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CONDUCTING LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH

Practical lessons from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health

Edited by Deborah Loxton, Wendy Brown, Julie Byles, Annette Dobson and Christina Lee
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Longitudinal research provides data from the same participants over a set time period and as such permits causal pathways (for example to health, illness and mortality), to be determined. There is a new emphasis on accountability in the public health sector. Longitudinal research can help those professionals seeking to implement longitudinal style research in order to meet these new demands.

Conducting Longitudinal Research will help both novice and experienced researchers, from academia, government departments, private and public sectors to establish and conduct a longitudinal study. Offering direction and advice concerning the efficient conduct of longitudinal research studies, *Conducting Longitudinal Research* fills a gap in the research methodology literature.

Internationally, longitudinal research has become increasingly important to both the academic community and state policy-makers as it is an important way to examine causal relationships - for example, understanding critical issues associated with ageing.

While the famous 'Seven Up' study is probably the best known, longitudinal studies can include many thousands of participants (e.g., The UK 'Million Women' study). The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health (ALSWH), which began in 1996, has 40,000 participants who are surveyed every three years.

Conducting Longitudinal Research includes topics from the researchers' experiences:

- strategies to encourage participants to remain in the study (often for decades)
- establishing succession planning for key personnel, and
- handling very large volumes of data.

Conducting Longitudinal Research is a practical guide to the development and successful management of longitudinal studies written by researchers and personnel who have been running the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health for over ten years.

In plain language, each chapter provides the reader with a thorough examination of the topic, illustrative case studies and real-life examples, timelines for project development and implementation and a chapter summary of the main points for quick reference.

Getting started: "Preparing the ground" and "planting the vines" for longitudinal research

Julie Ellen Byles, Annette Dobson, Lois Bryson, Wendy J Brown

Human resources for longitudinal studies: Matching people to skills and tasks

Penny Warner-Smith, Deborah Loxton, Wendy J Brown

Accessing and disseminating longitudinal data: Protocols and policies

Catherine Chojenta, Rosemary Mooney, Penny Warner-Smith

Longitudinal survey development and design

Deborah Loxton, Anne Young

Recruiting for a longitudinal study: Who to choose, how to choose and how to enhance participation

Lyn Adamson, Anne Young, Julie Ellen Byles

Developing relationships and retaining participants in a longitudinal study

Lyn Adamson, Catherine Chojenta

Cohort management: Developing and maintaining participant databases in longitudinal studies

Lyn Adamson, Anna Graves

Data management: The building blocks of clean, accurate and reliable longitudinal datasets

Anna Graves, Jean Ball, Eliza Fraser

Working with longitudinal data: Attrition and retention, data quality, measures of change and other analytical issues

Anne Young, Jennifer Powers, Virginia Wheway

Conducting substudies

Jenny Helman, Deborah Loxton, Lyn Adamson, Anna Graves, Jennifer Powers

Communication and dissemination of longitudinal study findings

Catherine Chojenta, Julie Ellen Byles, Deborah Loxton, Rosemary Mooney

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Conference Convener
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– *Jodyanne Kirkwood*

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BOOK REVIEWS

What is this thing called leadership? Prominent Australians tell their stories

by Neil C Cranston and Lisa Catherine Ehrlich. *Reviewer: Ken W Parry*

Leadership for the disillusioned: Moving beyond myths and heroes to leading that liberates by Amanda Sinclair. *Reviewer: Ken W Parry*

People, processes, projects: Harnessing complex socio-technical systems edited by Errol Lawson, *Reviewer: Ken W Parry*

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