

ABSTRACT TITLE:

Strategies to improve the use of evidence in health management decision making

BACKGROUND:

Research suggests a strong association between evidence-based management and improved effectiveness and efficiency in service provision in the healthcare sector^{1,2}. The practice of evidence-based management is recognised as a way of overcoming some common management failings^{3,4}. Furthermore, the ability to collect and analyse data from internal and external sources relevant to situations, and the knowledge of evidence based practice has been accepted as core competencies for healthcare managers⁵. However, studies in the UK, Canada and the US have shown that the health managers make little use of evidence-based approaches to decision making¹. In order to gain better understanding of the current practice of evidence-based decision making among senior healthcare managers in Victoria, and the factors that enable and discourage the practice, a research project has recently been completed.

METHOD:

This exploratory, descriptive study used quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data from Fellows and Associate Fellows of ACSHE in Victoria, which included a questionnaire and two focus group discussions.

RESULTS:

This study not only clarifies what constitute evidence in the view of healthcare managers, but also confirms whether evidence has been commonly and effectively sourced, appraised and used. A number of key factors that influence the practice of evidence-based decision making in health management has also been identified.

CONCLUSIONS:

The project concludes that responsibilities of improving the practice of evidence-based decision making among healthcare managers should be shared by all three of the following parties: the managers, healthcare organisations and researchers. Specific strategies will also be discussed during the presentation relevant to managers, policy makers, researchers, healthcare organisations, and research institutions.

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Short BIO

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Dr. Liang has been teaching and researching in the area of Health Service Management for nearly five years. She also had a wealth of experiences in working as a clinical practitioner, planning and evaluation consultant, and senior manager in the healthcare sector before she pursued her academic career. Her current research focuses are evidence-based management practice and competencies among hospital executives.