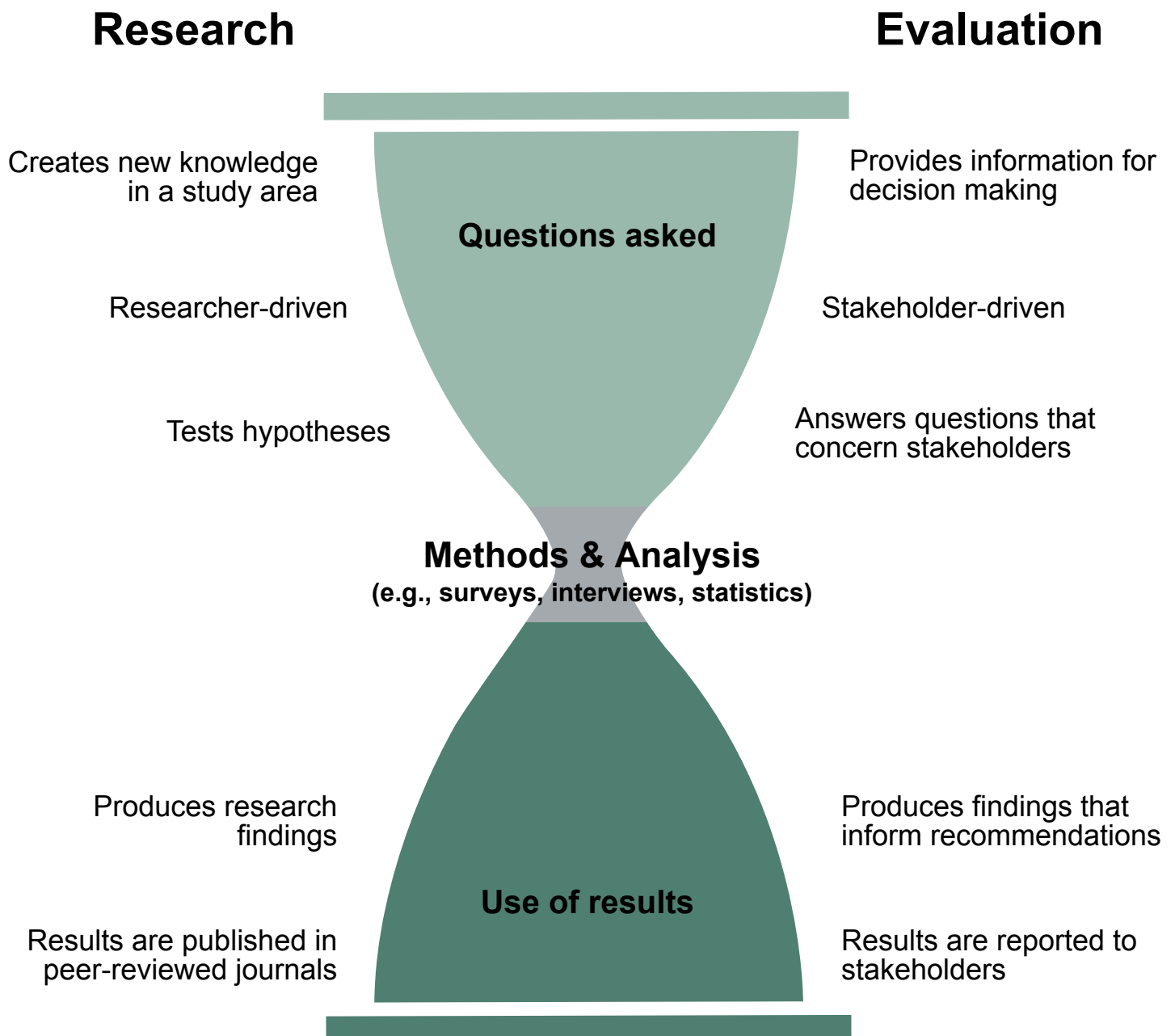# An Overview of
# Research and Evaluation

**"Research seeks to prove, evaluation seeks to improve."**
-Michael Quinn Patton, Founder and Director of Utilization-Focused Evaluation

The process of research and evaluation differ in:
- The beginning (what questions are asked)
- The end (how the results are used)

However, both processes may overlap in the middle by using the same methods and analyses.

## Research                              ## Evaluation

Creates new knowledge in a study area          Provides information for decision making

**Questions asked**

Researcher-driven          Stakeholder-driven

Tests hypotheses          Answers questions that concern stakeholders

**Methods & Analysis**
**(e.g., surveys, interviews, statistics)**

Produces research findings          Produces findings that inform recommendations

**Use of results**

Results are published in peer-reviewed journals          Results are reported to stakeholders

# Research vs. Evaluation

## Research

- Is the source of most new scientific ideas and ways of thinking about the world

- Often has less direct application to the real world than evaluation

- Typically involves the following steps:
    1. Identify the research question
    2. Review the literature
    3. Formulate hypotheses
    4. Develop the research design
    5. Collect data
    6. Analyze data
    7. Interpret and report

## Evaluation

- Applies research processes to assess programs* regarding:
    - **Design:** Is the program operating as intended?
    - **Implementation:** Was the program implemented as planned?
    - **Utility:** Is the program providing benefits and achieving the goals and outcomes that were anticipated?

- Usually has an immediate and practical use

- Often used to:
    - Identify a program's strengths and promising practices
    - Develop better practice within an organization
    - Monitor and improve practice in a program or organization

*Evaluation can also be conducted on projects, initiatives, interventions, policies, or strategies.

## References

Levin-Rozalis, M. (2003). Evaluation and research: similarities and differences. *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, 18*(2), 1-31.

Preskill, H. (2010). Similarities and differences between research and evaluation - simple graphic. Retrieved from http://comm.eval.org/communities/community-home/librarydocuments/viewdocument?DocumentKey=c1cdc062-463f-4b60-92e6-d9fe6ebd8b01

**Alberta Health Services**