

Guest Editorial

Dr. Daz Greenop,
Senior Lecturer
Liverpool John Moores University

Sharing best practice through publication

According to the Oxford Dictionary Best Practice refers to 'procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being correct or most effective'. A brief trawl through Google however suggests it is often conflated with 'evidence based practice' and, more likely in my own field of social work, 'research informed practice'. Both are, of course, important but all too often imply a one way direction *from research to practice*. In the hierarchy of evidence, systematic reviews and randomised controlled trials rule the chaotic world of health and social care but these 'gold standards' often lack the context of human experience, practice wisdom and social justice. In this time of austerity, my concern is that what is 'most effective' quickly becomes what is 'cost effective'.

It is therefore more important than ever to challenge convention and pose questions to policy makers, commissioners and researchers and ask *what can best evidence learn from best practice?* It needs to be a return journey from research to practice *and back* so that Best Practice is not correct OR effective but correct AND effective. Researchers and practitioners have a responsibility to talk to each other or perhaps more importantly listen to each other and share understanding. It should be a dialogue not a monologue, so it is imperative that one voice does not dominate another. Though it can't be 'controlled', researchers need to recognise the value of practice wisdom and patient experience and, while it may seem removed from reality, practitioners need to understand why 'standards' matter. We cannot know everything but we each have a responsibility to share what we do know, however inconsequential it may feel, and start contributing to the conversation.

Whether it's for a high impact academic journal or the local rag *use your voice*, you have something worth sharing.