

# Developing Research Priorities in Australian Primary Health Care: A Focus on Nutrition and Physical Activity

Ball et al. (2018)  
<https://doi.org/10.1071/PY16068>

## For which topic were research priorities identified?

healthy lifestyle behaviors

## In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

Australia - Australia

## Why was it conducted at all?

Research priority setting is an important component of research planning, particularly when research options exceed available resources. Numerous approaches to support patients to have healthy dietary behaviours and engage in physical activity have been tested in Australia (Australian Institute for Primary Care 2008). Previous research has identified that primary health professionals, specifically General Practitioners and Dietitians, are regarded as trusted and reliable sources of nutrition information (Ball et al. 2014). However, barriers within the current model of primary health care, such as time and funding, limit the capacity of these primary care providers to effectively shift population dietary behaviours and physical activity levels (Foster et al. 2009; Volker et al. 2015). Practise Nurses are increasingly recognised as health professionals ideally placed to enhance healthy dietary behaviours and physical activity in primary care (Sargent et al. 2012). However, these primary health professionals have been shown to elicit only modest improvements in patients' dietary and physical activity behaviours, with no clear factors moderating the effectiveness of interventions (Ball et al. 2015). There is a limited body of research that can confirm the ideal approach to implement in primary healthcare practice, signalling that further work in this area is required (Ball et al. 2015). Given concerns over research wastage in Australia (Herbert et al. 2013), an evidence-based approach to ensure that research is efficient, targeted and prioritised is of paramount importance.

## What was the objective?

to identify research priorities for supporting healthy lifestyle behaviors in the Australian primary healthcare setting

## What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 13 research questions

## How long did the research prioritization take?

No information provided.

## Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

survey

## How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: selecting management team. Step 2: determining scope and context of priority setting project. Step 3: stakeholder mapping and survey: survey asked participants to provide up to three research questions deemed as a priority, 15 research questions submitted. Step 4: defining criteria for prioritizing. Step 5: scoring questions: participants were asked to score each research question along criteria

## Which stakeholders took part?

Patient representatives, health professional associations, health educators, researchers, government advisors and policymakers; 10 stakeholder organizations participated.

## How were stakeholders recruited?

Categories of potential stakeholders were identified by the management team to include medical practitioner bodies, nursing organizations, nutrition and dietetic organizations, physical activity associations, government and non-government agencies, primary health networks, health insurance providers and research bodies. A list of stakeholder contact details was developed using publicly available information from websites. Preference was given to nationally representative bodies in order to capture informed opinions from the broadest possible audience. A total of 27 stakeholder organizations with an interest in primary health care were approached by emailing the director, president or external relations officer to explain the aim and ethical approval of the project.

## Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders were mere participants of the research prioritization process; they were not actively involved in the process.