

Background & Rationale

- The amount and quality of research conducted in Canada in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is on the rise
- While there has been pockets of success, EMS research endeavors in Canada often occur in silos across the country
- To date there has not been a common roadmap to guide future initiatives or collaboration
- Other countries have built national research agendas for EMS (USA & Australia) which are unique to their environments
- A *Canadian National EMS Research Agenda* was felt to be important to represent the issues and priorities unique to Canadian settings

Study Objective

- The purpose of this baseline study was to explore the opinions of key EMS stakeholders on EMS research in Canada as a first phase of the *Canadian National EMS Research Agenda* study
- Specifically, we sought to:
 - understand stakeholder's perceptions of the barriers and opportunities within EMS research in Canada,
 - what recommendations they have for moving forward,
 - and what areas of EMS research they believe should be prioritized in Canada.

Methods

- Qualitative descriptive methodology using one-on-one semi-structured interviews to collect data was employed
- Ethics approval was received from St. Michael's Hospital Toronto
- Sampling was purposeful across a variety of stakeholder groups
- Interviews were conducted by telephone, audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis
- Constant comparative analysis approach was used to track emerging themes and a basic coding framework was developed.
- Codes were then grouped into main thematic areas by two investigators and a descriptive interpretation is presented.



Findings

- Thirteen interviews were completed over 3 months
- Participants included 4 EMS physician researchers, 4 paramedics, 2 EMS physicians (medical directors) and 3 EMS educators
- Participants had an average of 14 years of experience (range 7-29) in EMS and/or EMS research.

Key themes identified included:

- (a) the lack of and need for *education and training related to research* for EMS staff and management, including fostering further mentorship opportunities;
- (b) the importance of creating a *physical infrastructure to support* pan-Canadian research collaboration;
- (c) the need to address the *operational complexities of involving frontline paramedics* in research despite their desire to be involved
- (d) the need for a Canadian research agenda to consider the geographic and political *diversity of EMS in Canada*.

- Participants recommended focusing on *principles to guide areas of research* rather than the identification of priority topics
- A key benefit of a National EMS Research Agenda was identified as the opportunity to create *Canadian-specific evidence* and knowledge for use in practice and training
- Of interest, issues related to *increasing funding for EMS research* was not mentioned as a priority by the participants.

Discussion

- This baseline study fulfilled its objective as a starting point for a much larger consensus-driven methodology, and provided important direction for the subsequent roundtable discussion, development of a Delphi survey and data triangulation
- There is a very strong belief in the need for stronger formal training and infrastructure supports for EMS research across Canada and the importance of creating specific knowledge for the Canadian context
- Some of the findings of this study may addressed at a national level, but organizational barriers to EMS research at a local level may be different than anticipated

Conclusions

- The stakeholder opinions about the EMS research environment in Canada are unique and will greatly influence the shape and direction of the Canadian EMS Research
- This baseline study reveals key themes regarding the state of EMS research in Canada, which are hypothesis-generating. This study was an informative first step to establishing a comprehensive and representative *Canadian National EMS Research Agenda*

Acknowledgements

This study was conducted in collaboration with the EMS Chiefs of Canada (EMSCC), the Paramedic Association of Canada (PAC) and the Dalhousie University Division of EMS. Thank you to participants for their participation, time and thoughts.



The study was generously funded by EMSCC, PAC, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation, Calgary EMS Foundation, and the Canadian Police Research Centre.

