



Foster diversity among health researchers and support sustainable research careers

ISSUE

Despite recently increased research investments, there is still a paucity of funding for mid-career researchers, as well as early-career Indigenous researchers. Inequities also persist, with underserved, minority and disadvantaged peoples having fewer opportunities and facing significant structural and institutional barriers to engaging in research careers. In addition, we know very little about the health workforce in Canada, including workforce trends, threats and opportunities.

REQUEST

The Royal College calls on all parties to ensure that there are viable career pathways for health and health system researchers in Canada. This will involve purposeful engagement with the academic medicine community in an effort to identify pressure points and co-create funding infrastructures that support health researchers throughout their careers. Now is the time to commit funding that fosters diversity among health researchers and supports sustainable health research careers.

WHY IT MATTERS

The Evidence

- Basic, applied and systems-level research are critical to the development and enhancement of the health care system.
- Diversity in research, including increased opportunities for Indigenous people, minority groups, and disadvantaged populations will lead to more creativity, more innovation, and more meaningful research outcomes.
- Researchers in Academic Medicine face a unique set of challenges, related to funding models and allocation of time for all aspects of their roles.

The Impact

- Basic and applied research increase knowledge, and facilitate valuable innovations that in turn lead to the development of new products, services, and technologies that benefit societies and individuals on a global scale.
- Research is a strong economic driver, leading to the creation of quality jobs, investments in communities, and helping Canada to recruit and retain the best and brightest minds.

FAQs

Why do we need to target specific populations, if everyone can apply for research funding?

Systemic and institutional barriers have made it difficult for certain populations to participate in the research ecosystem. We also know that certain groups (ie. Women) may be successful in securing early-career funding, but they face significant barriers, and are under-represented at the senior level, including in the Canada Research Chairs. Efforts must be made to ensure funding is available, and provide supports, including mentoring and pathway programs, to help advance the careers of traditionally under-represented peoples.

Why does health workforce research matter anyway?

Our healthcare system relies heavily on a range of health care providers and other staff, including physicians, surgeons, nurses, and other health professionals. To understand the needs within the health care system, we need to understand the composition, distribution, demographics, trends and contributions of the people working within that system. Health workforce research also helps with workforce planning, which aims to ensure that health worker numbers, distribution, competencies and models of care align with population needs.

Why is Indigenous research so important?

Indigenous peoples living in Canada have the worst health outcomes of any population. Addressing these inequities requires collaboration, led by Indigenous people, who have the best understanding of the health, social and cultural needs of their peoples. Non-Indigenous people must act as collaborators in the true spirit of allyship.



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