several domains
- intellectual stimulation & skill development

## Impediments in a multiprofessional research environment

- lack of established research teams, relative inexperience & track record

*having to prove yourself as a competent researcher perhaps more than researchers from other disciplines*

- attitudes of basic science researchers to clinical research let alone physiotherapy clinical research
- many appropriate journals have lower impact factors
- funding - an under-recognised field of scientific enquiry



## Research degrees Physiotherapy Melbourne

- B Sc (Hons) Ad Med Sc
- Master of Physiotherapy
- Master of Science
- Master of Sports Medicine
- Doctor of Medicine
- Doctor of Clinical Physiotherapy
- Doctor of Philosophy



## Output 2004

- 58 peer reviewed journal articles
- 2 book chapters
- 7 national competitive grants
- 3 university competitive grants
- 5 consultancies



