

# The Orthotic and Prosthetic Education and Research Foundation (OPERF)

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# Why is research important to O&P?

- We strive to be a *profession*
  - So, what does it mean to be a “profession?”

“A profession is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others. It is inherent in the definition of a profession that a code of ethics governs the activities of each profession.”

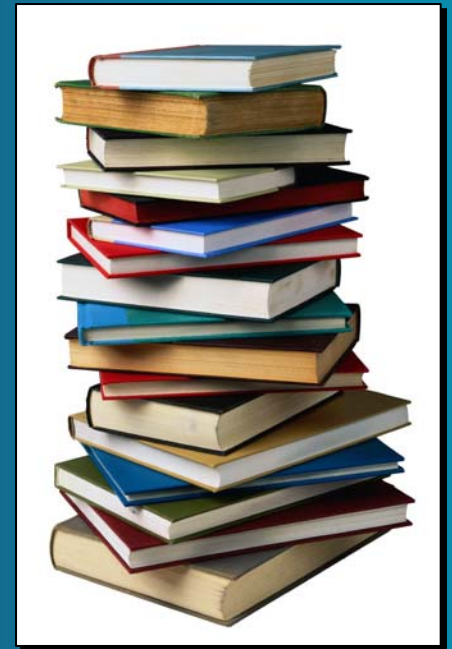
- Australian Council of Professions

# Why is research important to O&P?

- We strive to be a *profession*
  - So, what does it mean to be a “profession?”
- Characteristics of a profession
  - Acquisition of specialized knowledge
  - Development of a unique set of skills
  - Provision of ethical service to others
  - Self-regulation in the methods of service

# Why is research important to O&P?

- A body of knowledge derived from...
  - Research
  - Education
  - Training
- Knowledge requires research
  - Who takes ownership of this need?
  - If we do not, can we truly call this “our profession?”



# What are the most pressing needs?

- **Priorities**
  - We need to make research important
- **Education**
  - We need to create a culture of understanding
- **Motivation**
  - We need to find those who are interested and capable
- **Opportunity**
  - We need to encourage research to be done

# Research Foundations

- Organizations that serve the community
  - Advance science and research
  - Create research and educational opportunities
- Examples
  - Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation
  - Foundation for PM&R
  - Foundation for Physical Therapy
  - American Occupational Therapy Foundation
  - The Center for O&P Learning and Outcomes
  - O&P Education and Research Foundation (OPERF)



# O&P Education and Research Foundation

- Independent foundation for scientific research & education
  - Advance O&P education and research
    - Sponsor awards for deserving individuals and institutions
  - Raise the standards of science, research, and education
    - Develop a foundation of quality research in O&P
    - Cultivate a community of experienced educators
    - Promote, support, and stimulate research and education

**OPERF**

[www.operf.org](http://www.operf.org)

Orthotic and Prosthetic Education and Research Foundation

# What is OPERF doing?

- Promote
  - Provide research education
    - Community
    - Applicants
  - Advocate for award recipients
    - Presentation
    - Publication
  - Lead by example
    - Collaboration with other O&P organizations
    - Elevate perceptions



“**Bad** research is better than **no** research”



# What is OPERF doing?

- Support
  - Recruit funds to support O&P research
  - Sponsor awards across the continuum
    - Top-down/Bottom-Up
      - Residents
      - Graduate Students
      - Clinicians
      - Investigators
  - Appropriate support for appropriate research
    - More than \$100,000 in awards



# What is OPERF doing?

- Stimulate
  - Research is expensive
    - NIH pilot grants (R03) = \$50k/year
    - NIH research grants (R01) = 250k-500k/year
  - Research is evolutionary
    - Needs to grow from within
  - Created a three-tier seeding program
    - Resident travel awards (\$1,000)
    - Graduate fellowships (\$5,000)
    - Investigator initiated small grants (\$25,000)



# What next?

- We need to develop research priorities
  - Foundational research
  - Applied research
  - Translational research
  - Outcomes research
    - Comparative effectiveness
- Industry collaborations
  - Partnerships can be mutually beneficial
  - Independent, but targeted research
- Build the body of knowledge in O&P
  - Demonstrate that we are indeed a profession



[www.opert.org](http://www.opert.org)