

What difference does it make? A pilot survey to collect research impacts

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Background

The NHS constitution states *“The NHS commits to inform you of research studies in which you may be eligible to participate”*;
The UK Policy for Health and Social Care highlights that Research is a *“core function”* of health and social care;
CCGs have a *“duty to promote”* research.

But what difference does research actually make?

Methods

A short electronic survey was designed, piloted at two GP practices, further refined and distributed via CRN Facilitators to selected practices and community teams over a 6 month period.

Results

31/46 surveys were returned. Responses included the impacts of setting up and running studies, as well as how research had affected clinical practice. Feedback could be grouped into 4 key themes. Respondents also indicated where there had been no significant impact of the research on practice workload.

Aims

- To capture the impact(s) that research has had on clinical teams and practices.
- To provide evidence to local CCGs / stakeholders of the benefits of undertaking research at a local level.
- (indirectly) To increase CCG engagement with the Research Office team and to maximise support for funding initiatives.

Design Criteria

- Short, simple to complete, with the ability to complete electronically.
- Could be used to capture impacts in both community services and primary care.



“During the ... study it became apparent that patients and public did not have an understanding of causes of Pressure Ulcers and relied on nursing staff to ensure preventative measures. Time was spent with families and patients discussing how PUs could be avoided and how they could help... from there an education programme is being developed for patients and relatives/carers. This will involve all services/in-patient units and impacts will be measured.”

Community Practitioner

Service Improvement

“The study has helped to identify dementia patients and helped with clinical coding ensuring the right care is in place for the patient.”

GP

Patient Benefit

“Research is good for our clients who have increased contacts with clinicians and a greater opportunity to become educated in their difficulties and how to manage them.”

Community Practitioner

“The fact that there was somebody, who was listening to them and giving them all the time they needed to talk about anything, seemed to work like some kind of a therapy session for them.”

Community Practitioner

“This study enabled me to engage with patients and give them a better understanding about their cardiovascular disease including opportunistic health promotion.”

Practice Research Nurse

Staff job satisfaction, reflection and interaction

Staff Training and Experience

“Being involved in research has a great impact on me as it allows me to be involved in topics that I may not normally be involved in such as cancer care, this in turn keeps me up-to-date.”

Clinician

Conclusions and Future Steps

The survey offered an easy and efficient way to capture some of the impact research has had locally, feeding into reports to commissioners and stakeholders.

Further work includes modification to the GP version of the survey to prompt clinicians to think about areas of impact; to consider other ways to collect impacts (e.g. telephone or face to face interviews) and to determine how best to feedback on findings to relevant stakeholders.

