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**1990-2015: Celebrating 25 years of research  
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# **Ontario knowledge user perspectives on OHS research use**

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## Presentation overview

- What are the key messages?
- Why are we interested in research use?
- What did we set out to do?
- How did we ask about research use?
- What did we find?
- What are those key messages again?
- What are some next steps?
- How many questions will you ask?



## What are the key messages?

- Research use is important and KU report having the skills and motivation to find and evaluate research but lack the time necessary!
- KU want to find and use credible research from various disciplines, preferably from a single place (one-stop-shop) and available in plain language
- KU share evidence (to peers and others) and report having skills needed to tailor messages for specific audiences/contexts but often lack time to do this



## Why are we interested in research use?

- Research utilization (research use) is the use of research to guide practice, planning, and policy (decision-making)
- Seems straightforward, but Weiss (1979, 1981) argued that research utilization is fluid and diffuse and requires multiple processes:
  - “understanding, accepting, reorienting, adapting, and applying” the research results to practice (Weiss, 1981)



## Why are we interested in research use?

- Evidence-based decision-making (practice) in Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

...is the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about ... The practice of evidence based decision-making means integrating individual expertise with the best available external evidence from systematic research.

Adapted from Sackett DL, Rosenberg W, Gray JA, et al. Evidence based medicine: what is it and what it isn't. *BMJ*. 1996; 312:71-2.



## What did we set out to do?

Our objective was to examine the experiences and perspectives of OHS knowledge users in Ontario regarding research use

Knowledge Users (KU) are:

Stakeholders who could use relevant research evidence to inform OHS practice and/or policy.

We selected KU from the IWH contact relations database with the following criteria:

- agreed to be contacted for IWH studies
- job title, responsibilities included OHS or disability prevention
- excluding non-Ontario residents, MPPs and retirees



## How did we ask about research use?

- Online survey adapted from CFHI self assessment tool
  - Questions (40) related to acquiring, assessing, adapting, and applying research evidence (5 point Likert scale – disagree to agree)
  - 690 KU from IWH contact list, sent email link to survey
  
- Interviews (4-6 KU): 1 hour semi-structured
  - Guided by CFHI self assessment tool
  - 36 individuals approached (survey respondents)
  
- Focus groups (6-8 KU): 90 minutes, 2 groups
  - Guided by CFHI self assessment tool
  - 44 individuals in GTA approached (survey respondents)





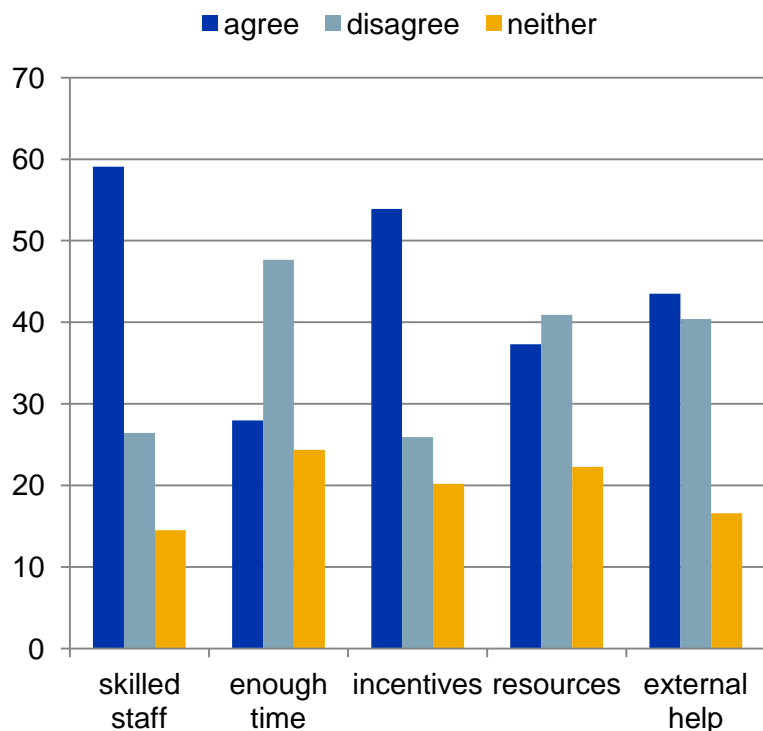
## What did we find? Participation

- 236 (of 690, 34%) knowledge users responded to the survey
- 196 (28%) provided responses to at least 40% of the items
- 6 interviewees and 7 focus group participants
- Results presented according to acquiring, assessing, adapting, and applying evidence





## What did we find? Acquiring evidence (1)



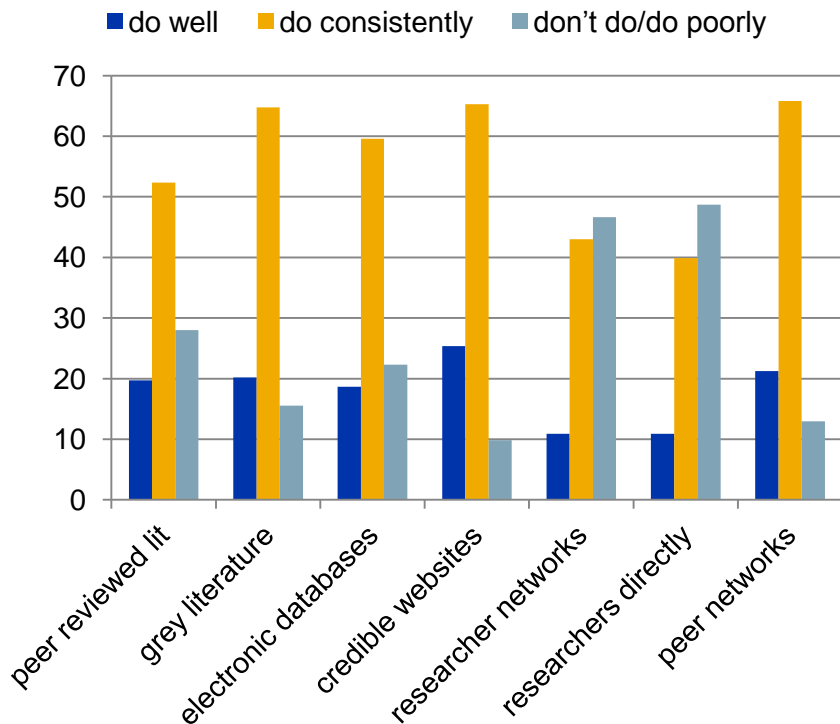
We have \_\_\_\_\_ to use research.

### KU report:

- having skills and incentives to use research
- not having enough time
- not enough resources or seeking external help?



## What did we find? Acquiring evidence (2)



We search/contact \_\_\_\_\_ for research use.

### KU report:

- consistently searching the peer-reviewed & grey lit, electronic databases, websites, and peer networks
- engaging with research networks or researchers directly?



## What did we find? Acquiring Evidence (3)

**Acquiring** research themes include:

- Using multiple sources (including colleagues)
- Research from different disciplines helpful
- Need to look frequently (keeping current)
- Willing to collaborate with researchers
- Willing to share with others

Barrier to research use:

- **Time** it takes to search and acquire
- Lack of a single location (one-stop-shop)
- Difficulty accessing research evidence



*I don't have a lot of time ... I find that I end up dealing with a lot of the emergencies that come my way, and my stuff that I want to do gets off to the side.*

-Krista, workplace practitioner



## What did we find? Acquiring Evidence (4)

**Acquiring** research themes include:

- Using multiple sources (including colleagues)
- Research from different disciplines helpful
- Need to look frequently (keeping current)
- Willing to collaborate with researchers
- Willing to share with others

Barrier to research use:

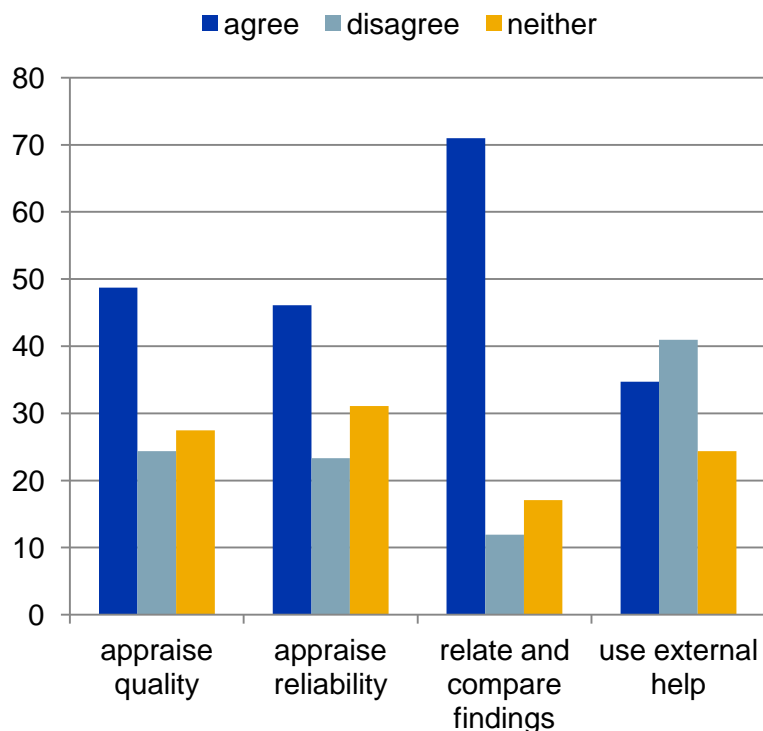
- **Time** it takes to search and acquire
- Lack of a single location (one-stop-shop)
- Difficulty accessing research evidence

*I might reach out to my colleagues in other 'workplaces' since we're all the doing the same thing.*

-Abigail, workplace practitioner



## What did we find? Assessing evidence (1)



We can \_\_\_\_\_ of/for research.

### KU report:

- they can appraise the quality and reliability of research
- **having the ability to relate and compare research findings**
- not using external help to assess research?



## What did we find? Assessing evidence (2)

**Assessing** research themes include:

- Self-directed when assessing evidence
- Notions of **credibility** were important and the ability to assess it
- Recent evidence (newest research)
- Have skills to appraise quality
- Assessment skills important when using research to support decisions

Barrier to research use:

- Difficult to draw conclusions
- Time required for assessment



*I think everything needs to be evidence based now. A lot of people who talk from the top of their hat, there's no credence to what they say.*  
- Krista, workplace practitioner

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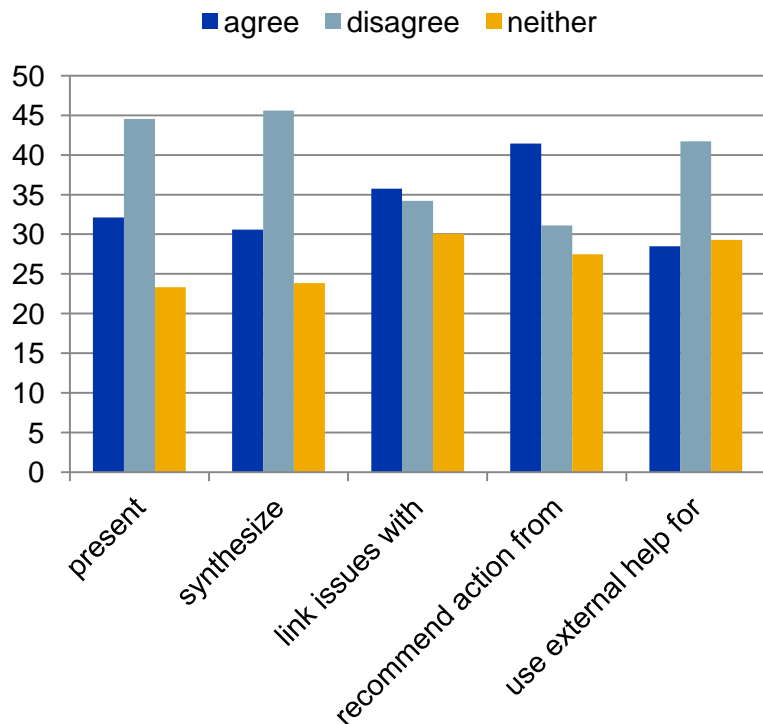
Barrier to research use:

- Difficult to draw conclusions
- Time required for assessment



*I sort of take that information and, I guess, match that with my own knowledge and ability and that sort of thing*  
-Derek, workplace practitioner

## What did we find? Adapting evidence (1)



### KU report:

- do not have skills/time/incentives to present or synthesize research results
- skills/time/incentives to link research to key issues of decision-makers?
- have skills/time/incentives to recommend action from research

We have skilled staff/time/incentives to \_\_\_\_\_ research results.





## What did we find? Adapting evidence (2)

**Adapting** research use themes include:

- Need to adapt research to audience characteristics (literacy, language skills)
- Need for short and concise communications

Barrier for research use:

- Time needed to adapt research to specific needs
- Require evidence that is relevant and specific to needs

*We have to tailor the research that we use and the way we present it based on our audience.*  
–Melody, independent consultant





## What did we find? Adapting evidence (3)

**Adapting** research use themes include:

- Need to adapt research to audience characteristics (literacy, language skills)
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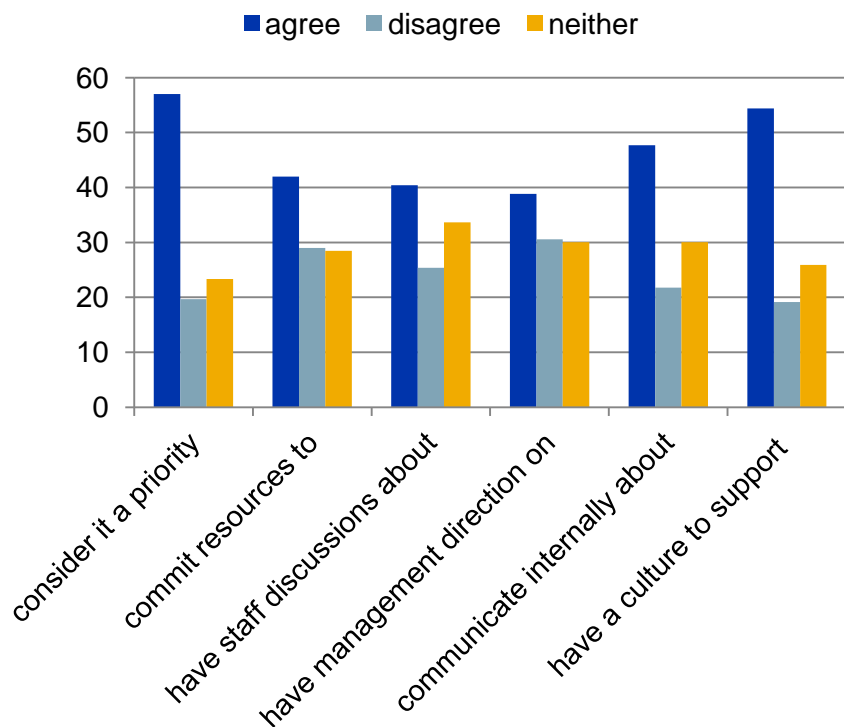
Barrier for research use:

- Time needed to adapt research to specific needs
- Require evidence that is relevant and specific to needs

*People know that this high level research isn't quite useful to everybody but it still has to be done and it's still important. It's just finding the resources and getting them in place to have, you know, whether it's somebody or an organization there to actually do that work that's required to kind of translate it into a way that is actually useful. –Stella, end-user with KT role*



## What did we find? Applying evidence (1)



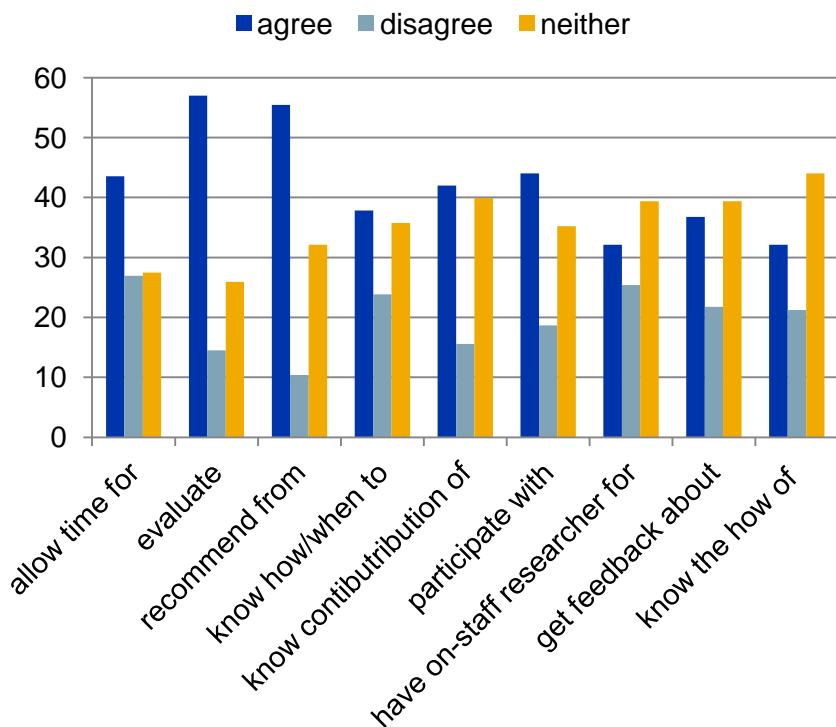
We \_\_\_\_\_ (research use).

KU report:

- **research use is a priority!**
- commit resources, communicate internally and have the culture to support research use
- have staff and management engagement in research use?



## What did we find? Applying evidence (2)



In decision making, we \_\_\_\_\_ research use.

### KU report:

- allow time for, evaluate, and recommend from research for decision-making, participate in decision making
- know how/when decisions will be made, know contribution of research in decision-making?
- may not have researcher on staff, get feedback, or know how research impacted on decisions



## What did we find? Applying evidence (3)

**Applying** research use themes include:

- Understanding the context
- Audience engagement (know the audience!)
- Using multiple formats (adult education principles)
- Practical application

Barrier for research use:

- Finding/creating relatable stories
- Using multiple learning methods
- Time, time, time

*The second they can relate to it, they will retain it.*  
-Amanda, end-user with KT role





## What did we find? Applying evidence (4)

**Applying** research use themes include:

- Understanding the context
- Audience engagement (know the audience!)
- Using multiple formats (adult education principles)
- Practical application

Barrier for research use:

- Finding/creating relatable stories
- Using multiple learning methods
- Time, time, time

*... giving them (audience) the tools and the resources that they can then use. Yeah, so we actually have a full-time department that their job is to engage with these communities and constantly be providing them the support that they need –Elise, OHS consultant*





## What were those key messages again?

- Research use is important and KU report having the skills and motivation to find and evaluate research but lack the **time** necessary!
- KU want to find and use credible research from various disciplines, preferably from a single place (one-stop-shop) and available in plain language
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## What are some next steps?

- Development of tools and products to help KU with research use
- Ongoing evaluation of researcher perspectives on the use of evidence







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