

Exploring the benefits and barriers to developing a Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals Clinical Academic Career pathway at LTHT

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Background: Nurses, midwives, allied health-professionals(NMAHPs) constitute 38% of NHS workforce(1); less than 0.1% are clinical-academics(2). Developing NMAHP clinical-academic career pathways is essential to enhance patient care, foster innovation, and ensure evidence-based NHS practice.

Aims:

- Explore Clinical-Academic NMAHP career landscape, identifying challenges faced.
- Evaluate impact of these roles on patient outcomes, experiences, and research delivery.
- Identify support mechanisms required to retain these professionals.

Methods: Mixed-methods:

- NHS workforce statistics quantitative data review
- Literature and policy document reviews, including NIHR ICA Programme
- LTHT Clinical-academic NMAHPs case studies

Results: Key challenges:

- Lack of structured career pathways
- Limited workforce understanding of NMAHP clinical-academic roles
- Maintaining protected research time

Case Studies: Dr Clare Greenwood, Clinical Academic Researcher, Tissue Viability. Undertook part-time PhD informed by practice, wanting to improve patient care and discover best evidence-based practice for heel pressure ulcer prevention. The findings successfully informed a HTA Multi-centre RCT "WHITE14-PRESSURE3". She is developing a research active Tissue Viability CNS team, recruiting clinical trial participants, presenting at conferences, developing research strategies and promoting a research positive culture within the Chief Nurse CSU.

Dr Sue Hartup, Consultant Nurse Breast Cancer Research. Undertook PhD part-time, building on patient-identified unmet needs, (chronic pain in breast cancer survivors), developing and testing a web-based intervention, integrated with EPR. The intervention provides patients tailored advice based on symptom reporting and allows HCPs to identify those needing support, helping guide clinical consultations. Current RfPB grant extends this with a multi-site intervention RCT, testing transferability to other NHS Trusts.

Conclusion: Clinical-Academic NMAHPs are vital in advancing healthcare research and NHS practice. While progress has been made through NIHR initiatives, further efforts are needed to address identified challenges. Enhancing support structures and promoting a culture that values research within clinical settings are essential to realising the potential of clinical-academic NMAHPs in improving patient care and health outcomes.

References:

1. <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-workforce-statistics>
2. Medical Research Council (2017) UK-wide Survey of Clinical and Health Research Fellowships. London: HEE: tinyurl.com/MRC-Survey-CHRF