

**Title:**

Using Crowdfunding Platforms for Scientific Nursing Research

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**Session Title:**

Innovative Technology in Research

**Slot:**

B 16: Saturday, 28 October 2017: 3:15 PM-4:00 PM

**Scheduled Time:**

3:15 PM

**Keywords:**

crowdfunding, innovative strategies and nursing research

**References:**

Rockey, S. (2014). Rock Talk: 2014 By the numbers.

Available: <https://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2014/12/31/2014-by-the-numbers/>

Vachelard, J., Gambarra-Soares, T., Augustini, G., Riul, P., & Maracaja-Coutinho, V. (2016). A guide to scientific crowdfunding. *Plos Biology*, 14(2), 1-7. doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.1002373

Yang, Y., Harry Jiannan, W., & Gang, W. (2016). Understanding crowdfunding processes: A dynamic evaluation and simulation approach. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 16(1), 47.

**Abstract Summary:**

In this session, participants will learn about how the use of crowdfunding platforms such as Experiment.com can facilitate successful funding and result dissemination of nursing research.

**Learning Activity:**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
The learner will define crowdfunding	Crowdfunding definitions will be explored.
The learner will describe how funding for nursing research can be achieved through the use of crowdfunding platforms.	Successful crowdfunding practices will be described.
The learner will describe how crowdfunding platforms aid in the dissemination nursing research results.	Descriptions of crowdfunding platform mechanisms for dissemination of research results will be detailed.
The learner will identify specific crowdfunding platforms for nursing research.	Examples of crowdfunding platforms, particularly those for specifically for scientific research, will be identified.
The learner will discuss benefits and barriers associated with seeking crowdfunding for nursing research.	Benefits and barriers of crowdfunding will be described.

## **Abstract Text:**

Funding for research is scarce. Applying for funds to support nursing research is time-intensive and difficult, particularly at non-research intensive universities. However, conducting research is an expectation of achieving tenure, and external sources of funding are highly regarded. Unfortunately, the ability to be competitive in obtaining external funding is dismal. Only about 11% of new applicants are funded at NINR and less than 20% are funded overall at NIH (Rockey, 2015). Therefore, nurse academics are seeking alternate means of funding research, such as crowdfunding. Crowdfunding, also termed crowdsourcing, is a general term for obtaining monetary donations for a variety of reasons from many people (Vachelard et al., 2016). In the case of nurse researchers, funds are requested for specific research projects.

The purpose of this presentation is to describe crowdfunding as an alternate source of revenue for nursing research.

Since the growth of social media outlets, new access to funding sources has become widely available. Common crowdfunding websites include Go Fund Me, Kickstarter, Donors Choose, and Fundable. Researchers indicate that using crowdfunding is most often successful when the funds sought are small-scale and non-profit (Yang, Wang, H., & Wang, G., 2016). Based on demonstrated efficacy, new sites have emerged to help fund scientific research, such as Experiment.com.

In 2015, Experiment.com collaborated with a small, private, liberal arts institution to conduct an initial project phase to determine the viability of crowdfunding in similar academic settings. After the initial project phase, participation in a second pilot was offered to an existing, closed consortium of universities. Ten universities in the consortium were able to develop one to four faculty-sponsored projects for the second pilot.

In 2016, nursing faculty members, with the help of a student assistant, applied for funding on Experiment.com. There was a competitive component to the process. Nursing faculty members were one of 4 teams, from across disciplines, submitting for funding. Each faculty team was required to develop a web page describing the background, purpose, and methodology of proposed research, along with a budget specifying expenses for each step of the research process. While the application process itself was not inherently time-intensive, as compared to an NIH grant, the requirements to participate were quite involved. A large amount of time and social media presence was required to make initial and follow up contact with potential funders, which required detailed familiarity with technology and multiple social media platforms. Applicants also had to be comfortable soliciting social media contacts, friends, and family for contributions.

The barriers encountered in this process were primarily unexpected, as crowdfunding is a relatively new funding mechanism for nursing research. Barriers included extensive amounts of time required for presence on multiple social media platforms for the duration of the project funding campaign. Further, most potential funders were not familiar with mechanisms, such as crowdfunding for scientific research; therefore, more time was required for explanation and positive rapport building which led to trust, increasing the potential of donations. Additionally, since the public has access to the nature of the research, responses to negative comments regarding the sensitive nature of the research topic was time consuming. The nature of competing with colleagues in a public venue also lent itself to potential uncomfortable situations, particularly when one party may have reached successful funding and others were not successful.

Benefits in obtaining crowdfunding were also unique. Benefits included publicity associated with the research, a feeling of success at attracting funds, and being overfunded. The notoriety of having participated in such an innovative fundraising strategy gained much attention and resulted in being contacted by several other researchers, internal and external, interested in pursuing this avenue of funding. Additionally, crowdfunding is a useful alternative that should be considered by students and

postdoctoral scholars who seek financial support for academic research projects as relatively small amounts of money are often difficult for individuals to raise for research purposes.

Crowdfunding platforms are innovative, alternate sources of revenue for nursing research. Researchers have great potential for becoming successfully funded through public awareness of and contributions to research topics. Awareness of the benefits and barriers of crowdfunding better prepares nurse researchers who may consider engaging in crowdfunding to sponsor studies.