Finding Research Partners

in

Public & Patient Involved Research

Facilitator:

Jon Salsberg

UL GEMS

NUIG Health Promotion Conference

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Outline of Workshop

- Different research partners and their research interests
- Finding research partners

- Workshop Activity: Identifying Project Partners

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Types of partners

- Practitioners

  e.g. MDs, RNs, PTs, OTs, Pharmacists

- Patients

  e.g. those patients attending a health centre

Example:
Research questions arising from health professionals' unmet clinical

Example:
Research questions arising from patients' concerns about the care they are receiving, or a research project aimed at improving patient centred outcomes

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- Patients

  e.g. those patients attending a health centre
- Patient organizations

  e.g. disease specific
- Caregivers
- Whole communities

Example:
Collecting baseline data, evaluating interventions e.g. for promoting healthy lifestyles

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Note that a particular research project may involve one or more of these potential partners, and thus overlap should be expected.

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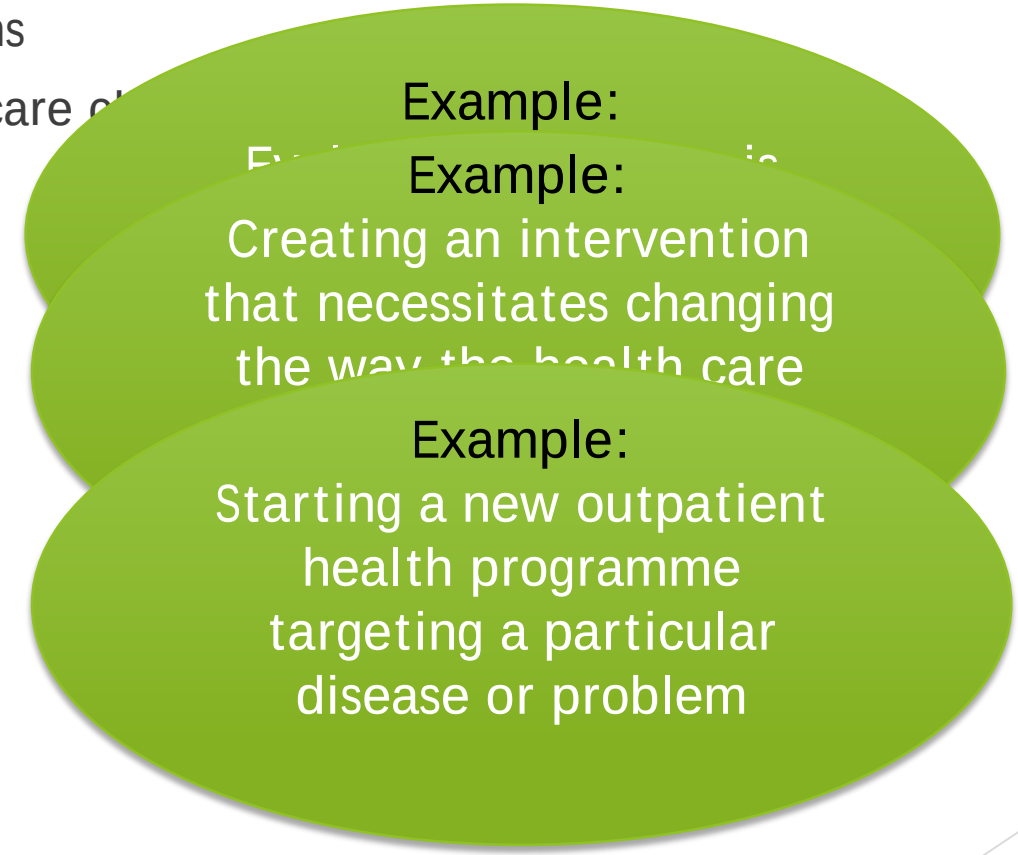
More! Types of partners

- Decision makers (e.g. program managers)
- Policy makers
- Institutions/organizations

  e.g. hospitals, primary care c



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More! Types of partners

- Decision makers (e.g. program managers)
- Policy makers
- Institutions/organizations

  e.g. hospitals, primary care clinics
- Professional colleges/associations
- Research funders
- Industry

Example:
Formally testing off-label use of an existing medication

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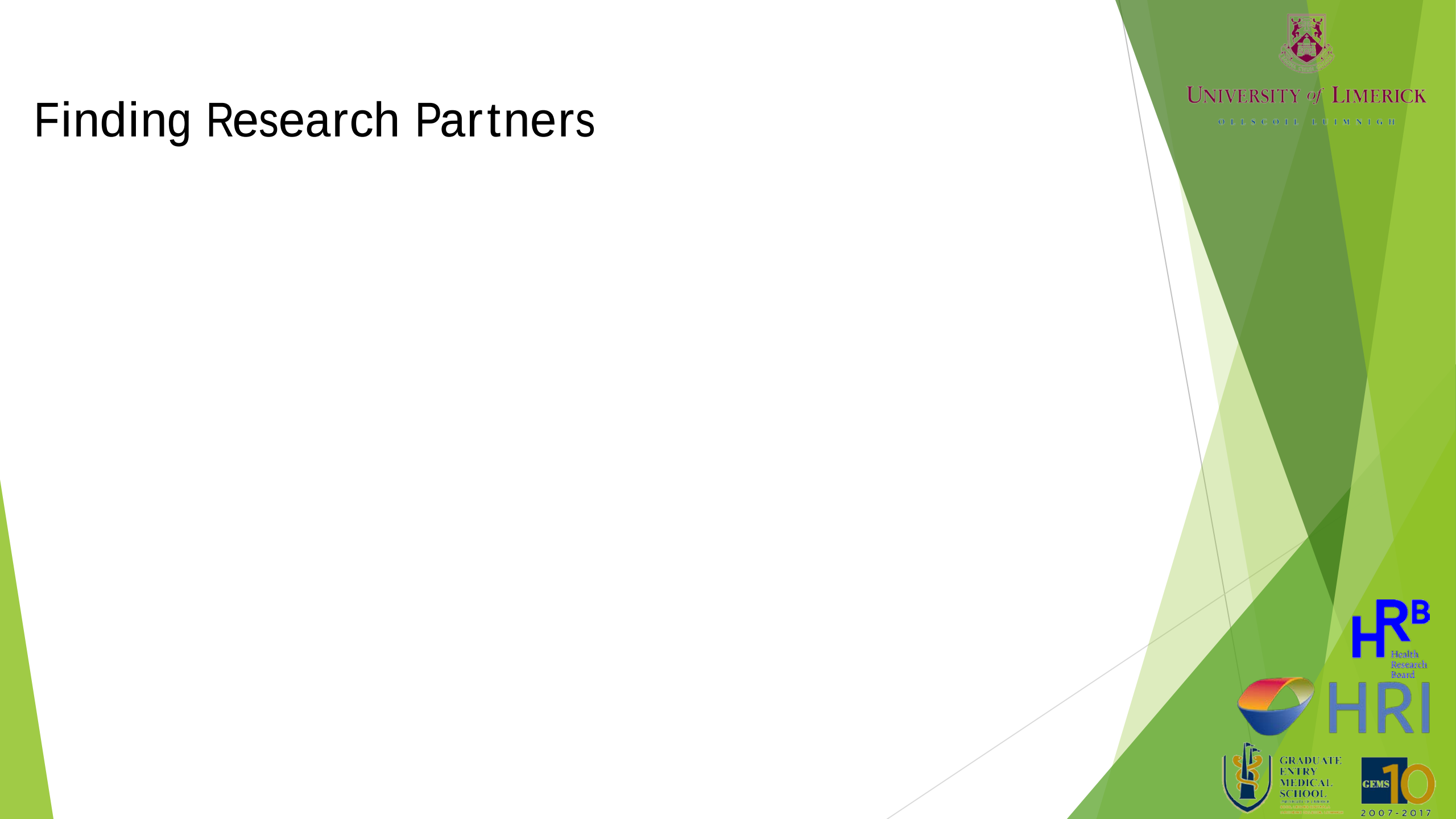

Reflect on the context and environment

- Do you have **existing relationships** with potential partners from some other aspect of you work or your life you can leverage?
- Pre-existing research relationships with researchers at **your institution**?
- Is **research used** by the potential partners, and how they would like to do so in the future?
- The **history of past relations** is particularly important to consider when working with historically underserved or ill-served communities, e.g. Indigenous or migrant communities.

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More issues to think about…

- The level of **organisation of the partners** –
  - are they a cohesive community with representative leadership?
  - are they represented by an advocacy group?
  - are they a loose mix of individuals and/or institutions?

- Be aware of the existing mechanisms for knowledge dissemination and exchange amongst the partners (e.g. **social knowledge**).

- Who are the natural **leaders?** – i.e. which individuals or organisations are r**espected** within the partner community and thus have the **potential to influence** other knowledge users, stakeholders or decision-makers?

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Choosing Partners Wisely

1. Is the research topic *really* important to this partner (not *should* be important) and **reflect a real need for action**?

2. Is the partner knowledgeable about – or open to – the **realities of research** – i.e. research norms of practice, and mechanisms of knowledge creation/diffusion?

3. Reflection on the **power structures** inherently in place within the partner community.

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Choosing Partners Wisely

4. Is there the possibility for **congruence of plans** between you and your partners?
5. Is there the potential for true **synergy** – i.e. that the partnership will be **mutually beneficial** and greater than either could accomplish alone?
6. Does the partner have the **capacity** (e.g. resources, skills, time, etc.) to engage in an effective partnership?
7. Will **effective communication** be possible, given geography, language and cultural factors… even IT resources?
8. What is the overall '**readiness factor**'?

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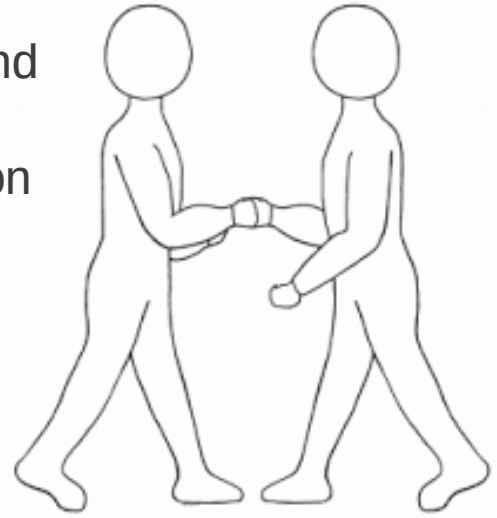
Making First Contact

- Attend partner's **events** (e.g. community events; grand rounds, etc.) **get to know** and start talking to people

- **Get involved** in partner's causes and issues (e.g. help them with another project, making linkages to other people in your network, assisting with literature, etc.) as a way to get to know people and show a willingness to do something for them (v. them always doing something for you)

- When contacting busy partners, **adjust to their schedule** and location for meetings and propose ways in which you can support their initiatives (e.g. making a link with a key person in your network)



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Follow-Up Communication

- acknowledge that **everyone at the table is an expert,** bringing different but equally valuable knowledge and skills
- **answer any questions** about the proposed research plan
- explain participatory principles and why their involvement in the research process is **crucial to its success**
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Have you ever thought about getting involved with research or **starting your own research** project?

How large is your institution? How many staff members work there? What is its target population?

What are some of the **needs** you encounter on a day-to-day basis?

What are some of your or your **institution's priorities** for the next few years?

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Thank You!

More Information…

@PPI_Ignite_UL

PPI-ignite@ul.ie
Jon.Salsberg@ul.ie

Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) Research Unit
http://www.ul.ie/gems/public-and-patient-involvement-ppi-research-unit

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Workshop Exercise:

- Patients / Community members
- Healthcare providers
- Policy and decision-makers
- Researchers

- You are concerned about low rates of breast cancer screening among recent immigrants to Ireland leading to disproportionate burden of poor outcomes among this population. You want to see how best to address the issue and improve outcomes.

- Discuss what you want the project to accomplish
  - What are your main goals and priorities?
  - What do you want to make sure happens?
  - What do you want to make sure *does not* happen?

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