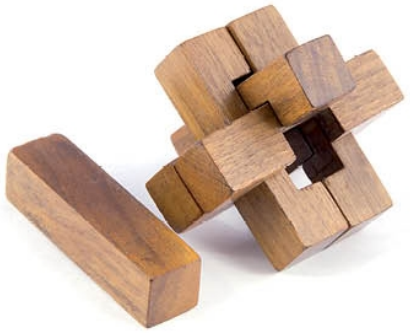


BANFF, CANADA September 7–11, 2014

The International School on Research Impact Assessment

Analysis: Understanding what works

Alexandra Pollitt,
RAND Europe

September 8, 2014

Hosted by: Alberta Innovates Health Solutions

In partnership with: Agència de Qualitat i Avaluació Sanitàries de Catalunya
AGENCY FOR HEALTH QUALITY AND ASSESSMENT OF CATALONIA

RAND EUROPE

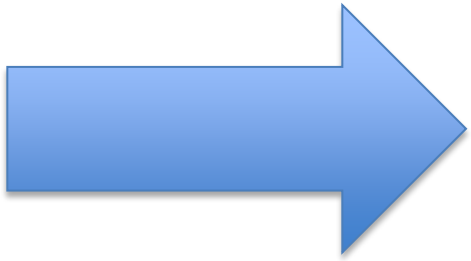
Assessment purpose

Learning outcomes

- Be able to recall what RIA for analysis is
- Know when and where to apply an analysis approach to RIA
- Understand how RIA for analysis links to different types of assessment questions, methods and implementation approaches

When to use analysis approaches…

- Focusing on the ‘how’ as much as the ‘what’
- Help funders:
  - Increase impact
  - Target particular outcomes
  - Support more of what works

Research  **Impact**

What research characteristics are associated with impact?

What kinds and levels of impacts does research produce?

Case Example: Mental Health Retrosight

3 year, 3 country study, driven and inspired by Tony Boeckh who lost his son Graham to schizophrenia.

Supported by multiple funders through the International Alliance of Mental Health Research Funders

Alliance of Mental Health Research Funders
Alliance d'organismes subventionnaires de la recherche en santé mentale

Fondation Graham Boeckh Foundation

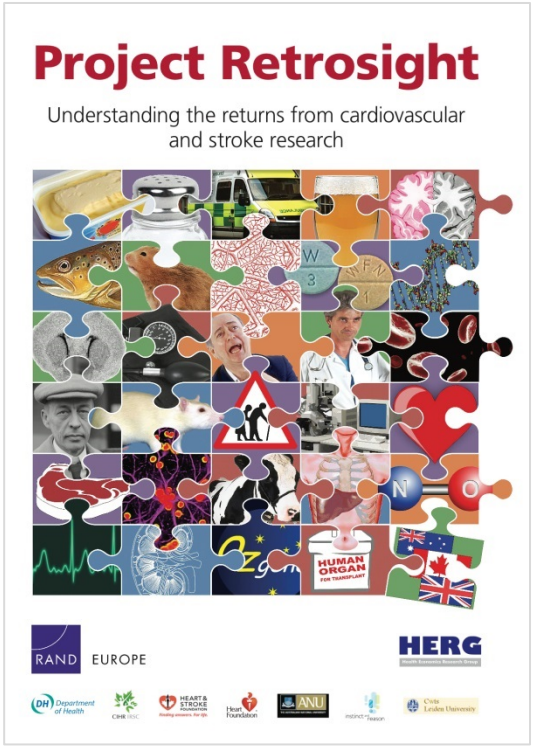
National Institute of Mental Health

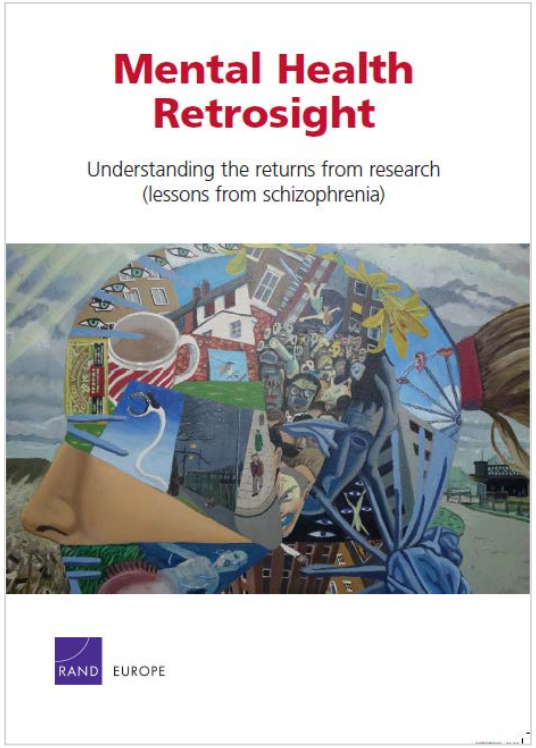
CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research | Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

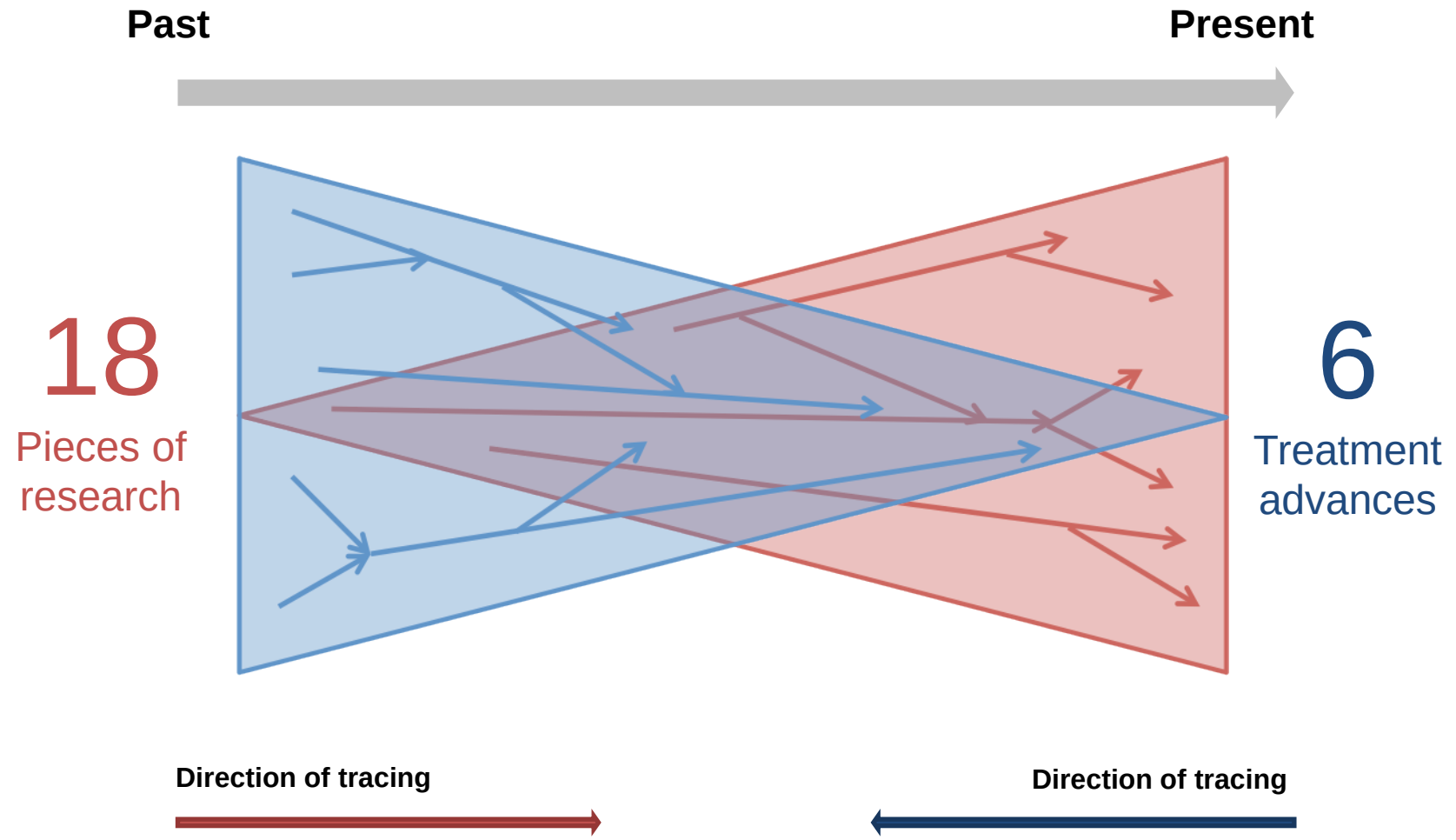
Alberta Innovates Health Solutions

NHS
National Institute for Health Research

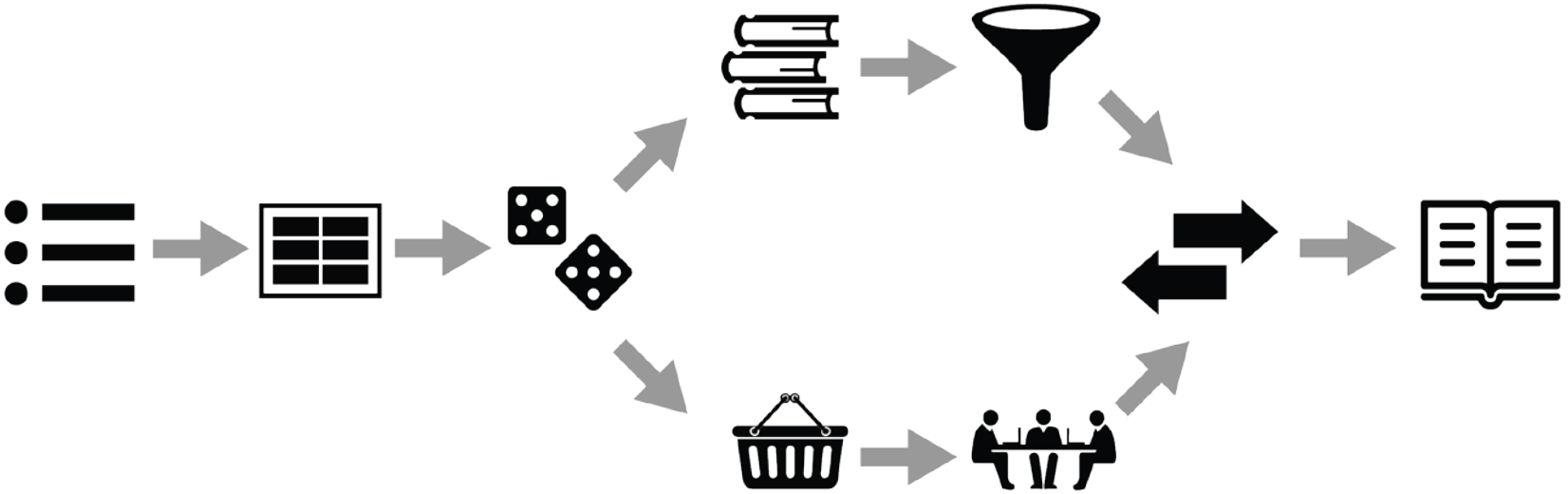
Building on previous work…






Past
Present
18
Pieces of research
6
Treatment advances
Direction of tracing
Direction of tracing

Mental Health Retrosight: Methods



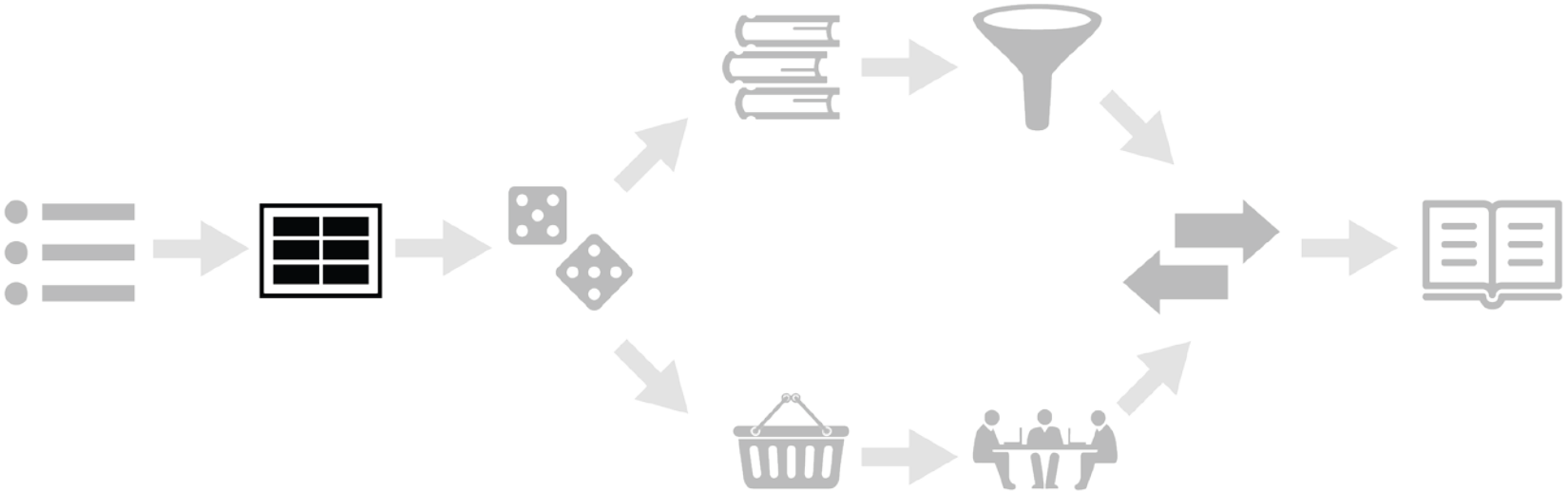
Arrows designed by Martin Chapman, Book designed by Tim Boelaars, Meeting designed by Julieta Felix, Basket designed by mathies janssen, Funnel designed by Patrick N, Stack of Books designed by Jeremy J Bristol – all from The Noun Project

Mental Health Retrosight: Methods

List of highly cited papers

Papers published between 1985 and 1990 about schizophrenia

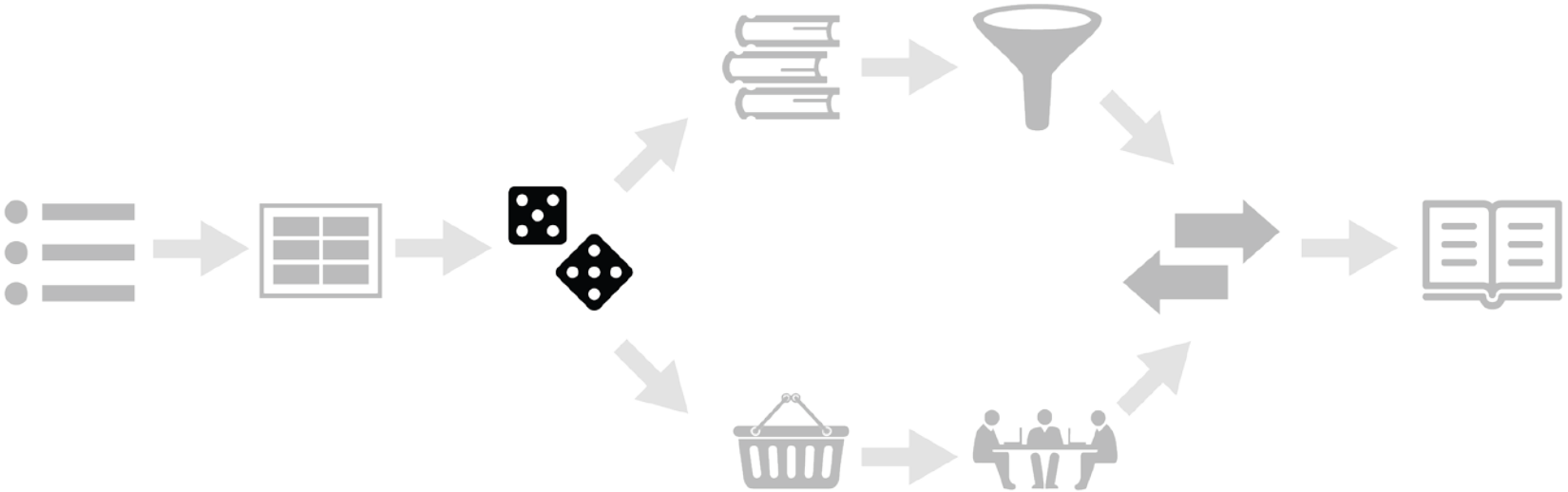
Mental Health Retrosight: Methods



Assign to cells in a selection matrix

	UK	US	Canada
Basic			
Clinical			

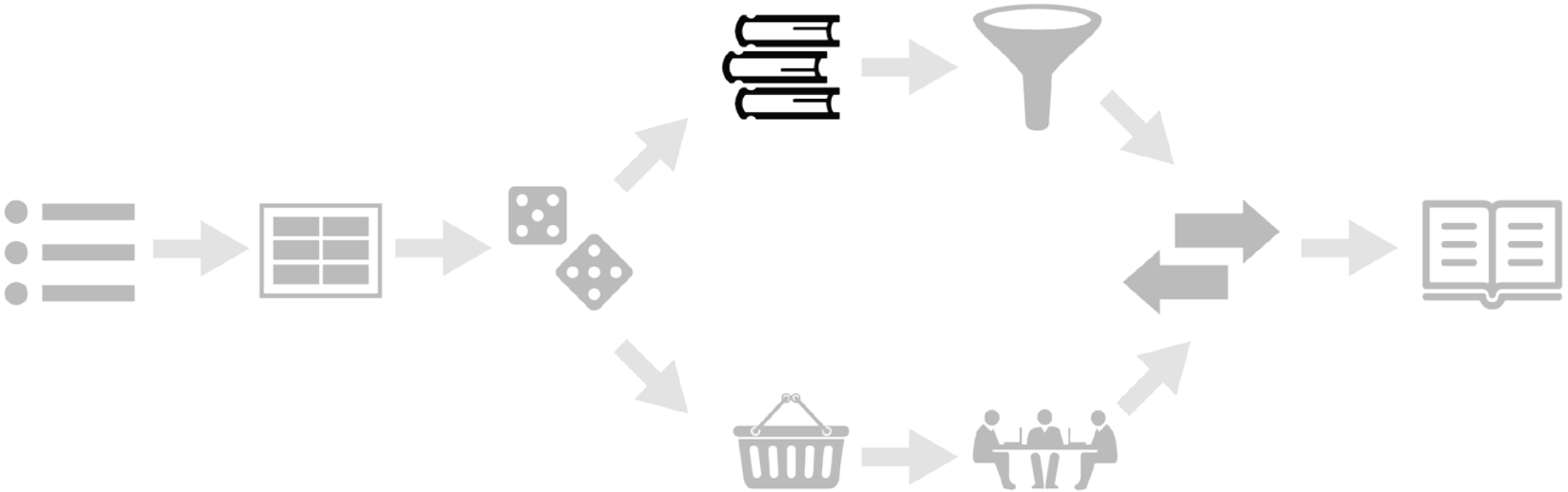
Mental Health Retrosight: Methods



Randomly select

We randomly selected 18 papers

Mental Health Retrosight: Methods



Compile stories

We read publications, did bibliometrics, examined archives and interviewed Principal Investigators

Mental Health Retrosight: Methods

Multidimensional catalogue of impacts

- Knowledge production (KP)
- Research targeting and capacity building (RTCB)
- Information policy and product development (IPPD)
- Health and health sector benefit (HHBS)
- Broader economic benefit (BEB)

Mental Health Retrosight: Methods

Use panel to score impacts

List of impacts

Impacts	KP	RTCB	IPPD	HHSB	BEB
Payback scores	8	4	2	2	0

Mental Health Retrosight: Methods

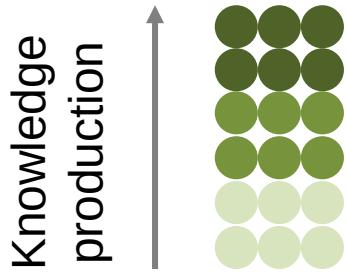
Extract characteristics

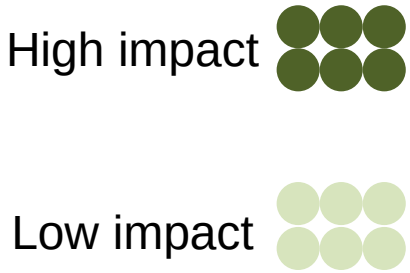
Story

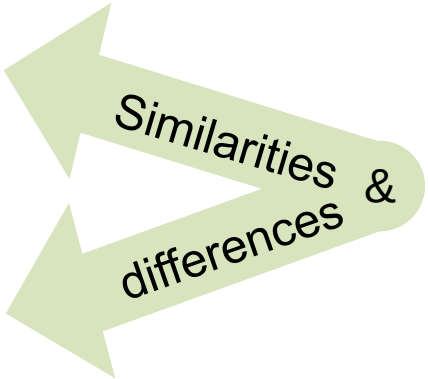
Clinical motivation	Yes
Curiosity focussed	No
Spans stages of translation	No
Multidisciplinary	Yes

Mental Health Retrosight: Methods

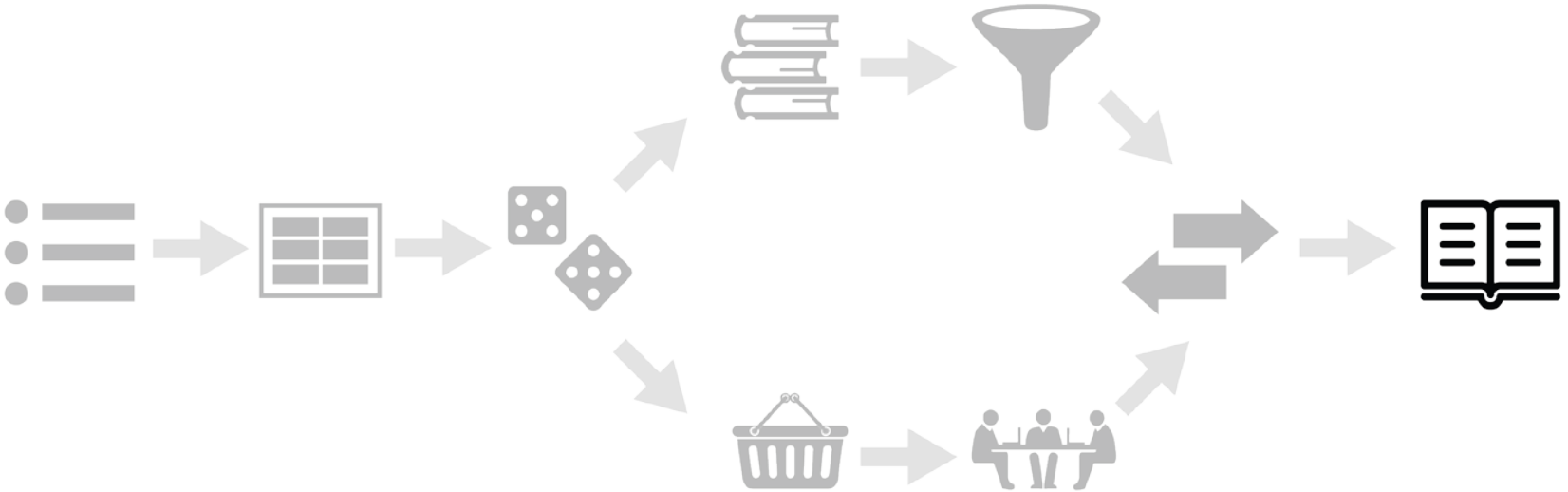
Examine similarities and differences







Mental Health Retrosight: Methods

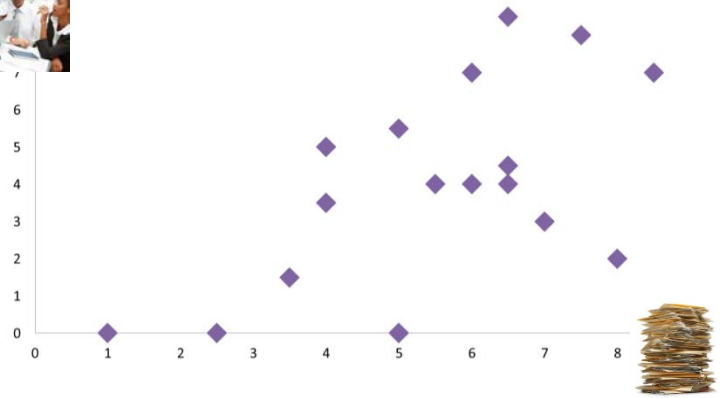


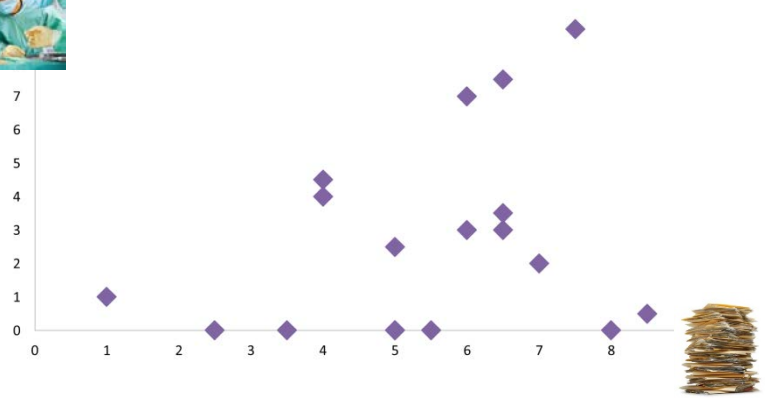
Return to case narratives and existing literature to investigate strength of association

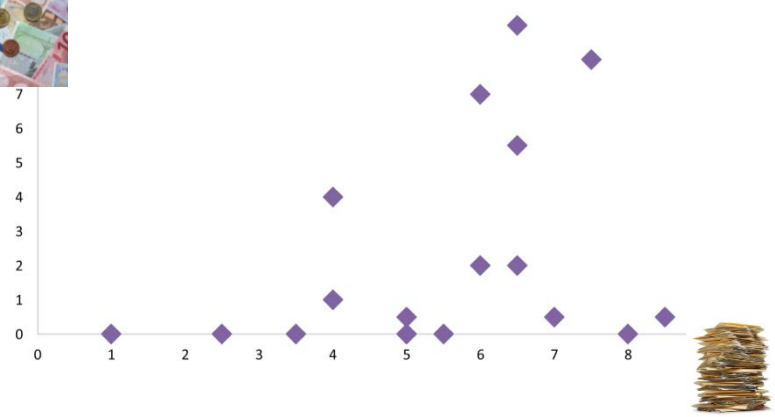
A wide range of impacts was produced

A wide range of impacts was produced

Wider impact was not strongly correlated with knowledge production



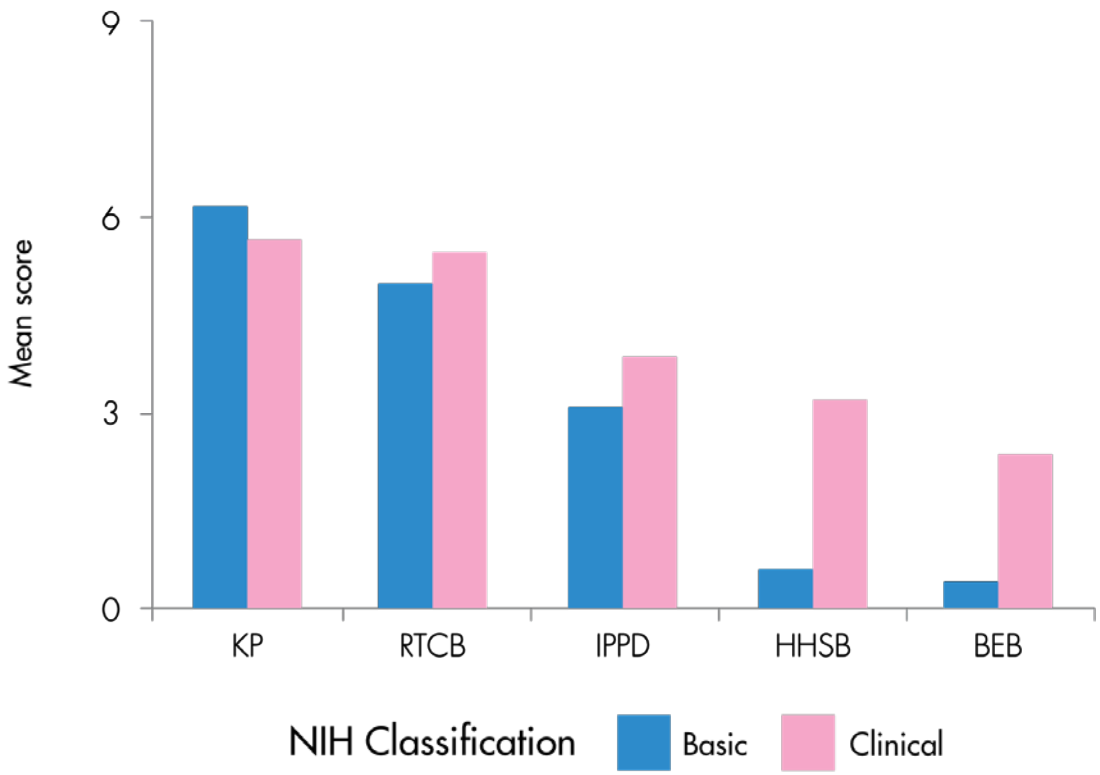




What type of research?

Basic or Clinical?

The impacts of basic and clinical research



Caveats:

Does basic research have fewer, larger successes?

Does basic research have a larger eventual impact and hence is worth the wait?

Finding

Over 20 years, applied or clinical mental health research had had more health, social and economic impacts than basic mental health research

Provocation

Funders aiming to make a difference to patients within 20 years should focus on clinical research

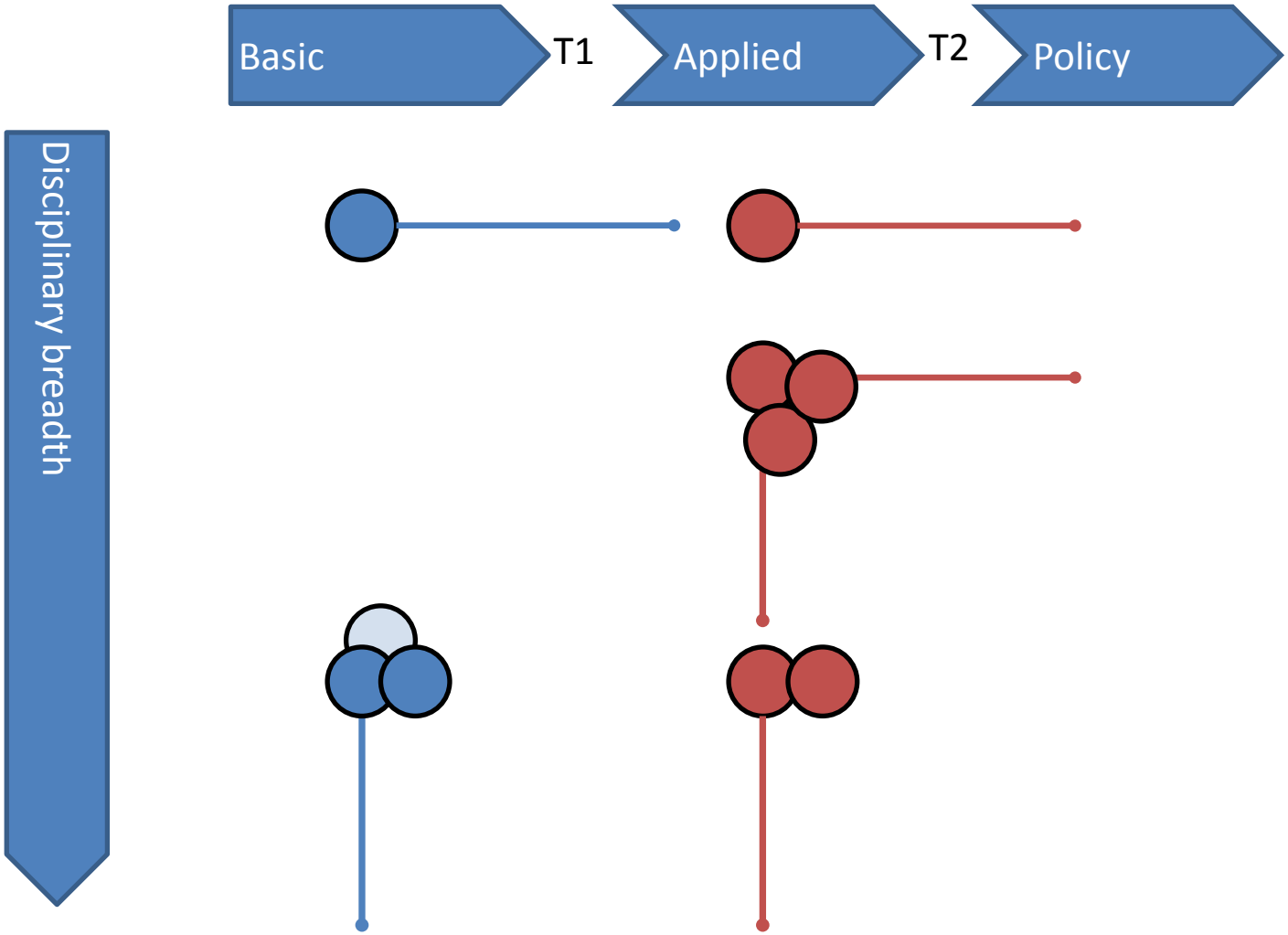
Research Questions

Develop more nuanced classification of basic research and understand the different impacts of these types of research

Investigate the distribution of impacts across basic research

Question designed by Martin Delin from The Noun Project

Focus or breadth?



Basic

Clinical

10 case studies were coded for some form of 'integration'; 1/10 in low impact categories indicated in translucence

Finding

Mental health research resulting in an academic, health, social or economic impact is associated with researchers who work across boundaries by spanning a translational pathway or more than one discipline

Policy Provocation

Support individuals who work across boundaries – both disciplinary and translation stages possibly through flexible funding

Develop opportunities for networking across boundaries

Research Question

Boundary spanning potential of researchers – can you teach it or do you have to grow it?

Is motivation important?

Finding

Committed individuals, motivated by patient need, who effectively champion research agendas and/or translation into practice are key in driving the development and implementation of interventions

Motivated by patient need

Vs

Motivation was curiosity focused

"I couldn't have done any of this research if I didn't see patients, because I had this corpus of learning that had been given me and then I saw the people who I was working with and these things did not compute… they weren't the same thing."

Interview with scientist

Finding

Committed individuals, motivated by patient need, who effectively champion research agendas and/or translation into practice are key in driving the development and implementation of interventions

Policy Provocation

Identify and support researchers who are motivated by patient need

Research Questions

Unpick the role of motivation in driving the impact of researchers and research teams

Investigate ways to inspire researchers to pursue patient needs

In summary…

- Research funders can expect a range of impacts from mental health research
- They should not assume that knowledge production will predict wider impact, although there may be a stronger link than in some other areas
- Research funders should encourage and support:
  - Clinical/applied research if looking for patient benefit within 20 years
  - Researchers who work across boundaries
  - Researchers motivated by patient need who champion a particular area

Key messages

Research → **Impact**

What research characteristics are associated with impact?

What kinds and levels of impacts does research produce?

- RIA for analysis can help us understand the research translation process

- This knowledge can then be used to increase impact

Recommended reading

Mental Health Retrosight (2013)

Project Retrosight: Understanding the returns from cardiovascular and stroke research (2011)

The returns from arthritis research (2004)

Thank you!

Alexandra Pollitt

RAND Europe

apollitt@rand.org