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

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