Starting Research Workshop

15th September 2021
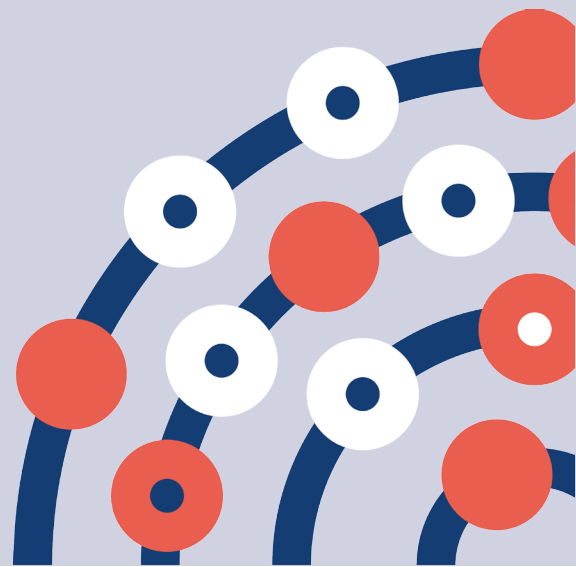
Starting Research Online Workshop

15th September 2021

09:15-09:20	**Welcome & Introduction** *Sophie Hyndman, Deputy Director RDS South Central*
09:20-09:40	**Routes into Research** *Sarah Brien, Principal Research Fellow & Portsmouth Site Lead, RDS South Central & Sophie Hyndman*
09:40-10:00	**What makes a good research question?** *Jane Vennik, Senior Research Adviser, RDS South Central*
10:00-10:30	**Establishing the evidence-gap: libraries, literature searches & systematic reviews** *Christine Keen, Adviser in Health Research Information, RDS East Midlands*
10.30-10.40	COMFORT BREAK
10.40-11:00	**First steps in research: a personal account** *Eileen Morrow, successful PCAF applicant and Orthotist, Oxford Gait Laboratory, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust*
11:00-11:20	**How to find a good supervisor** *Sophie Hyndman*
11:20-11:40	**An introduction to PPI** *Claire Schwartz, PPI Manager NIHR Oxford & Thames Valley Applied Research Collaboration & Polly Kerr, PPI Manager, Oxford Biomedical Research Centre*
11:40-11:50	COMFORT BREAK
11.50-12.30	**PANEL: Finding training and funding to develop research ideas** *Chair: Sophie Hyndman*

- **Sarah Brien**, Selection Committee Member, HEE-NIHR Pre-doctoral Fellowships
- **Rachel Evley**, RDS East Midlands (training & funding opportunities in East Midlands)
- **Kay Mitchell**, Associate Director, Southampton Academy of Research & Career Development Lead for Southampton Biomedical Research Centre (BRC)
- **Katherine Tucker**, Training/ Career Development Lead, Oxford & Thames Valley Applied Research Collaboration (ARC)
- **Kelly Adams**, Workforce Development Lead, Wessex Clinical Research Network (CRN)
- **Kinda Ibrahim**, Associate Academic Career Development Lead for ARC Wessex

- **Nana Theodorou**, Head of Research & Innovation, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS (small grants)
- **Liz Tunbridge**, Training Lead, Oxford Health BRC
- **Helen Walthall**, Director of Nursing & Midwifery Research & Innovation, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- **Chris Pugh**, Director, Oxford University Clinical Academic Graduate School (OUCAGS) & Chair, Oxfordshire Health Services Research Committee
- **Karen Bell**, NIHR Oxford BRC Training and Education Manager

12.35-13:20   **PANEL: Sources of other support for undertaking research**
Chair: Sophie Hyndman
- **Zoe Davey**, HEE-NIHR ICA Internship Programme Manager for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire region & Frimley ICS, OxInMAHR, Oxford Brookes University
- **Rachel Evley**, RDS East Midlands
- **Emma King**, Wessex REACH
- **Nana Theodorou**, Head of Research & Innovation, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS
- **Katerina Samouri-Christodoulos**, Thames Valley & South Midlands CRN Study Support Service
- **Ugochi Nwulu**, Senior Programme Manager (Incubators), NIHR
- **Nia Roberts**, Oxford Healthcare Libraries
- **Stephen Zingwe**, Research & Development Manager, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

13.20-13.30   **Next steps**
Issy Reading, RDS South Central

14.30-16.00   *Pre-booked one-to-ones with RDS advisers*

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Contents

Presentations

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Routes into Research

Sarah Brien, Principal Research Fellow & Portsmouth Site Lead, RDS South Central & Sophie Hyndman, Deputy Director RDS South Central

Routes into Research

Sarah Brien & Sophie Hyndman
RDS South Central

Different Routes for Different People

- Medics & dentists

- Non-medical clinicians

- Non-clinicians

For Medics & Dentists: the Integrated
Academic Training Pathway (well-established)

https://www.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/study/clinical-academic-training-office/about-us/about-the-integrated-academic-training-pathway/

Specialised (Academic) Foundation Programme

- Research skills; and/or
- Teaching skills; and/or
- Medical leadership/ management

- Dedicated time for academic activities usually during F2 (but can be F1)
- Four-month academic placement in F2, day-release over year, or combination
- May be co-ordinated by a local university
- Project-focused
- Research or QI
- Supervised

https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/programmes/2-year-foundation-programme/specialised-foundation-programme/ (see 'Rough Guide')

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Post-Foundation Academic Training

HEE-NIHR locally funded integrated academic training posts

- In-practice fellowships – Masters level for GPs & dentists
- Academic Clinical Fellowships (ACF) – pre-doctoral (235 medic +23 dentist pa.)
  - Time to prepare application for PhD fellowship (e.g. NIHR DRF) & progress as a senior clinician continuing research
- Clinical Lectureships (CL/ACL) – postdoctoral (100 medic +11 dentist pa.)
  - Develop research career, e.g. prepare for NIHR AF application
- Both – protected time to focus on research/ educational projects and to develop methodological & other academic skills
- ACF/CL posts hosted by partnerships of medical/dental schools (and their partner universities), postgraduate deanery functions within the Local Offices of Health Education England (HEE), and their partner NHS organisations.

'Out of programme' opportunities ('time out' from training, outside of the integrated pathway)

- Funding for PhDs, e.g. NIHR, MRC, Wellcome & other charities
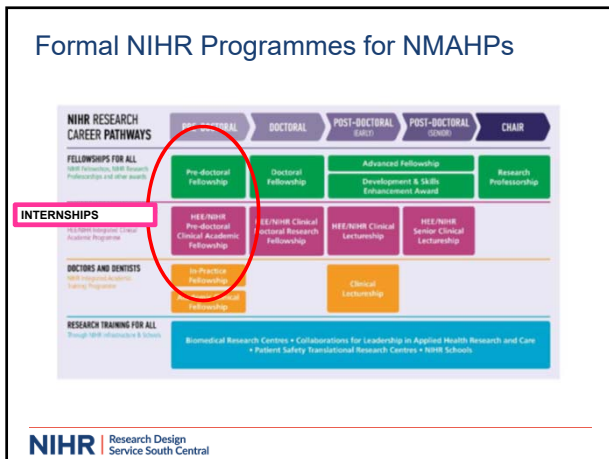- Other funding e.g. grants (ARC, Royal Colleges etc), research capability funding

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Non-medical Clinicians: Nurses, Midwives, Allied Health Professionals (evolving)

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Figure 2b Clinical academic careers pathway capability framework for NMAHPs

Source: Westwood, G. and Richardson, A. (2014)

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Figure 2b

Someone who:

- Consolidates/ develops own clinical practice
- Begins to develop specialist skills/ expertise
- Is an agent for change – local practice, audit, training others
- Implements evidence – service developments, evaluations
- Challenges practice

- Assesses, plans, implements & evaluates care
- Supports research in own clinical area
- Contributes to research groups & networks
- Undertakes undergraduate teaching
- Implements research into practice

- Takes a lead in research activity, e.g. data collection
- Identifies/ develops local clinical networks
- Develops research knowledge & skills, e.g. journal clubs
- Supports learning & teaching in area of interest
- Uses practice experience to identify research issues
- Critically appraises guidelines/evidence to develop practice
- Is keen to develop systematic reviewing skills to address issues

Source: Westwood, G. and Richardson, A. (2014)

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central
Transforming healthcare through clinical academic roles in nursing, midwifery and allied health professions
Association of UK University Hospitals (AUKUH) Clinical Academic Roles Development Group, 2016

First Steps for NMAHPs

- Demonstrate your commitment to a clinical academic career
- Develop research-related network in area of interest: locally, then beyond – peers, colleagues, researchers
- Contact your professional body for support/grants
- Get support from your manager
- Talk to your R&D lead
- Find role models & mentors – locally & beyond if necessary
- Be pro-active in developing skills – take part in studies (e.g. local data collector/ co-ordinator), formal training courses, journal clubs
- Build your CV – publish – professional journals & academic ones when you are ready
- Think about small grants – travel and conference; small research grants from professional bodies etc.
- Look for opportunities for formal first steps – internships, pre-doctoral awards, doctoral fellowships

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central
Building a Research Career NIHR (nihr.ac.uk)

Formal NIHR Programmes for NMAHPs

Which Award?

Early stage (little track record; hopefully demonstrable interest)

- HEE-NIHR Internships
- Run through different organisations locally, depending on where you are (e.g. Applied Research Collaborations, universities)
- Supervised
- Introduction to concepts & methods relating to applied health research
- Funding covers salary backfill and training (e.g. PPI)
- Focus of your internship (depends on your CV):
  - starting out (training, PPI, reviewing literature)
  - Progressing: systematic review, small study or audit to support a grant
  - Time to write a grant application

Output: an application for a NIHR Pre-doctoral Clinical Academic Fellowship (PCAF)

Some experience (Internship/ other research experience with outputs)

- Full NIHR Pre-doctoral Clinical Academic Fellowship (PCAF) (37% success rate 2020)

Output: Masters degree (e.g. MRes) & application for a Clinical Doctoral Fellowship (CDRF)

A bit more experience (e.g. Masters already)

- Bridging PCAF – small amount of training and preparation for CDRF (83% success rate 2020)

- CDRF

Doctorate level already

Can move onto rest of ICA scheme, namely, Clinical Lecturer, then Senior Clinical Lecturer (can also apply to academic Doctoral Research Fellowship/ Advanced Fellowship schemes)

Eligibility for PCAF/CDRF

- Registered with regulatory bodies by the start of the proposed award
  - See: https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/heenihr-ica-programme-eligible-professions-and-regulators/12204

- At point of application, must be committed to a career as a clinical/practitioner academic

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Proposed Work has to Fit NIHR remit

- Clinical & applied health/social care only (early translational only for post-doc)

- Clear potential for directly benefiting patients

- Research (future research) involves: patients (samples or data); health services research; health technologies; populations. Also medical education and methodological research which will have a potential impact on patients & public

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Research Design Service East Midlands
Pre-doctoral Clinical Academic Fellowships Seminar
23rd September, 2021, 1-2pm

- Description of the awards and application process
- What makes a fundable pre-doctoral application?
- Evidencing potential to develop as a clinical/practitioner researcher.
- Addressing training and development during the pre-doc
- Engagement with research, what to evidence
- Q and A with panel
- Includes recently introduced PLAF (local authority awards)

Booking via https://www.rds-eastmidlands.nihr.ac.uk/seminar-introduction-to-nihr-pre-doctoral-fellowship-schemes

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Other Pre-doctoral Fellowships (medic & non-medical clinicians)

For example: CRUK Pre-doctoral research bursary:
- Medics, nurses, other health professionals - pre PhD
- To decide if you want to do PhD or MD
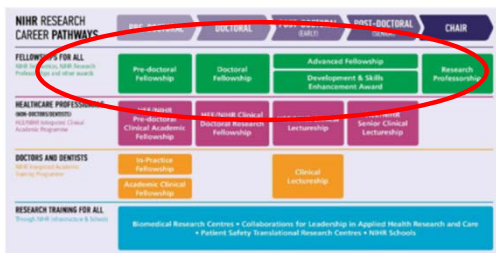- Up to 12 months, £25K (salary and research expenses) not for MSc

https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/funding-for-researchers/our-funding-schemes/pre-doctoral-research-bursary

- Other PhD Schemes (see later)

NIHR | Research Design
Service South Central

First Steps for Non-Clinicians

- Demonstrate your commitment to a clinical academic career
- Develop research-related network in area of interest – peers, colleagues, researchers
- Find role models & mentors – locally & beyond if necessary
- Be pro-active in developing skills – e.g. formal training courses, journal clubs; where appropriate & possible, be part of research teams
- Build your CV – publish
- Think about small grants – travel, conference & research
- Where applicable, speak to your R&D lead, professional body, & get support from your manager
- Look for opportunities for formal first steps – pre-doctoral awards, doctoral fellowships, ARC internships

NIHR | Research Design
Service South Central

For **Those with No Clinical Background**: e.g. NIHR 'Generic' Fellowship Route

NIHR | Research Design
Service South Central

NIHR Pre-doctoral fellowship

- Purpose: develop a career as a methodologist in health or social care research

- Eligibility: completed first degree, want to develop a career as a methodologist in applied health/social care research

Medical statistics	Modelling	Mixed methods
Health economics	Bioinformatics	Epidemiology
Operational research	Qualitative research	Clinical trial design

https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/academy-programmes/fellowship-programme.htm

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Facilitates a career change:

- BSc/ BA ⟶ Masters degree (+ DRF application)

- Masters ⟶ gain additional training (+ DRF application)

- Between 50% to 100% for 12, 18 or 24 months (WTE)

- Award = current salary + training + PPI costs
- Success rate (2020): 50%
- Possible next step: usual NIHR DRF/ AF schemes (if necessary/ desired)

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Other Pre-doctoral Fellowships (for various)

- Charities, research councils etc.
- Funds often allocated to supervisor or institution; if so, subject may be pre-determined
  – E.g. MRC have schemes which delegate funds for Masters & PhD 'studentships' to universities, who then allocate places
- Beware university deadlines
- Also mentioned in supervision talk

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

For funding applications, come and see the Research Design Service

www.rds-sc.nihr.ac.uk

What makes a good research question?

Jane Vennik, Senior Research Adviser, RDS South Central

What makes a good Research Question?

15th September 2021

Dr Jane Vennik
Senior Research Advisor
Research Design Service South Central

What makes a good question?

Research questions need to be…
- Important
- Relevant
- Novel
- Fundable
- Specific and focused
- Measurable
- Answerable

Your idea/research focus

- Often originates from your own clinical or professional experience
  - Recognising a gap in the evidence or in service delivery.
  - Everyday problems
  - More effective treatments or interventions
  - Structure of care pathways
  - Health inequalities
- Good idea to discuss early with other researchers, academics, clinicians
- Discuss with patients, members of the public
- What is the general aim of your research idea?

Is your idea fundable?

- Why does it matter?
- Is it fundable?
- Does it align with key themes?
- Does it contribute to existing knowledge?

NIHR | National Institute for Health Research

James Lind Alliance
Priority Setting Partnerships

_____

Is your idea novel?

- Know your topic area – what is already known
- What is currently being funded?
- Narrow the focus by asking questions of the evidence
- Establishing the evidence gap

ISRCTN registry

NIHR | National Institute for Health Research

Cochrane Library

PubMed

_____

Who will benefit?

- Funders want to see the benefit to service users
- Important for NIHR
- Think about
  - Number of people who are affected by your topic (incidence and prevalence)
  - Describe the current care pathway or burden to service users/NHS/Social care
  - How will your research lead to improvements?

_____

Is it specific?

- **Specific** enough to answer thoroughly
- **Broad enough** to require complex answers rather than simply yes or no or with facts and figures
- Space for discussion and interpretation

Example

Topic area:

Children's mental health

Initial idea

How does using social media effect children's mental health?

Research question?

*What effect does **regular use** of **Instagram** have on **body image and self-esteem** in **secondary school** children?*

Research question that is specific, measurable, answerable

*To **explore parents' perceptions** of the effect of daily use of Instagram on body image and self-esteem in **girls aged 11-16years**?*

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Is it answerable?

- Must be measurable
  - Think about the methodology, Qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods
- Be clear what data is needed to answer the question and how the data might be collected
- Achievable within the timeframe
- Resources to do so

How to formulate a research question

- Start with your **broad topic**
- Conduct preliminary research/ **know your topic area**
- Narrow your focus. Identify a problem which you will address.
- Think about a **purpose statement** – what do you want to know and how will it contribute
- **Draft your question**
- **Revise your question** to ensure it is specific, measurable, answerable

In summary - what makes a good question?

- Important, relevant and evidence-based
- Novel
- Specific and focused
- Measurable
- Answerable
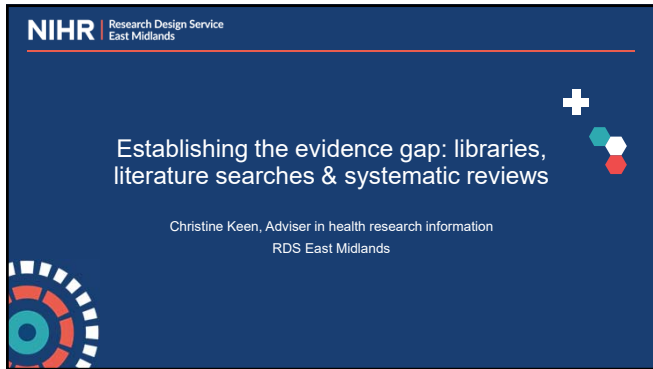
NIHR | Research Design Service
South Central

Establishing the evidence-gap: libraries, literature searches & systematic reviews

Christine Keen, Adviser in Health Research Information, RDS East Midlands

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

Establishing the evidence gap: libraries,
literature searches & systematic reviews

Christine Keen, Adviser in health research information
RDS East Midlands

Finding the evidence

All of you will have some experience in locating, appraising and using
information. This might be from your masters dissertation, involvement in
service development or audit, or at pre-doctoral level. These skills will be
extended and utilised in building a convincing case for research funding.

You will need information and evidence to illustrate your research proposal
and justify why it should be funded.

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

Finding the evidence

The NIHR and other funders will routinely ask, on their application forms,
how the existing literature supports a research proposal? So it will be
important to gain familiarity with the literature in your field, and use this to
build a convincing case for research funding. Any existing systematic
reviews will 'summarise' relevant primary studies and highlight gaps in the
'evidence base' where more research is needed.

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

Resources for finding research priorities and known 'uncertainties' – *pinpointing where research is needed*

- **Use the Evidence search' facility on the NICE database**
  https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/
  'Select' (click) the 'known uncertainties' filter on the left-hand side of the screen

- **NICE Guidelines**
  https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance
  Use the search box to find any relevant guidelines. Within the guideline the left-hand side of the page shows the contents including a section on 'Recommendations for research'

NIHR | Research Design Service East Midlands

Resources

- **James Lind Alliance, Top 10s of priorities of research**
  https://www.jla.nihr.ac.uk/priority-setting-partnerships/

NIHR | Research Design Service East Midlands

Resources

- **Cochrane priority review list** is a 'living' record of Cochrane's efforts to identify reviews that are of greatest importance to 'their' stakeholders and are likely to impact significantly on health outcomes worldwide. The list is updated in real time as reviews are published and new titles added:
  https://community.cochrane.org/review-production/production-resources/cochrane-priority-reviews-list

- **Cochrane library** – Search the CDSR (systematic review database) for any relevant systematic reviews, then you can check the contents to find the section on 'recommendations for research'
  https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/reviews

NIHR | Research Design Service East Midlands

17

Funder research priorities

- **NIHR Themed calls**
  These are annual calls prioritised by the Chief Medical Officer, and advertised across all of the NIHR programmes, and the Academy:
  https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/funding-programmes/themed-calls.htm

- **Charities**
  Some charities offer themed or commissioned calls, reflecting their research funding priorities:
  https://www.amrc.org.uk/Pages/Category/member-directory?Take=20

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

Systematic Reviews

What is a systematic review

- A systematic review is secondary research that synthesises all the literature on a given topic

- Combining the results of studies gives a more precise estimate of an intervention's effectiveness (known as meta-analysis, a statistical synthesis)

- Uses a scientific design based on explicit, pre-specified and reproducible methods

- As well as demonstrating what we know about a particular intervention, SR's can also show where knowledge is lacking (possibly suggesting the need for more primary studies)

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

Systematic review process

- **Define the question** - this can be tricky, carry out a scoping search/es, - a broad search to estimate the size and 'nature' of the literature on the topic.. Are there any existing SR's? what do they say?

- **Check PROSPERO** database for current and on-going SR's, to avoid duplicating a research proposal that has already been registered:
  https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO/

- **Search** for all the potential primary studies. Keep a record of all your searches
- **Sift** the studies to select those that meet the inclusion criteria

NIHR | Research Design Service East Midlands

Systematic review process

- **Assess the quality/validity of the studies** - Appraise each study against the same criteria and record the results. The CASP critical appraisal checklists are useful:
  https://casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists/

- **Combine results** of studies (possibly in a meta-analysis, *a synthesis of quantitative results to give an overall estimate of effects*)

- **Present** conclusions

- **Disseminate** findings, involving your 'stakeholders' in this process

NIHR | Research Design Service East Midlands

Protocol

A good *systematic review* usually starts with a *protocol* – this will serve as a road map for your review and sets out:
- the agreed focus of the SR, possibly in the form of a question, this may well be different from the original proposal
- the agreed plan for the different stages of the process
- The available resources, such as time, funding etc

NIHR | Research Design Service East Midlands
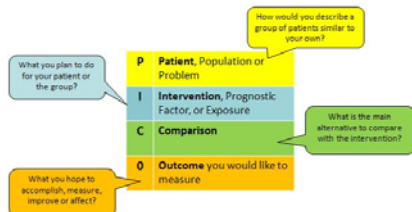
Systematic reviews

Registering your systematic review proposal in a database such as PROSPERO is free and:
- is helpful to establish that your group is doing this review
- increases potential communication with interested researchers
- may avoid duplication and the waste of multiple reviews addressing the same question

NIHR | Research Design Service East Midlands

Planning your literature search strategy

- Develop a clear answerable question
- Spend time understanding the subject
- Break down the question into concepts
- Think of relevant synonyms – look at a key paper on your topic, the keywords may be listed, check for terms in a thesauri like MESH, also search for abbreviations
- Search each concept separately
- Combine terms
- Limit results
- It can be useful to look at the search strategies used in other systematic reviews, these are usually found in a separate appendix at the end.

NIHR | Research Design Service East Midlands

Structuring the question

NIHR | Research Design Service East Midlands

Example: Breaking down a question

Is osteopathic treatment effective for adults with acetabular labrum tear experiencing pain and limited hip function?

- P = In adults suffering an **acetabular labrum tear**
- I = Is **osteopathic treatment**
- C = compared to **no treatment**
- O = effective in **decreasing pain & improving hip function**

- Combine the terms within each concept using **OR, for example,** Acetabular labrum tear OR Acetabulum
- Combine the final sets using **AND**

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

Suggested databases

The links to some of these may be different depending on which 'platform' you use to access
- MEDLINE
- EMBASE, particularly good for drug/pharmaceutical 'questions'
- Cinahl
- Cochrane https://www.cochranelibrary.com/

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

Additional subject specific bibliographic databases

- Psychinfo (psychology)
- SCIE (social care/work) https://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/
- Pedro (physiotherapy evidence) https://pedro.org.au/

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

On-going/current research databases:

- PROSPERO database for current and on-going systematic reviews
  https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO/

- Europe PubMed Central grant Finder Tool https://europepmc.org/grantfinder

- Be Part of Research https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/

- ISRCTN (clinical trials) https://www.isrctn.com/

- NIHR Journals library https://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/#/

- ICTRP (International clinical trials) https://trialsearch.who.int/Default.aspx

- World-wide clinical trials: https://clinicaltrials.gov/

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

Websites/databases - for grey literature

Reports and conference proceedings that are often not 'published' in the usual way.
- OpenGrey: http://www.opengrey.eu/

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

Citation searching

Cited Reference searching should be a part of any complete literature search. If you're only searching keywords to find papers, you may be missing out on important papers and ideas. A cited reference search starts with a known item and moves forward in time, potentially guiding you through the evolution of a concept in the literature of one or more fields.

- **Web of Science** https://clarivate.libguides.com/woscc/citedreference

NIHR | Research Design Service
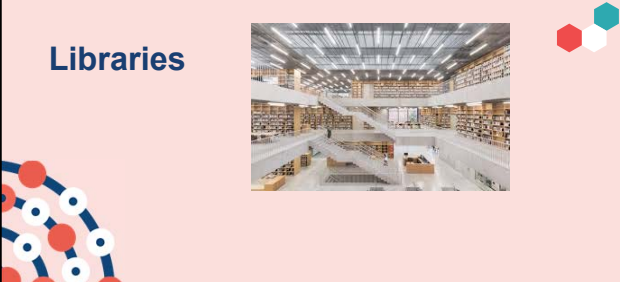East Midlands

Handsearching

Searching for clinical trial reports in databases may not retrieve all relevant available studies. Reports may either be missing from the database or may not have been indexed adequately due to lack of detail in titles and abstracts. Some reports are only ever published as abstracts in conference proceedings.

NIHR | Research Design Service East Midlands

NIHR | Research Design Service East Midlands

Libraries

Workshops

NHS Trust libraries and academic libraries usually offer sessions on literature searching, including systematic reviews (Leicester University library offers 'Search strategies for systematic reviews') and may offer one-to-one sessions to develop search strategies.

To find out where you're nearest health care library is search the Health library and information services directory
https://www.hlisd.org/ (covers the UK & Republic of Ireland)

NIHR | Research Design Service East Midlands

Other sources of help

- If your local RDS has an information specialist they may provide advice on search methodology, reference management, and will know about local health libraries and what support may be available.

- If you feel unsure of where to search and how, view the short videos produced by Yorkshire and Humber RDS, 'Finding evidence to support your research proposal'
  https://www.rds-yh.nihr.ac.uk/resources/videos/

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

Help

- Online tutorials are available for searching techniques and about individual databases

- There are many guides to undertaking systematic reviews on You-tube such as this one
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18uimFIGD9M

- Systematic reviews and meta-analysis: A Step-by-step guide (University of Edinburgh)
  https://www.ccace.ed.ac.uk/research/software-resources/systematic-reviews-and-meta-analyses

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

Help

- Future Learn online course:
  Systematic Literature Review: An Introduction
  https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/systematic-literature-review

- PRISMA – The transparent reporting of systematic reviews and meta analysis, comprises a checklist addressing the introduction, methods, results and discussion sections of a systematic review report
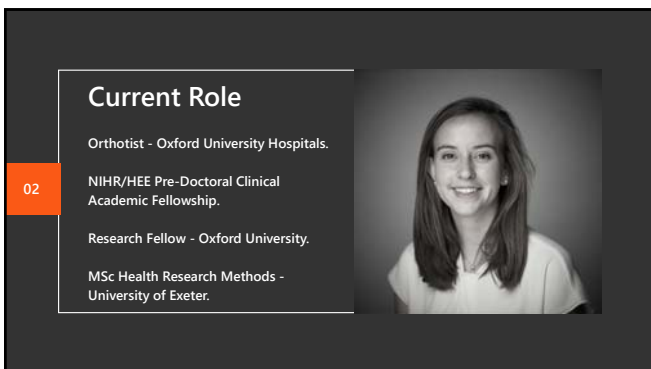 http://prisma-statement.org/prismastatement/Checklist.aspx

NIHR | Research Design Service
East Midlands

Thanks for listening.

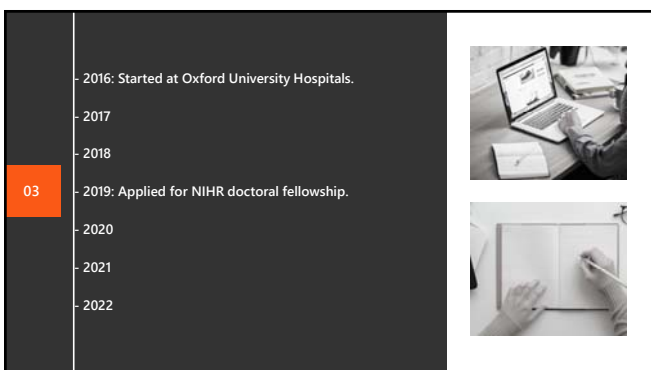Christine Keen
ck257@le.ac.uk

First steps in research: a personal account

Eileen Morrow, successful PCAF applicant and Orthotist, Oxford Gait Laboratory, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust

First Steps in
Research:
A Personal
Account

01

Eileen Morrow

Current Role

Orthotist - Oxford University Hospitals.

02

NIHR/HEE Pre-Doctoral Clinical
Academic Fellowship.

Research Fellow - Oxford University.

MSc Health Research Methods -
University of Exeter.

2016: Started at Oxford University Hospitals.

2017

2018

03   2019: Applied for NIHR doctoral fellowship.

2020

2021

2022

04

Doctoral Fellowship Application

- Approx 10,000 words.

- Requires input from multiple stakeholders.

- Takes a year to hear results.

05

- 2016: Started at Oxford University Hospitals.
- 2017
- 2018
- 2019: Applied for NIHR doctoral fellowship (unsuccessful).
- 2020: Applied for NIHR/HEE PCAF.
- 2021
- 2022

Pre-Doctoral Clinical Academic Fellowship

Training to be a doctoral fellowship candidate.

Less competition as not open to doctors.

Easier and shorter application.

Less emphasis on experience and more on plan to gain experience.

06

07

2016: Started at Oxford University Hospitals.

2017

2018

2019: Applied for NIHR doctoral fellowship (unsuccessful).

2020: Applied for NIHR/HEE PCAF (successful).

2021: Continuing PCAF.

2022: Reapply for NIHR doctoral fellowship.

08

PCAF Opportunity

- MSc Health Research Methods.
- Independent research module.
- Publications.
- Presentations.
- Training courses.
- PPI for doctoral application.

09

Good luck!

Eileen.Morrow@ouh.nhs.uk

How to find a good supervisor

Sophie Hyndman, Deputy Director RDS South Central

How to find a good supervisor

Sophie Hyndman,
RDS South Central

"Piled Higher and Deeper" by Jorge Cham
www.phdcomics.com

Importance of a Research Supervisor (e.g. PhD)

'A PhD supervisor can make or break a candidate's progress. It's estimated that roughly half of all PhD candidates in North America do not complete their doctoral studies due to a lack of support from their supervisor.'

Gemma Conroy (2020) How to choose the right PhD supervisor
4 red flags to be wary of in the search for a good match. *https://www.natureindex.com/news-blog/how-to-choose-the-right-phd-supervisor*

"The quality of the supervisor-PhD candidate relationship,
the PhD candidate's sense of belonging, the amount of freedom in
the project, and working on a project closely related to
the supervisor's research were positively related to satisfaction
and negatively to quit intentions."

Van Rooij, E, Fokkens-Bruinsma, M, Jansen, E (2019) Factors that influence PhD candidates' success: the importance of PhD project
characteristics. *Studies in Continuing Education*, Volume 43 (1), 2021

My PhD Supervisor

- Guide & mentor through the academic world
- Source of good methodological advice
- Facilitator for my project work
- Source of useful contacts
- Ensured safe working practices
- Helped me pace my work sensibly
- Allowed me to develop my own path
- Gently challenged me to reach my potential
- Did not insist on being on publications
- Saw me through viva and 'corrections'

= a great supervisor and, what's more…

- We're still talking to each other (32 years later)!

Sarah Curtis

NIHR | Research Design
Service South Central

What is a Research Supervisor's Job?

'The job of a [PhD] supervisor is to use their own experience and expertise to help support you throughout your research project.'

FindaPhD.com

Remember you need a clinical supervisor as well as an academic supervisor for specific schemes

Charles Laplante [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

NIHR | Research Design
Service South Central

What Makes a Good Research Supervisor?

- Substantial research expertise
- Good quality research outputs (e.g. where they publish & appropriate to career stage)
- Up to date in your area of interest
- Staying put for duration of your studies
- Previous experience as a supervisor
    - Prestigious but busy versus more junior & available
    - Previous supervisees have done well
- Excellent organisational skills – theirs & yours are key to success
    - Clear expectations
    - Provision of deadlines
    - Flexibility
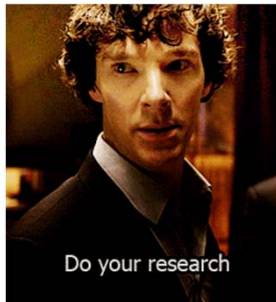- Willing to help & available to you

NIHR | Research Design
Service South Central

Findaphd.com
www.ucl.ac.uk/slms/aco/cat/information/supervisor

A Good Fit for You

- Enthusiastic about your work

- Inspiring about their own interests

- Good mentor when graft is required

- Hands-on versus hands-off

- Supervisory team should cover
  - Methods
  - Clinical problem
  - Aspects of training

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

How to Find a Good Supervisor

Do your research

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b018ttwn
http://gif-database.tumblr.com/post/16617279732

Do Your Research

- Have clear idea of your area of interest
- Find experts in your area:
  - Browse university websites
  - Look at scientific databases - who has published/ is commonly cited in your area
- Make a shortlist and read up on them
- Find out about previous supervisees & where they go
- Look at university & departmental facilities
- Approach with short, compelling summary – present position, CV, research interest, potential start dates, potential funders
- 'Interview' your potential supervisor
- Talk to their research team/ current students/ co-authors
- Get a feel for the workplace culture

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Findaphd.com
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/slms/aco/cat/information/supervisor

'Red Flags'

🚩 If a potential supervisor is difficult to pin down for a meeting, they are unlikely to treat their students as a priority down the line

🚩 If a potential supervisor seems to prefer working alone or doesn't include students as co-authors on their papers, it's unlikely that they will help the candidate build their resumes

🚩 Too much emphasis on publishing papers can be a sign that the potential supervisor lacks integrity and isn't focussed on helping their students' skill development

🚩 Prospective supervisors who expect candidates to work on weekends or be on-call outside of working hours are likely to be more interested in a student's productivity than their growth and development

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Gemma Conroy (2020) How to choose the right PhD supervisor
4 red flags to be wary of in the search for a good match.
https://www.natureindex.com/news-blog/how-to-choose-the-right-phd-supervisor

---

A Word on PhDs & Universities

• Whilst many fellowships schemes enable you to find doctoral funding for your research idea (e.g. NIHR), supervisors often look for PhD students for their ideas

   – funding & supervision is therefore (often) 'automatically' provided. See, e.g. via university websites, funder websites, findaphd.com & others

   – E.g. MRC have schemes which delegate funds for Masters & PhD 'studentships' to universities, who then allocate places

• Universities have internal deadlines for PhD places often quite separate from funding deadlines – you must be aware of these windows

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Comments from Funding Panels

DRF Chair's reports

"Applicants lacked supervision in methodological, qualitative and statistical support. When developing their project, applicants should identify any areas where expertise may be lacking and look to add a supervisor in this area to their supervisory team to address this gap" (Rounds 1-4, 2021)

"Unfortunately, many promising candidates were unsuccessful this year because of insufficient supervision in terms of preparation of the application itself and throughout the timescale of the proposed fellowship." (2014)

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/nihr-doctoral-fellowship-rounds-1-4-chairs-report/26829
http://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/funding/Training-Programmes/TCC-Fellowships-2014-ChairsReport.pdf)

PCAF Chair's Report Round 3, 2020

PCAF Panel look for:

- Availability of the supervisor/ time commitment required
- Fit of the supervisor's expertise with the stated area of research
- Record of conversion of Masters to PhD students.
- Doctoral supervision experience – at least 1 supervisor should have it
- Combined experience of supervisors can provide necessary expertise.

- "Full" PCAF can propose interim supervisors appropriate for a PCAF and plans to identify doctoral supervisors over the course of the award
- PCAF Bridge – the supervisory team should be individuals appropriate for doctoral supervision.

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Quotes about Supervisors

- "To get the most from your supervisor, you have to be interested in what they do" John Cowpe
- "Over the course of three years, it's crucial to have someone who can encourage you when your experiments fall flat, challenge you when you become cocky and help steer you towards successfully submitting your thesis," Simon Singh
- "The real issue is to see whether the chemistry is right. Think about whether your prospective supervisor seems like the sort of person who will be there when you need them." Susan Greenfield
- "If you're not at your most motivated, an absent or distant PhD supervisor can be a recipe for months of procrastination." Vivienne Raper

  (from: Matthew Killeya (2008) The PhD journey: how to choose a good supervisor. *New Scientist*)

- "Too many students get caught up in the PhD topic or project, but it's about building skills that can help you pivot into what you want to do next. The outcome of a PhD is not about output, but who you are as a scientist." Emma Beckett

  (From: Gemma Conroy (2020) How to choose the right PhD supervisor
  4 red flags to be wary of in the search for a good match. *https://www.natureindex.com/news-blog/how-to-choose-the-right-phd-supervisor*)

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central
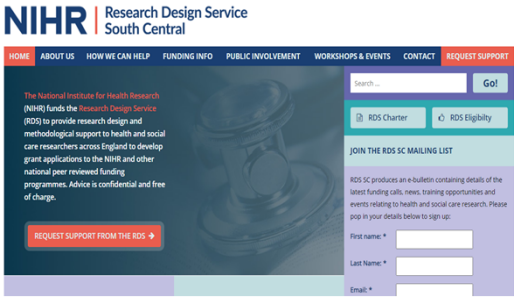

Other Mentorship: NIHR Incubators

- Purpose: 'to accelerate capacity building and support the development of a skilled clinical academic research workforce across the nursing and midwifery professions.'
  - fostering a 'community of practice' - networking and knowledge sharing
  - coordinating information and support to better access existing research and research training opportunities
  - developing and testing new forms of support, information and professional development
- single online platform - repository for information and resources, a noticeboard for developments and opportunities, and a forum for discussion and collaboration.

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

When applying for a fellowship, come and see the Research Design Service

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

| HOME | ABOUT US | HOW WE CAN HELP | FUNDING INFO | PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT | WORKSHOPS & EVENTS | CONTACT | REQUEST SUPPORT |

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) funds the Research Design Service (RDS) to provide research design and methodological support to health and social care researchers across England to develop grant applications to the NIHR and other national peer reviewed funding programmes. Advice is confidential and free of charge.

REQUEST SUPPORT FROM THE RDS →

Search... Go!

RDS Charter   RDS Eligibilty

JOIN THE RDS SC MAILING LIST

RDS SC produces an e-bulletin containing details of the latest funding calls, news, training opportunities and events relating to health and social care research. Please pop in your details below to sign up:

First name: *
Last Name: *
Email: *

www.rds-sc.nihr.ac.uk

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

An introduction to PPI

Claire Schwartz, PPI Manager NIHR Oxford & Thames Valley Applied Research Collaboration & Polly Kerr, PPI Manager, Oxford Biomedical Research Centre
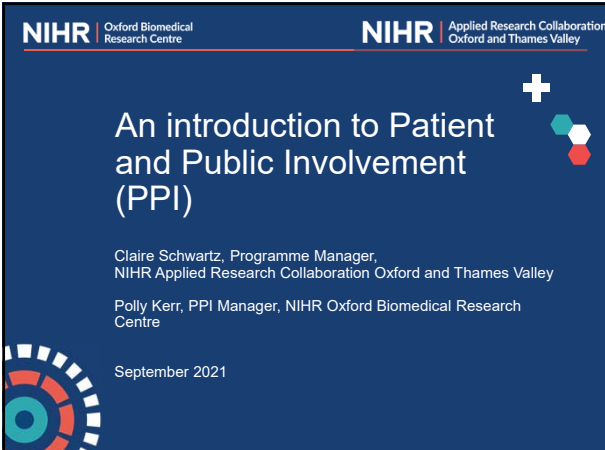
An introduction to Patient and Public Involvement (PPI)

Claire Schwartz, Programme Manager,
NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

Polly Kerr, PPI Manager, NIHR Oxford Biomedical Research Centre
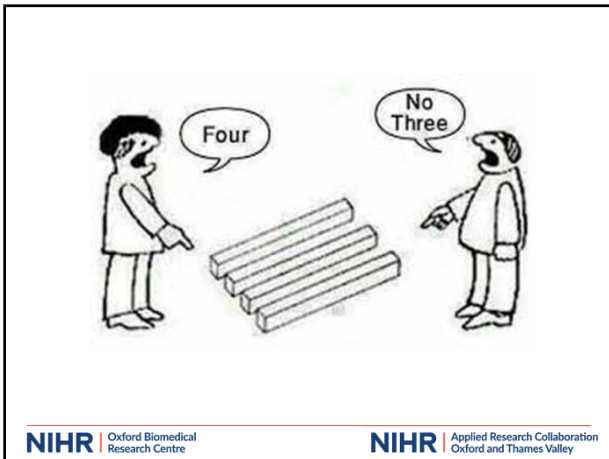
September 2021

What is PPI?

- Involvement – research done **with** or **by** patients or members of the public, not **to**, **about** or **for** them

- Engagement – raising awareness and sharing knowledge about research

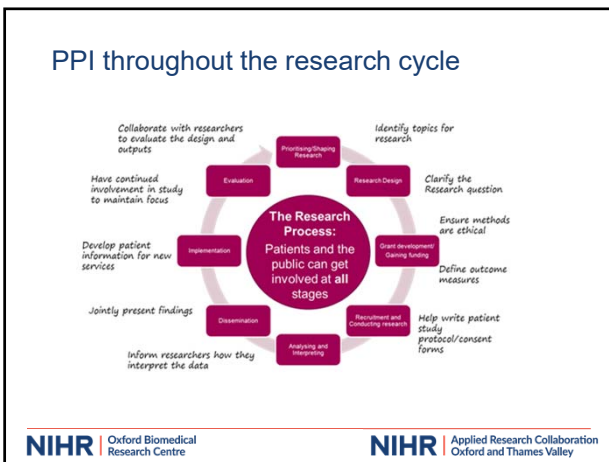- Participation – taking part in a trial or study for which consent has been given

---

Why do PPI?

PPI throughout the research cycle

Ways of doing PPI

Type of involvement	Definition	Style
Member of trial steering committee	This group has overall strategic responsibility for the research project throughout its funding period.	A group consisting of maybe two to three PPI contributors along with researchers, clinicians, statisticians, health economists etc.
One-off focus group	Convened at a specific moment in the project to answer a few specific questions.	A group of up to 10 to 12 PPI contributors, with one or two researchers facilitating the meeting.
Ongoing advisory group	A group that meets at various critical moments in the project to offer advice and feedback.	Up to about 10 people (may be just PPI contributors or other relevant people too).
Co-applicant	PPI contributor named on the grant application with the principal investigator.	Much more involvement as part of the research team.
Remote	Social media, blog comments, lay summaries, patient information leaflets.	PPI contributor does this on their own from home on an ad hoc basis.

Who can do PPI?

- Patients
- Members of the public
- Carers – informal and formal
- Children – and their parents
- Charities
- Patient support groups

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

How to recruit

- Clinics and waiting rooms
- GP surgeries
- Charities and patient groups
- Personal networks
- Public engagement events
- Community centres/church halls
- Social media
- PPI lists (eg BRC listings)

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

Information for PPI contributors

- Explain why you want them to be involved
- Role description
- Time commitment
- Payment and reimbursement

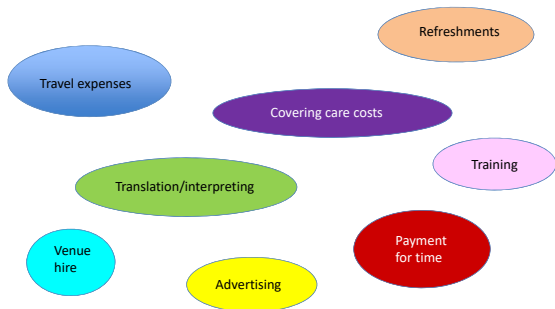NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

Things to consider during Covid-19

- Technical knowledge and ability (https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/PPI/resources-for-the-public)
- Timing
- Caring responsibilities

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

Things to consider during normal times

- Venue
- Go to them
- Timing
- Accessibility
- Caring responsibilities

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

Budgeting for PPI

Refreshments

Travel expenses

Covering care costs

Training

Translation/interpreting

Venue hire

Advertising

Payment for time

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

National Standards for Public Involvement

https://sites.google.com/nihr.ac.uk/pi-standards/home

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

National Standards for Public Involvement

INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES: We offer public involvement opportunities that are accessible and that reach people and groups according to research needs.

WORKING TOGETHER: We work together in a way that values all contributions, and that builds and sustains mutually respectful and productive relationships.

SUPPORT & LEARNING: We offer and promote support and learning that builds confidence and skills for public involvement in research.

COMMUNICATIONS: We use plain language for timely, two way and targeted communications, as part of involvement plans and activities.

IMPACT: To drive improvement, we capture and share the difference that public involvement makes to research.

GOVERNANCE: We involve the public in our governance and leadership so that our decisions promote and protect the public interest.

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

PPI case studies

AQUA Study

- PPI Contributor for this study was recruited through the research nurse

- Contributor was the parent of a young person with ADHD and also ran a support group for parents of children with special needs in their school

- Became a member of the trial team

- Attended regular team meetings and supported the research team

- Initially research team were sceptical about PPI due to a negative experience from an earlier study

IN-Bulletin-AQUA-Study3.pdf (invo.org.uk)

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   **NIHR** | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

Influence of PPI

- Addition of an additional study outcome measure – "Time to Diagnosis"

- Impact on the data collected from qualitative interviews as PPI contributor could review the questions

- Forum meetings were "brought to life" with the PPI contributor's personal account

- Recruitment target was exceeded by 100 within the planned recruitment time period

- Used the PPI Contributor's links to reach other parents and schools for dissemination

- PPI contributor went on to play a pivotal role in informing the protocol for a follow up grant

  "It wasn't a case of 'us' versus 'them'. We all worked together; clinicians, academics, our industry partners (Qbtech) and PPI. That was the real success of the trial."

IN-Bulletin-AQUA-Study3.pdf (invo.org.uk)

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   **NIHR** | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

Hidden talents

"Dave is an engineer by background so he is also good with technology so he's helped to test out the video conferencing platforms, trying to see which one might be the best. Also, there's been a text messaging service, that again is part of the intervention and he also helped to test that as well.

Fred is a cartoonist and has created excellent images for us which have been used in study documents such as the therapy booklet and posters presented at academic conferences. It's led to us winning more than one poster competition!"

Urgent Care Study –
Helping urgent care users cope with distress about
physical complaints

'Being your own therapist'
a cartoon by Fred Higton from the patient booklet

IN-Bulletin-HealthAnxietyStudyV2.pdf (invo.org.uk)

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   **NIHR** | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

PPI resources

- NIHR PPI resources: https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/campaigns/supporting-patient-and-public-involvement-in-research.htm
- NDPCHS PPI resources: https://www.phc.ox.ac.uk/ppi/information-for-researchers

- Research Design Service: https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/research-design-service.htm

- Healthtalk.org

- Oxford BRC PPI website: https://oxfordbrc.nihr.ac.uk/ppi/

- People in Research: https://www.peopleinresearch.org/

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   **NIHR** | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

---

NIHR | Oxford Biomedical Research Centre   **NIHR** | Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

Any questions?

Polly.kerr@phc.ox.ac.uk

Claire.Schwartz@phc.ox.ac.uk

Next steps

Issy Reading, RDS South Central

Why use the RDS?

- Tailored support for your proposal
- Support **all** NIHR Programmes
- Free!
- Methodological expertise & PPI
- Southampton, Oxford, Portsmouth & Isle of Wight
- Signpost

- External peer review
- Pre-submission review panel
- Mock interviews for fellowship applications
- Master classes and events
- Signposting to other support as required

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Ways the RDS can support you

We help you to:

Develop your idea

Identify Funding Streams

Build your research team
? ! ??!

Helping you to structure and write your proposal

Acknowledgement: RDS North West

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

RDS regions across the nation

NIHR | National Institute for Health Research

Research Design Service

https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/research-design-service.htm

NIHR | Research Design Service South Central

Evaluation form

NIHR | Research Design Service
South Central

Contributors

Kelly Adams	Panel member – Wessex Clinical Research Network
Karen Bell	Panel member – NIHR Oxford BRC
Sarah Brien	Speaker, panel member, one-to-one facilitator – RDS South Central
Zoe Davey	Panel member – HEE-NIHR ICA Internship Programme
Rachel Evley	Panel member – RDS East Midlands
Sophie Hyndman	Speaker, one-to-one facilitator – RDS South Central
Kinda Ibrahim	Panel member – ARC Wessex
Christine Keen	Speaker – RDS East Midlands
Polly Kerr	Speaker – Oxford Biomedical Research Centre
Emma King	Panel member – Wessex REACH
Brian Leask	Administrator – RDS South Central
Anna Maguire Elliott	Administrator – RDS South Central
Kay Mitchell	Panel member – Southampton Academy of Research, Southampton Biomedical Research Centre
Joanna Mochandreas	One-to-one facilitator
Eileen Morrow	Speaker – Oxford Gait Laboratory, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust
Ugochi Nwulu	Panel member – NIHR Incubators
Chris Pugh	Panel member – Oxford University Clinical Academic Graduate School, Oxfordshire Health Services Research Committee
Issy Reading	Speaker, one-to-one facilitator
Nia Roberts	Panel member - Oxford Healthcare Libraries
Katerina Samouri-Christodoulos	Panel member – Thames Valley & South Midlands CRN Study Support Service
Phil Saunders	Administrator – RDS South Centralp
Claire Schwartz	Speaker – NIHR Oxford & Thames Valley Applied Research Collaboration
Nana Theodorou	Panel member – Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS
Katherine Tucker	Panel member – Oxford & Thames Valley Applied Research Collaboration
Liz Tunbridge	Panel member – Oxford Health BRC
Jane Vennik	Speaker, one-to-one facilitator – RDS South Central
Helen Walthall	Panel member – Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Jane Wolstenholme	One-to-one facilitator
Wendy Wood	One-to-one facilitator
Stephen Zingwe	Panel member - Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust