

Translating research into practice: insights into practical pathways to apply new research findings

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Abstract

Too often, there is a gap between research and action. For researchers, peer-reviewed scientific evidence is the benchmark of success, while for policy makers and practitioners, success is being able to apply findings in the 'real world'. In this presentation, we will unpack the practical process used to translate the research to practice taken in a major research project that aims to improve cyclist safety. We will discuss the approach used to bring together leading Australian and international road safety experts, practitioners and policy makers to build the pathway from research to practice and increased safety.

Background

Safer Cycling in the Urban Road Environment is a major research study funded by the Australian Research Council through the Linkage Scheme. The study started in 2013 and took a multi-disciplinary approach to understand the issues contributing to cyclist injury with a particular focus on the road environment. Now, four years later with two completed PhD studies (O'Hern, Lawrence), several scientific publications and conference presentations, the study is reaching its conclusion. To ensure the breadth and depth of research evidence produced by the study is shared with key local stakeholders and clear pathways to practice as established, a translational workshop will be held in June 2018. This presentation at the Australasian Road Safety Conference in Sydney will present the outcomes and insights from that workshop.

Method

The translational pathway has three key stages: 1) facilitated interactive workshop; 2) familiarisation of Melbourne context, and; 3) public forum. As an ARC Linkage study, this project has the advantage of existing partner organisations involved in the project from the beginning. Partner organisations include Main Roads Western Australia, VicRoads, Transport Accident Commission, Amy Gillett Foundation, Cycling Promotion Foundation will be joined by international experts, representative from local councils and staff from Monash Art, Design and Architecture (MADA) in an interactive workshop. The workshop will present the key research findings and develop pathways to implementation. Stage 2 is a familiarisation tour for the international experts prior to the workshop. This tour by electric bike will enable the experts to experience the good and the bad of Melbourne's cycling infrastructure and provide context before the workshop. The third and final stage is a public forum at Monash University where the international delegates will present insights from their own experiences and provide an opportunity to engage further with local researchers and practitioners.

Results and Discussion

The stages of the workshop will be held from 18-20 June 2018. Following the workshop we will update our submission to the 2018 Australasian Road Safety Conference to provide details on the success and the limitations of our approach and the next steps for action.

In this presentation we will present the successes and examine the limitations of this practical approach to translating research into practice. We anticipate that the findings will provide insights for other researchers and practitioners on how to close the gap between research and practice to achieve greater road safety outcomes.