The Utility of Genomic Assistants, Associates and Practitioners (GenPs) in WGS in the NHS: The Clinician's Viewpoint

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INTRODUCTION

Established in 2018, the GMS expanded genomic testing beyond clinical genetics and introduced Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) in the NHS. WGS poses challenges due to complex, uncertain, and incidental results, while patients and clinicians often lack genetics expertise. Informed consent is lengthy, involving multiple forms and decisions about research participation. Stakeholder interviews highlighted limited support for consent and administrative work.

To address this, Genomic Assistants, Associates and Practitioners (GenPs) assist with WGS consent and research discussions, streamlining workflows and freeing clinicians for patient care.

AIMS

- Identify clinician benefits to utilising GenPs in the WGS consent process
- Identify the barriers to using GenPs experienced by clinicians that do request WGS

MATERIALS AND METHODS

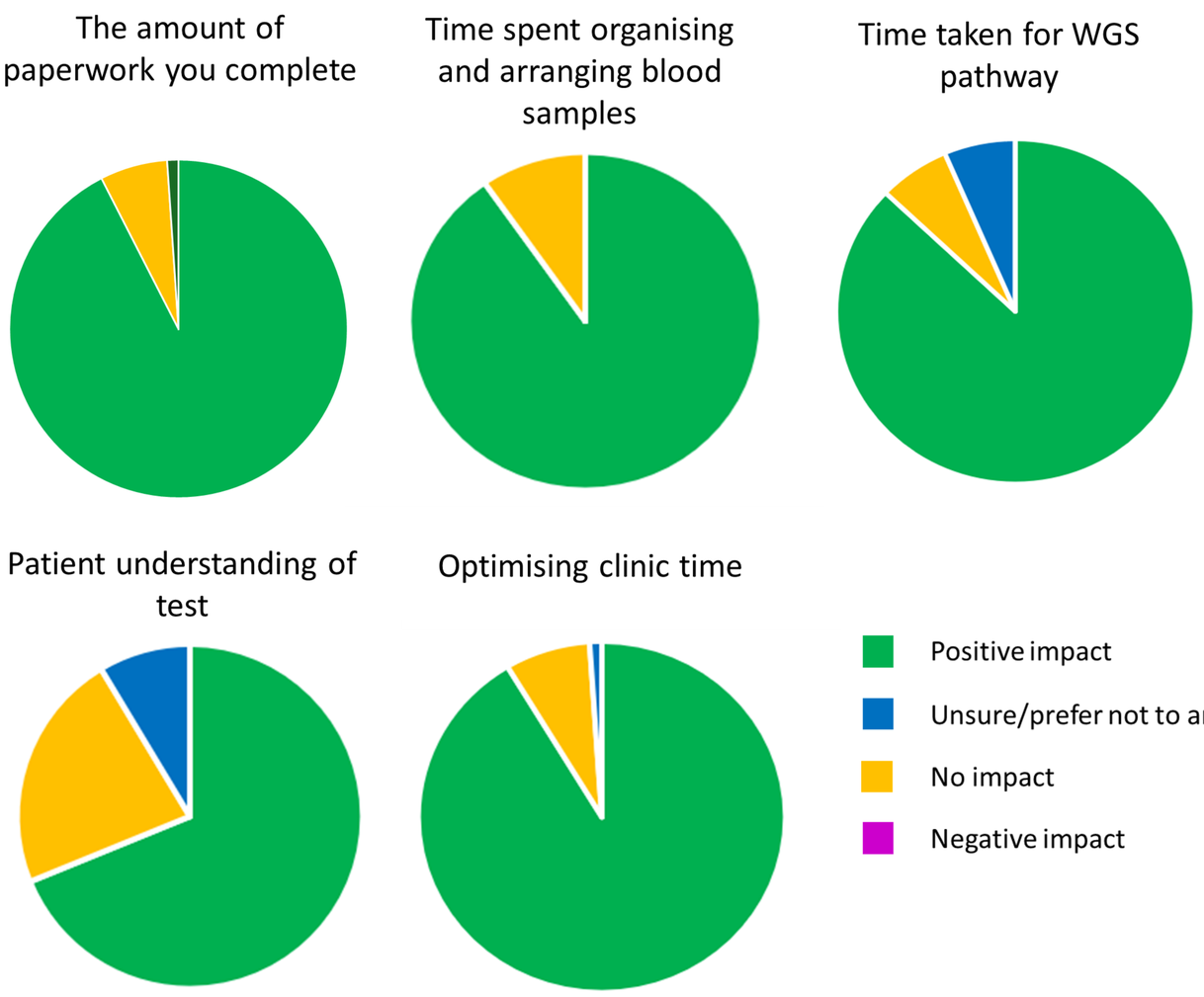
An online survey was circulated through the AGNC, BSGM and the GenPAN Network with multiple choice and free text answers.

RESULTS

116 clinicians participated in the survey. All 7 Genomic Laboratory Hubs (GLHs) were represented.

- **91%** have heard of the role and have at least some understanding of the responsibilities
- **85%** of those that have access to GenPs use support at least half the time with **28%** of these using GenPs all of the time
- **96%** agreed that GenP support is useful in WGS

Impact



Benefits

Eases burden on clinicians: *"we struggle to operate without them"*

Organisation and efficiency: *"significantly streamlines process"*

Equitable access for WGS: *"increases access to testing"*

Barriers

Funding: *"Funding for recruitment to these roles is a challenge"*

CONCLUSION

Strong clinician awareness and support for GenP roles within the GMS, particularly their contribution to reducing administrative burden and improving the WGS consent process. Wider adoption and continued evaluation of these roles may further strengthen mainstream genomic testing across the NHS. The primary barrier to access is funding.

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