

# Research and Development

Research bulletin, June 2020

Safe, effective care through research

## East Lancashire Hospitals fight against coronavirus



The Trust's efforts in the fight against coronavirus have received media attention. Senior Research Nurse Wendy Goddard discussed the current research efforts at East Lancashire Hospitals, including support for the RECOVERY trial and REMAP-CAP, during an interview which featured on BBC Television's North West Tonight programme.

The appearance followed an earlier interview on BBC Radio Lancashire where Wendy took time out from a busy week of entering patients into COVID-19 research studies, and supporting the newly formed COVID-19 research team, to describe the treatments under investigation. Previously, headlines also appeared in the local press, including the Burnley Express and the Lancashire Evening Telegraph.

The Trust currently has nine COVID-19 research studies open, with data for 1301 patients entered into the research. Details of the studies can be accessed on the [ELHT research webpage](#).

Michelle Stephens thanked ELHT Principal Investigators for supporting the COVID-19 research, and the research and clinical teams who've enabled the set-up of the new studies and the entry of East Lancashire patients into the research.

"Never in my 25-year career in NHS research has research been more critical and important than it is today. I would like to thank our patients and their families who have, and are taking part in coronavirus research at the Trust. They are not only helping patients today but healthcare in the future. The tireless effort put in by the Research Support Office team, Research Nurses, Midwives, Support Officers and Principal Investigators along with Pharmacy Clinical Trials Team and other support departments, in setting up the new COVID-19 studies and offering these to our patients across a 7-day week, cannot be underestimated. I would like to thank everyone for all of their hard work and continued dedication. I am so very proud of our contribution towards a better understanding and treatment of COVID-19."



We'd also like to express our gratitude to the Trust communications team for their support, and for all their efforts to raise awareness of research, both during the COVID pandemic and at other times.

### Contact us

Research & Innovation, Level 3, Royal Blackburn Hospital, Blackburn, BB2 3HH  
Tel: 01254 733008; Email: [research@elht.nhs.uk](mailto:research@elht.nhs.uk); [www.elht.nhs.uk/research](http://www.elht.nhs.uk/research); Follow @ELHTresearch

### Restarting NIHR research

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) published the Restart Framework on 21<sup>st</sup> May. The Framework aims to guide the restart of research, either funded or supported by the NIHR, which was paused due to COVID-19.

The document outlines the roles of sponsors, research funders, investigator sites and the NIHR in restoring a fully-active portfolio of NIHR research, whilst continuing to support COVID-19 research studies as part of the government response to tackle the pandemic.

The framework tasks investigator sites to convene a Site Assessment and Prioritisation Panel within a month of the publication of the framework and outlines the criteria for prioritising the restart of NIHR research studies.

The C-Stich trial was one of the first research studies to restart at ELHT. The women's health research team worked closely with new Principal Investigator Mr Yen Eit Liew to undertake a local risk assessment and assess how the study could be run effectively and safely for both the research team and patients. This opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of study management is highlighted in the Restart Framework. The initiative was a success and resulted in the first patient being randomised into the research within a day of restarting the study.

The Restart Framework will continue to be updated during what will be an evolving situation for the NHS in dealing with Covid-19. Further details on the framework can be accessed via the [NIHR website](#).

### ARC NWC Data Science Internship

Speech & Language Therapist, Lee Hughes, will undertake an Applied Research Collaboration North West Coast (ARC NWC) data science internship at the Rakehead Team Centre following a successful application for the award.

Lee will be supported by the Neurorehabilitation Team and Louise Connell, Professor of Allied Health Neuro-rehabilitation and Stroke for East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust and the University of Central Lancashire. The internship will enable the team to explore how national and local neurological rehabilitation outcomes data can inform service improvements and training.

The Neurorehabilitation Service at Rakehead is a specialised interdisciplinary pathway for patients with disabling neurological conditions. It is an integrated service with inpatient beds at the Rakehead Rehabilitation Centre (Burnley General Teaching Hospital) plus community and outpatient teams.

### New Research Team appointments



L-R Julie Ditchfield, Rachel Bolton, Chloe Davison

The Research Delivery Team is delighted to welcome three new additions to the team.

Julie Ditchfield is the second R&D Co-ordinator in the Research Support Office, working alongside Gemma Hudson. Julie joins ELHT from a previous role in the Clinical Research Network North West Coast.

Rachel Bolton has been appointed Cancer Research Team Lead/Specialist Nurse Practitioner, having previously worked at The Rosemere Cancer Centre.

Chloe Davison has joined the team as a Research Support Officer for the Multi-Disciplinary Research Team having recently completed an MSc in Psychology of Child Development.

### Welcome back

We welcome back four members of the team who were redeployed to clinical areas over the last few months to support the clinical services.

Jill Fitchett, MDT Research Nurse, was redeployed to Theatres. Michelle Cookson, MDT Research Nurse and Aayesha Kazi, MDT Research Nurse, were both redeployed to Critical Care. Michelle and Aayesha are new to the Research Delivery Team, having delayed their start dates, to help Critical Care. We would like to welcome them to the team!

Finally, Cathie Melvin was redeployed to the postnatal, ward working with the Baby Friendly Team. We would like to thank our staff for supporting the wider clinical teams at these challenging times and we know that their contributions were invaluable to the clinical services.



## Network news

### NIHR launches new funding call for longer-term COVID-19 research

The NIHR is inviting funding applications to better understand and manage the health and social care consequences of the global COVID-19 pandemic beyond the acute phase. The **UK-wide call** aims to provide high-quality and timely evidence to inform policy and to support system recovery and learning. Research should focus specifically on health outcomes, public health, social care and health service delivery and mitigating the impact of subsequent phases and the aftermath. The new funding call sits alongside the **NIHR/UKRI 'rolling call'** for urgent research into COVID-19. The first and second closing dates are 23<sup>rd</sup> June and 14<sup>th</sup> July, respectively.

### NIHR evidence website

The NIHR has launched a new website, **NIHR evidence**, which aims to make health and care research informative, accessible, relevant and ready for use for all. NIHR Evidence presents high quality summaries of findings from health and care research as alerts, collections and themed reviews. You can sign up to the **NIHR Evidence newsletter** and follow on Twitter at @NIHRevidence.

### Over 51,000 participants take part in research

The Clinical Research Network Greater Manchester surpassed its annual recruitment target for 2019-20. Staff within the Network supported 51,260 participants in Greater Manchester, East Cheshire and East Lancashire to take part in research. Recruitment targets have not been set for 2020/21, due to the long-term impact the coronavirus outbreak will have on research. This will enable research efforts to be focused on new COVID-19 research, supporting the clinical services at trusts across the region and restarting non-COVID research activity.

The CRN Greater Manchester core team thanked staff in the network. "Greater Manchester has done an excellent job in the past year and we know our research community will help lead the way again at this important time.

## Regulatory news

### Changes to IRAS and amendment submissions

Two new services have been launched by the Health Research Authority (HRA).

#### Online booking service for IRAS submissions

A new online booking service for IRAS submissions now replaces the current Central Booking Service telephone line. Applicants access the online booking service through IRAS, to book in their submission, select the appropriate review, and then submit their application. The online booking service will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Training and guidance is available via the IRAS website. You can also **watch a short video** to see how to use the online booking service. Applicants making contact about fast-track COVID-19 studies, should continue to follow current guidance and email [fast.track@hra.nhs.uk](mailto:fast.track@hra.nhs.uk).

#### Online submission of amendments and an amendment tool

From 2<sup>nd</sup> June applicants making an amendment to an approved research project will complete a new amendment tool and **submit their amendment online** through IRAS. The amendment tool replaces the Notification of Substantial Amendment (NoSA) and Non-Substantial Amendment forms and gives tailored guidance for the applicant on where to submit their amendment and what actions are needed. This will help speed up the processing of amendments and means that applicants can track the submission history of amendments. Guidance and support is provided together with videos showing an **amendment tool demonstration** and how **to complete online submission of amendments**.

## Training and events

### Demystifying targeted cancer treatments

Free online course, studied over 5 weeks, requiring 3 hours per week of study time. **Further details**

Developed by Cancer Research UK and designed primarily for cancer research nurses, this free course aims to help learners gain a deeper understanding of how targeted cancer treatments and immunotherapies work, in order to support communication with cancer patients.

### RDF21: RDForum Annual Conference

16th-18th May 2021, Newcastle  
**Further details**

### Improving healthcare through clinical research

Free, on-line course. **Further details**

This free, online course explores how clinical research contributes to the treatment of disease and of the huge benefits it has brought to modern healthcare.

### Engaging with your local NHS

The NIHR has further developed its package of interactive learning resources to support research delivery professionals to engage with their local NHS organisation. The resources can be accessed in the NIHR communities section of NIHR Learn.



## COVID-19

### Resources to support COVID-19 research

#### HRA support for COVID-19 studies

COVID-19 research studies are being fast-tracked through the [HRA fast-track review service](#) with the most urgent studies reviewed in as little as 24 hours after submission. COVID-19 research studies are also being fast-tracked through Pharmacy Assurance. A new [public involvement matching service](#) has been introduced to put research teams in touch with public involvement networks and groups who can quickly contribute to COVID-19 studies. Meanwhile, the HRA continues to review non-COVID research and is ready to support the restart of studies which have been paused during the pandemic.

#### Share your views

##### Share your experiences of working during the COVID-19 pandemic

The NIHR Clinical Research Network NHS Engagement Team are looking to share stories of people's experiences of working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim is to provide support to other healthcare professionals in similar circumstances, as well as highlight the dedication shown by the research delivery workforce, to the wider public. Stories may be shared via a blog on the NIHR website as part of the COVID-19 Research Voices series or with national and local media. Anyone interested is asked to share a short summary of their COVID-19 experience with their [local Communications lead](#) and the [Coordinating Centre Communications inbox](#).

### COVID-19 study publications

#### ISARIC Clinical Characterisation Protocol UK

The [first report from the CCP-UK research study](#) was published on 28<sup>th</sup> April, describing the clinical features of 16,749 UK hospitalized patients with confirmed COVID-19. The research is an observational cohort study which employs rapid data gathering and near real-time analysis, using a pre-approved questionnaire adopted by the World Health Organisation. The median age of patients was 72 years [IQR 57, 82], duration of symptoms before admission was 4 days [IQR 1,8], and duration of hospital stay was 7 days [IQR 4,12]. The commonest comorbidities were chronic cardiac disease (29%), uncomplicated diabetes (19%), non-asthmatic chronic pulmonary disease (19%) and asthma (14%). Overall, 49% of patients were discharged alive, 33% died and 17% continued to receive care at date of reporting. 17% required admission to High Dependency or Intensive Care Units. Data for 40,303 UK patients, including 615 East Lancashire patients, has been included in the research to date.

### COVID-19 research available directly to members of the public

#### COVID symptom study

Almost 4 million people, from all ages and backgrounds are using the [COVID symptom study](#) app to report their health daily, even if they are well. Links between hormones and nutrition and COVID-19 are also being studied.

#### COVIDENCE UK Study

In the [COVIDENCE UK study](#), people aged 16 years or older are invited to consent then complete an online questionnaire with details about their lifestyle and health. Participants are contacted every month to check if they have developed any symptoms of coronavirus disease. The data will help determine risk factors for coronavirus disease among UK adults, recovery times and whether there are any long-term complications of the illness.

#### Research Design Service North West resources for COVID-19 research

The Research Design Service North West has worked with RDS colleagues across the country to collate relevant research resources and methodological approaches for research studies being designed or delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic. The resources can be accessed via [the RDS NW website](#).

#### NIHR's response to COVID-19

The NIHR's new COVID-19 page has brought together all the latest updates on the pandemic and its impact on research. It includes news items relating to COVID-19, information on the prioritised COVID-19 research studies and the 'restart' strategy. To view the page, visit the [NIHR website](#).

#### Survey on COVID-19 recovery & resilience

The Clinical Research Working Group (CRWG) is undertaking a programme of work to inform both the response to any future waves of the COVID-19 pandemic and improvements to the UK's clinical research environment more broadly. The research community is invited to [complete a survey](#). The results will inform a summary report, highlighting key issues and opportunities for change, which will be shared with decision makers in the Department of Health and Social Care and Office for Life Sciences. The deadline for survey responses is 21st June.

#### UKOSS

The results of the [UKOSS study](#), have been published in the BMJ. The study lead at ELHT was Ms S Loveridge. The paper reports data for 427 pregnant women with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection, who were admitted to hospital. The estimated incidence of admission to hospital was 4.9 per 1000 maternities; 69% of the women were overweight or obese, 56% were from BAME groups, 41% were aged over 35 and 34% had pre-existing comorbidities. Most pregnant women admitted to hospital with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection were in the late second or third trimester; 73% gave birth at term and 5% of infants tested positive for the virus, half of those within the first 12 hours after birth.