

Consumers & Research

What's in it for us?

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Not all consumers equal under the law

- Illegal nature of much drug use has massive impact
 - Stigmatisation almost legal
 - Impacts on not just what people say but how we see ourselves
 - Dominant language that of treatment & recovery
 - Drug use is not something everyone wants to stop
- On the other hand drug users in NSW have a representative voice, whereas alcohol doesn't

What's in it for us?

- Research in general has not always delivered positive outcomes for many consumers.
- Positive outcomes for example:
 - More choices for consumers
 - Assertion of consumer / community control / input
- Negative:
 - Increase stigma and discrimination
 - Lessen harm reduction
 - Lessening choices in treatment

“Evidence based policy”

- Some cynicism around this phrase...
- However, it is absolutely crucial for us to be involved at every stage of as much as possible

“Level” of involvement

- Planning, some initiation, ethics etc. perhaps best undertaken by representative orgs at present
 - Capacity
 - NUAA’s attempted “Ethics committee”
- Recruitment
 - ensure not just most visible consumers are researched
 - ensure wide range as possible
- Data Interpretation
 - Co-authoring incredible capacity and credibility jump for consumer and organisation

Differing approaches

- NCHSR is not only research group of course
- Many others with varying levels of consumer involvement
- To us this shows clearly in the outputs
- Consumer ethics committee/board was an attempt to bridge this

Outcomes

- Consumer involvement at the “business” end: initiation, investigation, ethics, data interpretation
- Improved / increased over the years
- Consumer capacity partly responsibility of researchers to build
- Trust improving but not total
- Peer/Professional boundary must dissolve

Thanks

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