

## RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING: THE ROLE OF THE PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH NETWORK VicReN

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### What is VicReN and what does it do?

VicReN is a practice-based research network established in 2007. It currently has 87 members and:

- promotes a research culture in general practice and primary health care.
- links primary care practitioners and academics in order to build their research capacity: practitioners contribute their knowledge, skills and experience in the delivery of primary care, and academics provide a framework for the development and implementation of important research projects.

### What has VicReN achieved?

- All founding GPs are engaged in NHMRC-funded projects: 3 are paid GP advisers on projects, and 3 are undertaking Masters by research;
- Some members are participating in VicReN-associated research;
- GPs contributed to the development of a trial shared-care intervention to address childhood obesity;
- E-bulletins are regularly published to offer research and study opportunities, events, information and to share members' research achievements; and
- Committee members piloted a baseline survey to assess their research skills and interests that will also monitor the network's achievements.



*“Practice-based research networks can open up what is really happening in primary care and work towards making it as good as it can get.”*



Dr. Hubert van Doorn, VicReN Foundation Member



### How does VicReN build research capacity?

Building research capacity is integral to VicReN's agenda, and is achieved by:

- linking members with research fellowships and academic research courses;
- encouraging members' participation in ethical research projects that acknowledge and support primary health care;
- providing links to academic and wider research community events and information through regular e-bulletins and newsletters;
- developing relevant modules on the research process and presenting research skills; and
- ensuring research methodology respects the general practice working environment, is practical, feasible and therefore more likely to succeed.

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### Where is VicReN headed?

VicReN:

- builds a research-active community of primary health care stakeholders committed to improving the quality and relevance of research in primary care;
- provides information and research events; and
- promotes the relevance of research to primary care which will improve community health outcomes by informing primary care practice and policy.



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**General practitioners, practice nurses, practice managers and primary care practitioners: are you keen to make a difference?**

If you would like to learn more about how VicReN can build your research skills capacity, add a new dimension to your day-to-day routine, or link you with other primary care practitioners with a genuine research interest, don't hesitate to contact the VicReN Coordinator Melinda Soós for more information via (03) 8344 3392 or msoos@unimelb.edu.au

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