**#43 - Tensions and Paradoxes of Scaling Up: A Critical Reflection on Physical Activity Promotion**

**Presenting Author(s)\***

Dr Harriet Koorts1

**Affiliation**

1. Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN), School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences,
2. Deakin University, Geelong, VIC 3220, Australia

**Country of residence**

Australia

**Objectives/aims**

Scaling up evidence-based interventions has been ubiquitously difficult in public health. Accelerating implementation of scalable solutions to physical inactivity is needed, although this requires reliable, dedicated resources, and establishment of strategic connections between stakeholders and policy priorities. Currently, we do not know why some interventions are successfully scaled over others, and how we can facilitate the process. This presentation discusses a number of *tensions* (challenges and conflicts) and *paradoxes* (things that are contrary to expectations) academics, practitioners and policymakers (‘stakeholders’) face when scaling up physical activity interventions.

This presentation showcases new knowledge that extends what has already been learnt through studies of scaling up. We explore challenging concepts such as whether we can improve scaling up and how the systems we work in (i.e., academic or government) contribute to the circumstances we face in population health. We adopted a unique approach to understanding scaling up, by synthesizing multiple viewpoints and framing these through a reflexive and critical lens of ‘tensions’ and ‘paradoxes’.

**Methods**

A multidisciplinary two-day workshop involving stakeholders in physical activity scale-up (convened by University of Newcastle, Australia, and University of Ottawa, Canada; 2019). Objectives included exploring: (1) funding, evaluation and other challenges during scale-up; (2) research designs, process and outcome measures, and costing; and (3) collaboration between government and academic organisations. Workshop facilitators captured session notes, which were grouped into core topic areas. Core topics were organized and framed as ‘*tensions’* and ‘*paradoxes’* in the scale-up field.

**Main findings**

Tensions included: epistemology, methodology, time, and partnerships. Paradoxes included: ‘reach without scale’, ‘planned serendipity’ and ‘simple complexity’. Tensions can impede scale-up progress. Paradoxes encourage a reframing of scaling mindsets. Implications and recommendations for future scale up research and practice included: (i) broadening theoretical approaches, (ii) re-thinking data sources, (iii) co-creation for planning and design, (iv) shared values and evaluation approaches, (v) improving research-practice roles and partnerships.