

Research and Development

Research bulletin, August 2020

Safe, effective care through research

Trust recognised for COVID-19 research support

The Trust's support for COVID-19 research has been recognised by the NIHR Clinical Research Network Greater Manchester. The ELHT research and clinical teams have supported national, high-priority COVID-19 research entering 1258 patients into research studies as of 24th July 2020. This achievement places ELHT third amongst other trusts in the Network.

The achievement follows a year where the research team helped a further 1676 East Lancashire patients enter non-COVID research. Sixty-five of these patients entered studies in March whilst the research team were busy setting up new COVID-19 research and ensuring the safe delivery of care to participants in existing research studies.

At the start of the outbreak, the research team quickly established a dedicated COVID-19

research team led by Senior Research Nurse and Team Lead, Wendy Goddard.

The team has managed 10 COVID-19 research studies with additional studies such as GenOMICC, ImmunoCOVID-19 and Pan-COVID being supported by the Cancer and Women and Children's Health Research Teams.

Michelle Stephens, R&D Manager said: "This is an outstanding achievement and praise is well deserved for the whole team. Although we recognise the tremendous work that Wendy and the research team have put into this effort, there have been fantastic contributions from the whole team, whether directly in recruiting to studies like Priest & GenOMICC, or by keeping everything else ticking over and maintaining a dedicated, professional research service throughout this challenging period."

ELHT C-Stich experience guiding other researchers

C-STICH Newsletter

June 2020

Reproductive Health and Children's research, Burnley Teaching Hospital, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust



The ELHT Women and Children's Health Research Team with C-Stich Principal Investigator, Mr Yen Eit Liew (inset)

Bev Hammond, Senior Research Midwife and Team Lead for the Women and Children's Health Research Team is mentoring the NIHR online course [Improving Healthcare through research](#). Course mentors monitor discussions, respond to comments and answer questions during the initial 4 weeks of the course. The opportunity arose through Bev's role as Midwifery Research Champion for the Greater Manchester Research Network.

A section of the course looks at the C-Stich trial which the Women and Children's Health Research Team has supported at ELHT since 2016. The team recently featured in the C-Stich trial newsletter describing the restart of C-Stich within the Trust, since the COVID-19 outbreak. Under the guidance of new PI Mr Yen Eit Liew, the team were able to quickly risk assess the study, refine their study processes and restart the study, entering their first patient within a day of re-opening. The team now restarted 9 research studies within their portfolio.

Contact us

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New Team Lead for the Restart Multi-Disciplinary Research Team



Congratulations to Research Nurse Karen Marsden who's been appointed as Team Leader for the Restart Multi-Disciplinary Research Team. The role provides temporary support for the team through the COVID-19 outbreak, whilst they focus on re-starting paused research studies, and begin to open new studies in the future.

Widening cancer research at ELHT

Plans are in place to widen access to cancer research within the Trust. The plans, agreed with the Clinical Research Network Greater Manchester will build on the current strong urology cancer portfolio. The aim is to increase the number of breast and gynaecological cancer research studies and provide access to research in radiotherapy and novel therapies in the future. Haematology studies such as FITness are currently in local feasibility in anticipation of the study sponsor being in a position to open sites. A comprehensive review of colorectal and upper GI studies will follow later in the year.

Research capacity and culture survey

The Trust's first Research Capacity and Culture (RCC) Survey was launched on 22nd July to find out:

- How many staff have research-based qualifications
- Who is conducting research or would like to be involved in future research
- What barriers and motivators there are for being involved in research

Gathering the information will help to improve the support the Trust can offer to researchers. The contribution of everyone is important, whether you're an experienced or novice researcher, or someone with no interest in research. All responses will be kept confidential. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete and can be accessed [via this link](#) using Google Chrome. There's an opportunity to enter a prize draw of £300 towards a Continuing Professional Development related activity once the survey has been completed. For more information e-mail Researchideas@elht.nhs.uk, adding RCC survey in subject heading.

Online writing skills workshop



Mark Illis, Royal Literary Fund Fellow, novelist, and writer for TV and radio delivered an on-line writing skills workshop to ELHT at the end of July. The workshop focussed on structure, explored how stories work and how to give writing a pleasing, logical shape, in order to shape an effective piece of writing. Since May, Mark has provided free writing support to people working at the Trust. In a series of 1-2-1 online sessions Mark has been helping people write about their research, new initiatives they've been involved in, and writing to share with colleagues, students and for public audiences.

Cathie Melvin, Research Development Lead at the Trust said: "Mark hosted a very informative, fun and comfortably interactive workshop, and the feedback from participants has been very positive. I would encourage anyone with an interest in improving their writing skills to seize the opportunity for tailored writing support with Mark whilst they can."

Resources

Ensuring ethnic diversity in COVID-19 research

New [resources for researchers](#) have been launched to encourage COVID-19 studies to be inclusive of people from all communities, including across BAME populations. People from BAME groups are disproportionately affected by coronavirus infection, so it's imperative that they're included in COVID-19 research. The NIHR has collaborated with the Centre for BME Health to offer tips and advice on designing and delivering health and care research that is sensitive to and inclusive of people from BAME groups.

The resources include a [series of videos](#) which explain cultural competency within a research context, provide advice for researchers and highlight the views of people from BAME communities on the barriers to engagement in health and care research and how these can be addressed.

Clinical research in the Intensive Care Unit

A new video [Perspectives on enhancing consent and recruitment in intensive care studies](#) has been developed by researchers at the University of Liverpool. The video explains why critical care research is important and how it is carried out, including how informed consent to participate in research is sought from participants, their families and clinical staff. Although aimed at the critical care setting, the video provides a useful overview of clinical research.

Study news

FEMME study published

The [results of the Femme trial](#) have been published in the New England Journal of Medicine. Femme compared treatments for symptomatic uterine fibroids among women wishing to avoid hysterectomy. 254 women were randomised to receive either uterine artery embolization (UAE) or myomectomy, the uterine-sparing alternative to hysterectomy. The results showed that myomectomy gave a small but significant improvement in the quality of life of women when compared with UAE. The FEMME trial included a diverse population, with a substantial number of Black women. This representation is critical, since the risk of fibroids is three times greater among women of African descent than among white women. The trial was led by Professor Klim McPherson at the University of Oxford. ELHT joined the study, under the leadership of PI Mr Mark Willett in 2012.

Bev Hammond, ELHT Senior Research Midwife said: "On behalf of the Principal Investigator and clinical team I would like to thank the ELHT participants who were involved in this important study. As we continue to expand our gynaecology research portfolio it is hoped we can offer further options to women who experience such debilitating conditions."

CLIMB study



The CLIMB study, funded by the Medical Research Council and managed by the University of Cambridge, has re-opened and will now continue until the end of September. The research is looking at perceptions of how health and care data should be shared and used, and what consent should be given. If you'd like more information regarding the study, or would like to complete the survey, please [visit the study website](#).

COVID-19

ELHT contribution to ground-breaking GenOMICC

East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust (ELHT) is continuing the fight against COVID-19 by recruiting patients who have tested positive for the virus to participate in a ground-breaking new study. Researchers from the [University of Edinburgh's GenOMICC project](#) are working with Genomics England and 205 NHS hospitals, including ELHT. The study aims to sequence the genomes of 20,000 people who are severely ill with COVID-19 to help explain why some patients with COVID-19 experience a mild infection, others require intensive care and why for some it is sadly fatal.

Nine East Lancashire patients have entered the research to date, placing ELHT in the top 3 recruiting sites nationally. Dr Matt Smith, Acting Consultant in Critical Care and Principal Investigator for the study, said: "I am extremely excited to be involved in this ground-breaking research. COVID-19 has not only transformed the way of life within hospitals but its impact has affected the whole of the world. To play a part in this study that will help inform the best way to treat and beat this disease is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity. I would like to thank anyone who has taken part in our research projects in the past. Their input really is making such a positive difference to the treatments and care we give."

NIHR launches new vaccine research register



COVID-19 vaccines have been identified and safety-tested but large scale studies are now needed to establish their efficacy. The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has partnered with the NHS to launch the new [NHS COVID-19 vaccine research registry](#) to help scientists connect with people willing to be involved in vaccine studies. The vaccine register could potentially lead to an effective vaccine against coronavirus being identified and made available to the UK public earlier. People registering with the service give permission to be contacted by researchers with information about COVID-19 vaccine research. The register is available to anyone living in the UK, aged 18 years or over.

Results from the RECOVERY trial: First drug to reduce mortality

The steroid dexamethasone has been identified as the first drug to improve survival rates in certain coronavirus patients. The [results from the RECOVERY trial](#) have been published as a preliminary [report in the New England Journal of Medicine](#). The controlled, open-label trial, which is funded and supported by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), is comparing a range of possible treatments in patients hospitalized with COVID-19.

The publication reports outcomes in 2104 patients who were randomly assigned to receive oral or intravenous dexamethasone (at a dose of 6 mg once daily) for up to 10 days or to receive usual care alone. Overall, dexamethasone reduced the risk of 28-day mortality by 17% with a highly significant trend showing greatest benefit among those on ventilators.

Over 11,500 patients have so far been enrolled into RECOVERY from over 175 NHS hospitals in the UK, including ELHT. The research is being conducted at the University of Oxford and is led at ELHT by Dr Srikanth Chukkambotla.

Professional development

Research training awards

If you'd like to make a difference through undertaking high quality clinical research, and are interested in more information on the following internship schemes, please contact Cathie Melvin, Clinical Research Development Lead on 07977503545.

NIHR ARC NWC internship scheme



NIHR Applied Research Collaboration NW Coast (ARC NWC) Research Internships 2020

The Applied Research Collaboration North West Coast (ARC NWC) has announced the latest round of their research internship scheme. The internships will support individuals to prepare an NIHR Research Fellowship application or complete a Rapid Conversion Evidence Summary project (RaCES).

For both types of internships, salary back-fill (a payment of £6000) will be provided to the intern's employing organisation to assist with time release. Interns will be expected to dedicate sufficient time to their internship to enable them to submit an application to the relevant NIHR funding call.

NIHR Award	Launch dates
Pre-Doctoral Fellowship	February annually
Development and Skills Enhancement Award	January, May, September annually
Doctoral Fellowship including Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowships	April, October annually
Advanced Fellowship	April, October annually

Applications for Pre-Doctoral and Doctoral Fellowships must be supervised by Academic Researchers from:

- Edge Hill University
- Lancaster University
- Liverpool John Moores University
- University of Liverpool
- University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)

Fellowships must:

- Align with an existing ARC NWC research theme
- Address a regional or national priority
- Involve co-production with patients/service users
- Consider health inequalities

To request an application form please contact arcnwc@uclan.ac.uk. Please indicate which type of internship you are interested in applying for. Applications must be received by **5pm, Tuesday September 1st 2020**. Interviews will be held in September and the internship must begin shortly after.

Virtual Research Festival

16th September 2020, 2-4pm

Developed by the University of Liverpool and the Liverpool Hospitals Research Collaboration Group, this on-line festival aims to promote nursing, midwifery and allied health professional research and collaboration. The festival will include information on research training and funding opportunities. To register and book your place, visit the [festival Eventbrite page](#).

NIHR Integrated Clinical Academic Programme

ICA

HEE/NIHR Integrated Clinical Academic Programme
for non-medical healthcare professionals



The Integrated Clinical Academic (ICA) Programme provides research training awards for **non-medical healthcare professionals** who wish to develop careers that combine clinical research and research leadership with continued clinical practice and professional development.

The ICA programme is funded by Health Education England (HEE) and managed by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). Two award schemes support applicants to the ICA programme:

ICA Internship Scheme (pre-masters degree level)

The ICA Internship Scheme is designed to offer an introduction for graduates to all aspects of clinical research from trial design and data management through to undertaking primary research in a clinical environment. Internships provide backfill support for the intern's time, are available annually and run for six months. The internship provides a range of taught and academically supervised interventions and enable interns to undertake a research project supported by an expert clinical academic supervisor.

Participants will gain the confidence to apply their new skills within their employing Trusts, become research champions, and consider a future clinical academic career to include formally accredited education programmes, either within the HEE/NIHR ICA programme, or via other routes. The next scheme is planned for January 2021. **The closing date for applications is 5pm on Friday 4th September 2020.** For further information visit the [Internship Scheme web page](#).

ICA Bridging Scheme (pre and post-doctoral level)

The ICA bridging scheme provides an exciting opportunity for non-medical clinical academics to apply for personal awards to support them to build applications for PhD or post-doctoral level fellowships. The scheme is designed to help nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, pharmacists and healthcare scientists who have completed, or are about to complete a Masters level degree or a PhD, or are looking to undertake a PhD or a post-doctoral level fellowship. **The closing date for applications will be 5pm on Friday 9th October 2020.**