

SiREN Sector Needs Assessment Survey Executive Summary

November 2012

Western Australian Centre for Health Promotion Research

About SiREN

SiREN is the WA Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Applied Research and Evaluation Network. The SiREN project is coordinated by the Western Australian Health Promotion Research Centre (WACHPR) and supported by the Western Australian Department of Health (WA Health) Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Program (SHBBVP).

The objectives of SiREN are:

1. To identify sexual health and blood-borne virus (BBV) public health research priorities in Western Australia (WA) for the priority populations specified in the national sexually transmitted infections (STIs), hepatitis and HIV strategies and the Western Australian model of care implementation plans.
2. To develop partnerships between WA-based researchers, the WA Health SHBBVP and the national sexual health and BBV research centres.
3. To develop and enhance partnerships between government and non-government service providers, researchers and policy makers working towards the prevention and control of STIs and BBVs; and
4. To contribute to an evidence base to inform WA Health's policy and decision making for the prevention and control of STIs and BBVs within WA.
5. To contribute to the national sexual health and BBV research agenda, in particular development of the national STI, hepatitis and HIV strategies 2014-2017.

Enquiries and further information can be made by contacting:

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SiREN Sector Needs Assessment Survey

The *SiREN Sector Needs Assessment Survey* was conducted during August to September 2012 to obtain data on the training and skills needs of organisations in the Western Australian sexual health and blood-borne virus sector in relation to research and evaluation.

The survey was created using Survey monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) and contained 12 questions. The survey took 5-10 minutes to complete and remained open for four weeks.

The survey was emailed to 61 contacts. Recipients were asked to forward the survey within any relevant networks. The number of responses received was 23, a response rate of 38% (based on the initial distribution to 61 contacts). Responses were anonymous.

Demographic data

Disclosure of demographic data was optional. Thirteen organisations disclosed their details. The majority of these respondents were large metro-based organisations. Smaller rural or regional organisations may still have responded to the survey but may have chosen not to disclose their demographic data.

Table 1: Demographic data

	Small (<10)	Medium (10-30)	Large (>30)
Size of organisation (number of staff)	2	1	10
	Rural	Metro	Rural/Metro/Regional
Location of organisation	1	10	2

Survey findings

A summary of the survey findings is presented below:

Importance of research and evaluation

- 96% stated research was either important or very important to their organisation
- 100% rated evaluation as either important or very important to their organisation

Current research and evaluation skills

Note: Two organisations selected more than one option.

- 52% interested in research and evaluation but needed to improve their skills.
- 52% moderately or highly skilled in evaluation and research.
- 4% wanted to seek higher education for research and evaluation.

Types of research and evaluation activities in SHBBV sector

- Many research and evaluation activities currently underway within the SHBBV sector including clinical audits, prevalence studies, participant feedback/evaluation, needs assessment, brief interventions and action research.
- There is currently limited evaluation of behavioural outcomes (i.e. changes in attitudes or behaviours) in relation to STI/BBV control.

Confidence to undertake research activities

- 74% confident or very confident to undertake research activities
- 26% not confident to undertake research activities

Confidence to undertake evaluation activities

- 70% confident or very confident to undertake evaluation activities
- 30% not confident to undertake evaluation activities

Likelihood of undertaking research activities in current role

- 70% likely or very likely to undertake research activities within current role
- 30% not likely to undertake research activities within current role

Likelihood of undertaking evaluation activities in current role

- 91% likely or very likely to undertake evaluation activities within current role
- 9% not likely to undertake evaluation activities within current role

Five most helpful ways in which SiREN could support practice

1. Tool kit resources
2. Project planning and evaluation support
3. Skills building opportunities
4. Education and training opportunities
5. Identifying research opportunities.

Barriers to research and evaluation being done in your organisation

- Lack of time and funding
- Staff knowledge and skills for research and evaluation poor
- Staff capacity
- Resources unavailable/limited
- Lack of experience
- Costs (perceived and actual).

Enablers for research and evaluation to take place in your organisation

- Motivated and keen staff to learn and improve on skills already acquired
- Ongoing encouragement for research and evaluation
- Resources such as: online tools, training programs
- Increased funding due to recognised importance.

Five topics of *most* interest for further training or toolkit resources

1. Planning and evaluating programs (61%)
2. Publishing program findings (52%)
3. The research process (48%)
4. Indigenous sexual health (39%)
5. Youth health (35%).

Other topics of interest for training or toolkit resources

- Sexually transmitted infections (30%)
- Use of peer-based approaches (30%)
- Analysis of clinical data (30%)
- Men and sexual health (22%)
- Sexual health of culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) groups (22%)
- Use of the sex knowledge and attitudes test (13%)
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) sexual health (13%)
- Disability and sexual health (13%)
- Risk factors, safe sex (13%)
- HIV/AIDS (13%)
- Injecting drug use (9%)
- Hepatitis (9%)
- Older aged people and sexual health (4%)
- Sex worker health (0%).

Conclusions and recommendations

The *SiREN Sector Needs Assessment Survey* has provided some useful insights and additional evidence concerning the knowledge and skills gaps within the WA SHBBV sector in relation to research and evaluation. In particular:

- The importance of research and evaluation was very high (95%)
- The majority of the sample were interested in developing their research and evaluation skills
- The likelihood of undertaking research and evaluation activities within current roles was fairly high (70%). However, it is worth noting that a third of the sample did not

think it was likely they would be able to undertake any research activities within their current role.

- Barriers to undertaking research exist and need to be investigated further. Enablers which would support research and evaluation activities were also noted and included training and resources, ongoing support and encouragement to participate in research and evaluation, and access to additional funding.
- Western Australian evidence associated with priority groups was lacking and considered important.
- Topics of most interest for training and toolkit resources were planning and evaluation, publishing program findings, the research process, Aboriginal health and youth sexual health
- Interest in resources and training related to a range of minority groups was also noted. These included: people with disabilities, people who inject drugs, gay men and men who have sex with other men, people living with HIV and other BBVs, and migrants and new refugees.

Two main priorities were identified by the [SiREN Project Team](#) and the [SiREN Resources Reference Group](#) for 2012-2013 following analysis of the results of the *SiREN Sector Needs Assessment Survey*. These were:

1. A focus on **workshops and toolkit resources** which address reported knowledge and skills gaps in planning and evaluating programs. Workshops and toolkit resources are currently under development and will be available during 2013.
2. Provision of **information and support** in relation to the research process, for example guidance with ethics submissions, identification of funding opportunities, review of draft project plans, support in developing an evaluation strategy for a program.

Since the SiREN project was established in May 2012, at least 20 hours of support have been provided to WA SHBBV organisations in the period June-October 2012. Requests for information and support are expected to increase in the coming months as more stakeholders become aware of the free consultancy services available through SiREN.

A new SiREN website was launched in October 2012 – see www.siren.org.au. This site is intended to provide a ‘one stop shop’ for SHBBV organisations to access information to support research and evaluation activities, including notice of upcoming training and skills building events.

Demonstration projects will be established during 2013-2014 which showcase best practice in planning, implementing and evaluating effective SHBBV programs. Evaluation of these projects will be conducted and reported through various channels including the SiREN website, an e-News bulletin and a research and evaluation symposium planned for 2014.