

Did you know...?

Being research active is better for our patients and our hospital

At any one time there are over 200 research studies currently active across the hospital. Most departments are involved in research in one way or another.

- There are several different sorts of research studies:
 - Interventional studies need participants to be given or to take medication or follow a certain regime e.g. radiotherapy;
 - Observational studies mean that someone watches the participants do something and then data is collected on this;
 - Genetics and lifestyle studies usually involve a one-off blood sample and/or for participants to complete a questionnaire.
- All research need to have approval by an independent ethics committee and the Health Research Authority before the hospital's Research & Development department confirm the study can start.
- Some treatments or tests are only available for those participating in a study.
- This Trust aims to provide all patients with equal opportunity to participate in relevant studies but no-one is under any obligation to agree to participate.
- Patients who are unable to consent (e.g. those with neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's, those who are unconscious, or babies and children) can take part in research when the process approved by the ethics committee is followed.
- People who agree to take part can withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.
- Patients can ask their doctor about taking part in research; they don't have to wait to be approached by a member of the team!

Examples of how research has impacted on patient care

1: Standardisation of Breast Radiotherapy (START Trial)

The START trial compared different doses of radiotherapy to see which dose was more effective in treating breast cancer. A total of 4451 patients were entered from 34 centres across the UK, including the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust.

The study established that a lower dose of radiotherapy, delivered in fewer treatments, has been shown to be as effective as the international standard of a higher dose delivered over a longer time.

This means that those undergoing radiotherapy for breast cancer could benefit from fewer hospital visits in the future. The Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Trust has implemented the results of this decade-long research to ensure that patients continue to receive recommended treatment, which is in line with best practice.

2: Benefits to patients: CLOTS Trial – Results that changed practice

Guidelines advising on the treatment of stroke patients are being revised following the results of a study in the Stroke Research Network (SRN) Portfolio. Between 10%-20% of immobile stroke patients develop deep vein thrombosis (DVT) in the first month. The CLOTS trials are a family of three multicentre randomised trials testing whether external compression devices reduce risk of DVT in stroke patients admitted to hospital who are unable to walk.

In May 2009 the results of the CLOTS trial 1, which compared thigh length Graduated Compression Stockings (GCS) with avoid GCS, were published by the Lancet and presented at the European Stroke Conference in Sweden. This trial enrolled 2518 patients more than all previous trials of GCS combined.

The trial data do not support the use of thigh-length GCS in patients admitted to hospital with acute stroke, moreover, patients in the GCS group had significantly more problems with skin ulcers, blisters and irritation. On the basis of these results the study team expects the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) to revise their guidelines to advise that thigh length GCS are not recommended for stroke patients. The study team is aware that several sets of national stroke guidelines from around the world are already changing to take account of these results.

This trial result will benefit many millions of stroke patients because it will mean that they will not be subjected to an uncomfortable and awkward treatment that causes 1 in 20 to develop problems with their skin. Furthermore those patients will potentially benefit from the additional nursing time available since nurses will not spend their time sizing, fitting and monitoring the stockings (estimated to be 3-4 hours per patient per admission).

Over 100 UK hospitals contributed to the CLOTS trials supported by SRN. The CLOTS 1 trial demonstrates that the NHS can carry out clinical research, which will change practice around the world. The results of this trial will affect two thirds of all hospital admitted stroke patients – perhaps 80,000 people in the UK each year.

3. Patch 1 Trial

Cellulitis of the leg is a common, painful and potentially serious bacterial infection of the skin. It can spread rapidly and often leads to long term damage. Cellulitis is one of the most common reasons for emergency admissions to hospital and up to half of patients have repeat attacks or other difficulties such as swelling and ulceration.

The trial, involving 274 patients from 28 hospitals across the UK and Eire, was designed to see if low dose penicillin (250 mg) taken twice a day for 12 months could prevent further attacks in patients who suffer from repeat episodes of leg cellulitis. Patients who had experienced at least two episodes of leg cellulitis in the last three years were included in this trial. They remained in the trial for up to three years to see whether or not the penicillin was effective only whilst it was being taken, or whether there were longer term benefits after the antibiotics had been stopped.

In the largest randomised trial of its kind, dermatologists from the UK have discovered that taking low dose penicillin twice a day for a year can reduce the number of repeat episodes of leg cellulitis. However, this protection was gradually lost after patients stopped taking the antibiotics at 12 months. In fact, by three years, around half of all patients in both groups had suffered at least one further episode, so longer-term antibiotics may be required.

IT'S OK TO ASK ABOUT CLINICAL RESEARCH – Contact a member of our team to discuss more.

Clinical Haematology and Oncology (Cancer) Research Team	0118 322 8799 / 7960 / 7898
Urgent Care Research Team (Intensive Care Unit, Emergency Department)	0118 322 7257 / 8410 / 8639
Diabetes Research Team	0118 322 8929
Cross Specialty Research Team (Renal, Stroke, Cardiology, Gastroenterology, Trauma and Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and more)	0118 322 8593 / 6974 / 6739
Women's and Children's Research Team	0118 322 8652 / 7431 / 8929
Pharmacy Research Team	0118 322 6966
Respiratory Research Team	0118 322 8429
Florey Unit Research Team	0118 322 7223
Urology and Dermatology Research Team	0118 322 8720

Useful websites:

■ **www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk**

The Trust website has information about Research and Development as well as contact details of departments who are involved in research.

■ **www.invo.org.uk**

INVOLVE is a national advisory group, funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). Its role is to support and promote active public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research.

■ **www.nihr.ac.uk**

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is committed to establishing the NHS as an internationally recognized centre of research excellence through supporting outstanding individuals, working in world-class facilities, conducting leading-edge research focused on the needs of patients and the public.

■ **www.ukctg.nihr.ac.uk**

A database of clinical research trials that are running in the UK.

■ **www.hra.nhs.uk**

The Health Research Authority was established in December 2011 to protect and promote the interests of patient and the public in health research, and to streamline the regulation of research.

■ **www.crn.nihr.ac.uk/can-help/patients-carers-public/**

Information about clinical research and how to get involved.

■ **www.crn.nihr.ac.uk/blog/news/ok-to-ask-about-clinical-research/**

More information about the OK to ask campaign.

■ **www.myresearchproject.org.uk**

The Integrated Research Application System (IRAS) is a single online system for applying for permissions and approvals for health and social care/community research in the UK.

It's OK to ask about clinical research

For any research related queries or advice please feel free to contact the Research and Development (R&D) core management team:

Telephone: 0118 322 8140 / 8693 / 8223

Email: researchanddevelopment@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Follow us on twitter @berksresearch

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R&D_1336 Research & Development, September 2017. Review due: September 2019