This project is led by Julia Reynolds, Clinical Services Manager, National Institute for Mental Research (NIMHR), Research School of Population Health (RSPH), College of Medicine, Biology and the Environment at the Australian National University (ANU) under the supervision of Professor Kathy Griffiths (Director, NIMHR, RSPH, ANU).

**Project Title:** Developing a community of practice in e-mental health.

**General Outline of the Project:**

**Description:**

The project is a study of the natural use of an online forum (“eMHPrac Exchange Community”). It involves analysing forum members’ posts and activities in order to:

- investigate issues of significance to practitioners exploring the use of e-mental health resources;
- understand how to build better professional online communities of practice.

**Methodology:** We will undertake a qualitative analysis of the content of posts made on the online forum. Quantitative analysis of usage patterns will also be undertaken.

**Participants:** will be all registered members of the eMHPrac Exchange Community. Registered members are required to be at least 18 and be health care service provider.

**Use of Data and Feedback:** This research will be written up and submitted for publication in scientific journals, books or other publications or thesis or presented at conferences. However, anything we publish will not include your username/nickname and best efforts will be made to ensure that we do not publish any other information that could identify you.

By registering on the eMHPrac Exchange Community forum you are providing us with permission to carry out and publish research and to quote, with your username/nickname removed, small sections of your posts. Participants may contact the eMHPrac Team (listed below) for results from the project.

**Project Funding:** This forum is funded by Department of Health (DOH) as part of the eMHPrac project.

**Participant Involvement:**

**Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:** Participation in this research is voluntary. To withdraw from the research, you can stop posting messages to the eMHPrac Exchange Community forum at any time. However, as the online discussion is in group format, it will not be possible to remove data already collected prior to withdrawal. All data (including posts and other information) that you have provided prior to departing the forum (and thus withdrawing from the research) will be retained and included in the analysis. If you would like your data to be excluded from the analysis, please contact the chief investigator Julia Reynolds (see details below).
In order to ensure that the data can be formally analysed and written up for publication, participation in the Forum will be limited to people who are willing to participate in the research component (i.e. agree that their data can be analysed and written up for publication) and provide their consent for their data to be used in the research.

**What does participation in the research request of you?** Participants are asked to answer a short registration questionnaire about your work background and provide basic demographic information. Data will also be collected on your use of the service and the posts you make.

**Location and Duration:** The online registration questionnaire can be completed at your convenience using the Internet. It should only take 5 minutes to complete.

**Risks:** The risk associated with this research is considered minimal. Participants should be aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed on the Internet, even when you are posting in a members-only forum (see details in section below on Confidentiality).

**Benefits:** Participants are expected to benefit from the improved understanding of how best to use online forums as a supportive learning environment for health care service providers.

**Confidentiality:**

Participation in the community involves being part of an online group, so there are limitations on the extent to which your participation can be kept confidential. Please consider the following ways in which confidentiality may be limited:

- Other members may be aware of your identity through your username or material that you post to the forum.
- Confidentiality of information posted on the Internet cannot be guaranteed, even when posted in a members’ only professional discussion forum.

You can choose to post messages anonymously by selecting an anonymous username and not providing any identifying information in your posts or in private messages to other members.

Publications arising from this research will not include your username/nickname and we will take every reasonable effort to ensure that we do not publish any other information that could identify you. Confidentiality will be protected as far as allowed by law.

**Data Storage:**

**Where:** eMHPrac Exchange Community forum data is stored on secure servers at the Australian National University. Access to the data will be restricted to project staff and authorised IT personnel using appropriate access control mechanisms.

**How long:** Research data will be stored on password-protected computers for at least 5 years following the publication of findings from the research in accordance with standard ethical guidelines for the storage of research data.

**Destruction of Data:** Data will be deleted after the minimum storage period once it is no longer required.
Queries and Concerns:

This research is being undertaken by the National Institute for Mental Health Research. Should you have any enquiries about the research, please contact:

**Julia Reynolds,**
eMHPrac Team, National Institute for Mental Health Research,
The Australian National University
E: emhprac@anu.edu.au.
T: 02 6125 2741

Ethics Committee Clearance:

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

**Ethics Manager,**
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
E: Human.Ethics.Office@anu.edu.au
T: 02 6125 3427