

# RTNA Conference Reporting Template

## Context

Why is KT important to your organization? What is your role/interest in KT?

ICCER is a relatively new organization with a mandate to be a partnership of practitioners, researchers, educators and learners collaborating in order to provide the best care and quality of life for those served by the continuing care system.

As well as encouraging research activities in the continuing care sector, we encourage uptake of the research findings into practice. In order to assist in this, I act as a knowledge broker between individuals and between organizations.

## Session Overview

Please provide an overview of the conference, the intended audience, and the theme.

The conference attendees were a mixture of researchers, grant providers, decision makers, and knowledge brokers, although the majority of participants were researchers.

The focus of the conference was on integrated knowledge translation and included four main themes: i) what is integrated knowledge translation and how does it work?; ii) the challenges and rewards of building and working in multi-disciplinary research collaboration; iii) creating and sustaining researcher-decision maker collaborations; and iv) knowledge translation theories and frameworks – what they are and why they are needed.

There was a good mix of plenary speakers, panel discussion, and workshops offered. Both days began with a plenary speaker, followed immediately by a panel discussion to further the topic. There was also a good progression in terms of the flow of topics.

The prominence of researchers is primarily historical, after all the emphasis on partnership and collaboration with decision-makers is a fairly recent development in research grants. However, I think discussion would be more balanced if researchers were not the predominant group at future conferences.

Please choose one session you attended (keynote, panel, workshop, etc.) and provide an overview of the key messages of the session.

André Pickard – Plenary Speaker – Monday evening

Mr. Pickard began the conference with a non-academic perspective on knowledge transfer. As a journalist and public policy writer, he has a good knowledge of what is important in translating research into easily understood messages for the general public.

He started off by stressing two key points: i) it is essential to integrate research findings into decision making processes; and ii) researchers /academics should always keep in mind that the public is the ultimate user of research findings.

Mr. Pickard discussed the relationship between journalists and scientists/researchers and how this relationship can serve the public. He believes that the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge is the goal of both journalists and researchers. However, how these two groups perceive findings and use them can be very different. Journalists are more likely to rush to judgment and see issues in black and white terms, whereas researchers tend to be wary of making judgments and seek further clarification of issues. In his mind knowledge translation bridges the gap between these two groups.

He asked the question “Is knowledge actually created if it is not communicated a large enough audience?” In answering this he discussed how evidence means different things to different groups (general public, politicians, journalists, and researchers). In translating, journalists may simplify or over-simplify because the general public don’t have the knowledge to understand jargon, etc. Scientists have the responsibility to make research public and the media has the responsibility to do the translation as a public service. Both researchers and journalists have a responsibility to help improve the knowledge translation at every stage of the process.

## Key Lessons

Overall, what key lessons for KT did you gain from this conference?

I think the two key lessons I learned were:

1. The importance of knowledge being a knowledge broker – Brokers act as a bridge between researchers and policy makers.
2. The need for conceptual frameworks for use in knowledge translation

## Putting It Into Practice

Is there anything you will change your KT practice as a result of this conference?

One thing Mr. Pickard said in his talk was that researchers and journalists need to understand each other's cultures. I think this is appropriate for anyone in the KT business. I work closely with both academic institutions and health care organizations; with educators, researchers, and care providers. Each type of organization and each group of individuals has differing perspectives and cultures. In my role as a knowledge broker it is important to understand the differences, and to try and make each group understand the differences. I think that as ICCER embarks on an initiative to increase membership, this will become a more important aspect of my work and something that I will need to continue to improve on.