

From Concept to Capacity: DACRIN's Evolution as a Collaborative Network for AOD Research in NSW

Michelle A Hall^{1,2,3}, Paul Haber^{1,3,4}, Barry Edwards^{1,2},

¹ *Drug and Alcohol Clinical Research and Improvement Network (DACRIN), Sydney*

Australia ²*Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs, NSW Ministry of Health, Sydney Australia*

³*Specialty of Addiction Medicine, Sydney Medical School, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney, Sydney Australia,* ⁴*Edith Collins Centre for Translational Research (Alcohol, Drugs & Toxicology), Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney Local Health District, Sydney Australia*

Presenter's email: michelle.hall@health.nsw.gov.au

Introduction: Established in 2014, the NSW Drug and Alcohol Clinical Research and Improvement Network (DACRIN) was created to address the fragmented and under-resourced landscape for clinical research within alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment services in NSW. Barriers such as limited infrastructure, workforce capacity, and inequitable access—particularly in rural and marginalised communities—hindered research quality and inclusive participation.

Method / Approach: Over the past decade, DACRIN has evolved into a dynamic, Ministry of Health-supported statewide network representing over 80% of Local Health Districts, as well as specialist and non-government organisations. It supports AOD research by providing shared infrastructure, governance frameworks, training, and practical tools—including REDCap instruments, iPads, statistical support, and site-based research equipment. DACRIN's member-only SharePoint platform centralises information and resources to support capacity building. The affiliate membership model has expanded engagement, with almost 300 individuals joining in two years.

Results: DACRIN has significantly strengthened clinical research capability: nearly 150 members have completed Good Clinical Practice training, and almost 60 have completed research skills programs and workshops; and services have received equipment and technical support to improve research quality. DACRIN's approach disrupts traditional models by embedding research capacity directly within services, particularly in rural and justice-involved settings. DACRIN is also working to build more culturally respectful research environments by supporting Aboriginal and consumer reference groups to guide priorities and ensure research reflects lived experience and cultural safety.

Discussions and Conclusions: DACRIN demonstrates the impact of a systems-level, equity-focused approach. Rather than centralising coordination, it empowers services to lead research that challenges exclusionary practices and centres local knowledge.

Implications for Practice or Policy: DACRIN's model offers a scalable and sustainable approach to embedding research in clinical services. Long-term investment in training and shared infrastructure—particularly in under-resourced settings—is critical to achieving more just, inclusive, and effective AOD research.