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## Recognising impact

Professor Dame Sally C. Davies spoke to invited guests and trainees about the significance of primary care research at a celebration of the School's renewal on 21 September. She illustrated research impact with examples from the School's researcher and trainee contributions over the past nine years. Significant advancements made by the School thus far include influencing the development of NICE guidelines, engaging with government policy, and importantly, impacting on GP practices around the country. Delegates were assured of the NIHR's continued commitment to supporting primary care research referencing the key areas of: caring for the aged; antimicrobial resistance; multi-morbidity; patient safety; diabetes and obesity. The Department Heads and Training Leads were commended for developing a supportive and conducive training programme resulting in many awards and prizes won by trainees both nationally and internationally. This exposure, the multidisciplinary support and networking available to trainees, said Dame Sally, would be instrumental to the future success of research programmes and their impact on primary care.

Delegates attended two guest lectures by Chris Ham (The King's Fund) and Graham Watt (Glasgow University) in the Mathematical Institute before the dinner. The lectures highlighted the issues and constraints affecting the NHS and implications for primary care research in 'W(h)ither the NHS' (Chris Ham), and the seeming contradictions in academic primary care in 'Is academic primary care an oxymoron?' (Graham Watt).

The events were topped and tailed with another successful annual SPCR Trainees' Event which included talks on: contextualising and planning recruitment in primary care, the benefits of engaging with the media; publishing research via open access, facilitators and pathways to impact, qualitative research: reflections from the field, recruitment in primary care, primary care databases, and balancing an academic career, life and clinical practice.





## 2015 RCGP John Fry Award

Hazel Everitt (University of Southampton), is this year's recipient of the RCGP's John Fry Award for promoting general practice research. Hazel is currently funded by the School to carry out a systematic review of the prescribing of antidepressants for insomnia.

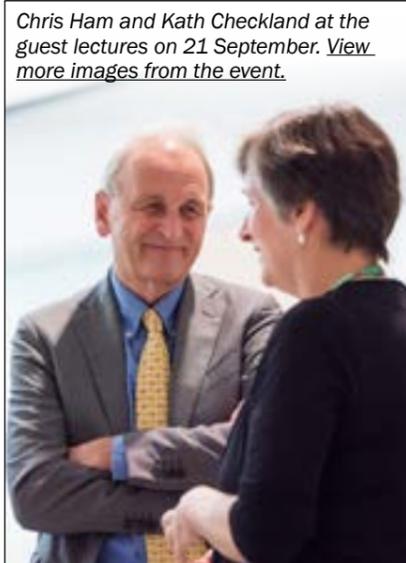
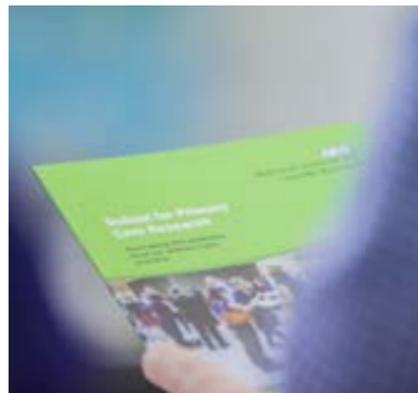
In addition, Hazel co-authored 'The Handbook of General Practice, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition' (Oxford University Press) which was given the accolade of Highly Commended in the Primary Health Care section at the BMA book awards on 3 September. [Read more.](#)

## BARACK D recruit 430

Jointly funded by the NIHR School for Primary Care Research and the NIHR Health Technology Assessment Programme, the Benefits of Aldosterone Receptor Antagonism in Chronic Kidney Disease (BARACK D) Trial is the largest primary care based chronic kidney disease trial conducted to date.

Led by the Primary Care CTU at the University of Oxford and with seven recruitment centres across the country, BARACK D aims to determine whether an established cardiovascular medication, spironolactone, can reduce cardiovascular risk and the decline in renal function. The trial aims to recruit 2910 participants through 300 GP practices across the country.

At the end of September the trial had reached a milestone by recruiting 430 participants.



Chris Ham and Kath Checkland at the guest lectures on 21 September. [View more images from the event.](#)

## Fewer antidepressants prescribed than ten years ago

Despite antidepressant prescribing in primary care increasing since the financial crisis, a SPCR study shows that GPs have responded to the introduction of NICE guidelines and QOF measures that encourage more targeted use of antidepressants. Prescription of antidepressants in people with a first bout of depression has fallen by 12 percent between 2003 and 2013, from around 73% to 61%.

In a press release issued in Pulse Today, study lead Professor Tony Kendrick said "GPs did try and follow NICE guidelines to reduce antidepressant prescribing, and that was reinforced by QOF, although it was only for new cases of depression. The reduction in prescribing for new cases was cancelled out by increased longer-term prescribing for recurrent cases, and overall prescriptions went up due to longer courses being prescribed." [Read the press release in Pulse Today.](#)

## Research paper of the year

Research published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) in August, 2014, was successful in securing this year's Royal College of General Practitioners' Annual Research Paper of the Year award. The TASMINSR randomised clinical trial, a study on patients at high risk of cardiovascular disease, was led by Professor Richard McManus from the University of Oxford and involved a research team from the universities of Birmingham, Cambridge, Central Lancashire, Southampton and UCL in the UK, and from the Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute and the University of British Columbia in Canada.

Paper: Effect of Self-monitoring and Medication Self-titration on Systolic Blood Pressure in Hypertensive Patients at High Risk of Cardiovascular Disease.

Authors: Richard J. McManus, Jonathan Mant, Sayeed Haque, Emma P. Bray, Stirling Bryan, Sheila M. Greenfield, Miren I. Jones, Sue Jowett, Paul Little, Cristina Penalzoza, Claire Schwartz, Helen Shackelford, Claire Shovelton, Jinu Varghese, Bryan Williams, F.D. Richard Hobbs.

To date, the paper on the JAMA website has received **21,877** views, **14** citations, **133** tweets, mentioned in **6** blogs and **9** news outlets, receiving a total of **168** social media shares.

## Capillary refill time used to identify serious illness

A systematic review has found that capillary refill time of three seconds or longer is an important warning sign for serious illness and risk of death in children. Published in PLOS One, The Diagnostic Value of Capillary Refill Time for Detecting Serious Illness in Children: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis, is the first comprehensive and systematic assessment of the diagnostic value of the CRT test for a range of serious outcomes in children worldwide. The research was led by Susannah Fleming, a research fellow at the University of Oxford. Susannah was a SPCR Fellow from 2010 to 2013 during which time the research was undertaken. [Read more.](#)



## New treatment approach for UTI

A new treatment approach for tackling urinary tract infection has been developed by researchers at the Universities of Southampton, Bristol and Oxford testing a treatment with a long established history in herbal practice.

Urinary tract infections (UTI) are one of the most common female conditions treated by general practitioners, and the majority of patients are prescribed antibiotics. With increased antimicrobial resistance to antibiotics, and what is a self-limiting condition, alternative treatment strategies are being investigated to alleviate the uncomfortable symptoms. The ATAFUTI clinical trial was developed to find out if either Bearberries or Ibuprofen can be used during a period of delayed antibiotic prescription to provide symptom relief.

Principal Investigator Michael Moore featured in a short film about the project by That's Solent TV. [Read more and watch the film.](#)

## Increased focus on patient safety in primary care

Over the last three years researchers from seven partners within the SPCR have developed, piloted and implemented a 'patient safety toolkit' for general practices.

The toolkit consists of a range of 'tools' that can be used to provide a multifaceted assessment of patient safety in practices. They also include an audit to review records to assess whether patients have come to harm and two different safety checklists specifically developed for primary care practice. The toolkit is now available on the [RCGP website](#). In November Stephen Campbell and Tony Avery will be leading a series of workshops, arranged by the RCGP, on primary care patient safety. The events will take place in Glasgow, Sheffield, Bristol and Nottingham. [Read more](#)



## The shared burden of domestic violence

A booklet aimed at helping friends and family members to support victims of domestic abuse has been written by Alison Gregory from the University of Bristol and is being distributed to hundreds of locations across the city.

The booklet ***It might be nothing but it could mean everything*** is informed by findings from Alison's School funded PhD research ('On the outside looking in: the shared burden of domestic violence') in which Alison looked at how domestic violence and abuse affects the friends and family members of the person in the abusive relationship. [Read more.](#)

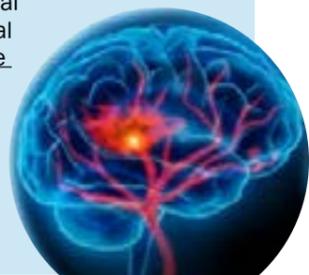
Alison is also to be congratulated for receiving the Corinne Seith Prize from Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE), for a paper developed from her doctoral research on the same topic.



## Distinguished paper

Grace Moran's publication 'Missed opportunities for prevention of stroke and transient ischaemic attack (TIA) in primary care' was voted in the top five out of the 18 highest rated submissions at the North American Primary Care Research Group's (NAPCRG) Annual Conference. As a result she won the Distinguished Paper Award and presented the paper at the conference on 25 October.

Domhnall MacAuley has since written a Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) blog [Some golden nuggets, and grumbles, from NAPCRG 2015](#) where he mentions Grace's excellent presentation.



## Interdisciplinary research on ageing and chronic illness

Professor Louise Robinson

Academic primary care at Newcastle University is located in the Institute of Health and Society, which also co-hosts FUSE, the North East NIHR School for Public Health Research.



With four Professors of Primary Care; Barbara Hanratty, Eileen Kaner, Gill Rowlands and me (Louise Robinson, the first GP to become a NIHR Professor), Newcastle Academic Primary Care Research (NAPCR) is a rapidly growing, vibrant group. Currently we have six academic GP registrars, a wonderful bunch who organised this year's 2015 NIHR GP Academic Clinical Fellows conference, and are eagerly waiting to step into our professorial stilettos! We also meet regularly with our academic primary care colleagues in the other northern universities and hope our membership offers a much needed boost to academic capacity building in the region.

“ We were absolutely delighted to extend membership of the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) School for Primary Care Research further up north! ”

Our inter-disciplinary research is focused on ageing and chronic illness and aims to help people live better quality lives as they grow older. Our ageing work spans across the life course from childhood to the oldest old (85 years and over).

### We are interested in:

- Exploring how those with age-related conditions like dementia and frailty, can live better lives for longer, supported by high quality care in the community
- Identifying how end of life care experiences can be improved, and
- Helping people to prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease e.g. by reducing alcohol use or improving nutrition.

Over the next five years, our research will closely align with four of the SPCR's key themes:

- Ageing and multi-morbidity
- Disease prevention, with a particular focus on age related diseases
- Organisation and delivery of health care including shared decision making
- New health care technologies.

New technologies is a particularly exciting area for Newcastle, with the University recently awarded Government Funding to establish the National Centre for Ageing Science and Innovation, where industry, the public, researchers and health and social care will work together to develop products and services to promote healthy ageing.

In 2015, we have SPCR-funded projects looking at public views on dementia risk assessment; end of life care in frailty and the role of primary care in liver disease. We welcome Dr Amy O'Donnell, who won one of three NIHR

SPCR post-doctoral fellowships this year, and will be expanding her research in primary care informatics. Also joining us is Bethany Bareham, NIHR SPCR Doctoral Training Fellow (DTF) who is looking at patient and professional perceptions of the risks and benefits of alcohol in later life. In addition, one of our GP ACFs, Dr Eugene Tang, has recently secured a national NIHR DTF and will be looking at dementia-care after stroke. We would welcome approaches from researchers/would-be researchers interested in applying for any of the SPCR funded opportunities - particularly GPs in the early stages of training, who may wish to apply for an ST3 entry ACF post, or fully qualified GPs who would like to compete for a GP career progression award. Newcastle is a canny (Oxford Dictionary = pleasant) place to work and primary care research is buzzing!

Read more about NAPCR's research: [www.research.ncl.ac.uk/napcr/](http://www.research.ncl.ac.uk/napcr/)

Louise Robinson is Director of the Newcastle University Institute for Ageing and an academic GP and Professor of Primary Care and Ageing at Newcastle University. She was the first GP to be awarded a prestigious NIHR Professorship. Louise leads a research programme focused on improving quality of life and quality of care for older people, especially those with dementia. She is also the RCGP co-Clinical Champion for Dementia and the national primary care lead for the Prime Minister's Dementia Challenge, through which she has developed a range of educational and commissioning tools on dementia care. She was the lead for the recent Government Office Foresight on Ageing review on the future health and social care for older people.

A few SPCR researchers and trainees in the Department of Academic Primary Care, from left to right: Daniel Stow, Beth Bareham, Holly Standing and Amy O'Donnell.

## Reducing the burden of ill health

Professor Jonathan Mant

The Primary Care Unit (PCU) at the University of Cambridge is really pleased to re-join the School for Primary Care Research



Our overall aim is to reduce the burden of ill health and our 130-odd staff focus on four key areas: identifying and targeting the behaviours that lead to chronic disease; improving early detection of illness; improving the delivery of health services in community settings and teaching medical students, clinicians, researchers and educators. We draw in particular on clinical epidemiology and social and behavioural science, with emphasis on informing practice and interventions through interactions with policymakers, clinicians and decision-makers.

Our clinical research is led by Jonathan Mant, Fiona Walter, Simon Griffin, Stephen Barclay, Christi Deaton and Stephen Sutton, aiming to influence clinical practice guidelines. Meanwhile our health services research, led by Martin Roland, and our behaviour and health research, led by Theresa Marteau, aims to influence government policy.

### School-funded projects so far:

Using national administrative data to evaluate new models of primary care (Martin Roland)

In collaboration with the universities of Manchester, Bristol, UCL and Nottingham, we are assembling national administrative datasets in order to evaluate new models of primary care with three initial exemplar projects.

Patterns of medication use and polypharmacy at the end of life (Rupert Payne)

We are analysing CPRD general practice data to describe the changing patterns of medication use during the last year of life.

Validation of existing risk prediction models for colorectal cancer using UK Biobank (Juliet Usher-Smith)

Our project aims to assess the performance of a range of existing risk scores developed to identify individuals at high risk of developing colorectal cancer in a large UK cohort in order to inform future risk stratified screening approaches in the UK.

Assessing the potential of a data sharing and communication facility within a cessation smartphone app (Q Sense) for patients and NHS smoking cessation advisors (Felix Naughton)

Q Sense is a 'context-aware' smoking cessation app that collects detailed Ecological Momentary Assessment data about smoking behaviour while a smoker prepares for and starts a quit attempt.

Literature review of exercise interventions for peripheral arterial disease (Ricky Mullis)

We will explore why people with peripheral arterial disease and similar diseases known to benefit from exercise decline to take part in supervised exercise, often fail to complete the programme and do not remain physically active afterwards.

Review of predictive modelling studies for prostate cancer (Greg Irving)

This is a systematic review of predictive modelling studies for prostate cancer within the general population.

Mental Health Advice and Guidance for Informal Carers (Gemma Clare Ali)

Gemma (NIHR-SPCR funded PhD student) is using mixed methods

research to design and evaluate low cost, primary care interventions to help informal carers support the mental health of their family and friends living with cancer, diabetes, or cardiovascular disease.

Read more about the Unit's research: [www.phpc.cam.ac.uk/pcu/](http://www.phpc.cam.ac.uk/pcu/)

“ Re-joining the School will make a real difference to our ability to impact on improved primary care practice and on the patient experience. ”

Jonathan Mant is Professor of primary care research and head of the primary care unit in the Department of Public Health & Primary Care of the University of Cambridge. He is an honorary consultant for Public Health England and the Addenbrooke's Hospital and is an NIHR Senior Investigator. Jonathan trained in public health medicine in the Oxford Region, and was clinical lecturer in public health medicine at the University of Oxford 1991-1997, before moving to the University of Birmingham as a senior lecturer in Primary Care Clinical Sciences in 1997. In 2008 he took up his chair in Cambridge. His research interests focus on the prevention and management of cardiovascular disease, particularly stroke, in community settings. He is currently leading two programme grants, one funded by the Stroke Association/BHF exploring the potential role of a polypill in the secondary prevention of stroke, and the other funded by NIHR which aims to develop and evaluate primary care services for stroke.

## Funding round 9 - new projects across the School

Andrographis paniculata for symptomatic relief of lower respiratory tract infection: A Cochrane review	George Lewith and Michael Moore	Southampton
Anticholinergic drugs and the risk of dementia: a nested case control study	Carol Coupland	Nottingham
Assessing dementia risk in general practice: a qualitative study of the attitudes and views of patients and the public	Louise Robinson	Newcastle
Assessing dementia risk in general practice: a qualitative study of the attitudes and views of primary care health professionals	Greta Rait	UCL
Assessing the potential of a data sharing and communication facility within a cessation smart-phone app (Q Sense) for patients and NHS smoking cessation	Felix Naughton	Cambridge
Assessment of sarcopenia in primary care: identifying potential practical tools for assessment and scope for intervention	Goya Wannamethee	UCL
Blood pressure self-monitoring individual patient meta-analysis of registered trials; sub group analyses in a multi-morbid population	Katherine Tucker and James Sheppard	Oxford
Can a frailty index be used in primary care practice to improve prognostication at the end of life? A multi-method study	Barbara Hanratty	Newcastle
Can continuity of primary care decrease unscheduled secondary care use?	Richard Morris	Bristol
Can metaphors usefully represent underlying CBT principles for Medically Unexplained Symptoms (MUS), and how acceptable are such generic and MUS specific metaphors to patients and practitioners?	Athula Sumathipala	Keele
Children and Adolescents with Musculoskeletal Pain in primary care: CAM-Pain Feasibility Study	Kate Dunn	Keele
Comparative Effectiveness of Treatment Options for Subacromial Shoulder Conditions: A Network Meta-Analysis	Danielle van der Windt	Keele
Empowering People to Help Speak Up about Safety (EPHESUS) in Primary Care	Sarah Knowles and Gavin Daker-White	Manchester
Evidence synthesis for economic decision models of primary care diagnostics	Beth Shinkins	Oxford
Getting it right for autistic patients: a qualitative study	Sara Ryan	Oxford
Identification of gambling problems in primary care: A quantitative study	Sean Cowlishaw	Bristol
Implementing diagnostic genetic testing for familial hypercholesterolaemia in primary care: qualitative study	Nadeem Qureshi	Nottingham
Incidence of osteoporosis and fracture in common inflammatory diseases in primary care	Zoe Paskins	Keele
Investigating the impact of a short-course MBSR-based mindfulness intervention on patients with difficult-to-manage asthma	Mike Thomas	Southampton
Investigation of the factors behind the training choices of junior doctors which result in inadequate recruitment to general practice careers	Sharon Spooner	Manchester
Keeping active: maintenance of physical activity in older people after an exercise intervention	Denise Kendrick	Nottingham
Online structured education with email facilitation for people with type 2 diabetes: feasibility trial	Elizabeth Murray	UCL
Patterns of medication use and polypharmacy at the end of life	Rupert Payne	Cambridge
Predicting individual risk of future hip and knee replacement for osteoarthritis	Dahai Yu	Keele
Process evaluation of the Digital Alcohol Management on Demand (DIAMOND) feasibility randomised controlled trial	Fiona Hamilton	UCL
Risk factors for influenza-related complications in children: a retrospective cohort study using linked routinely collected data from the Clinical Practice Research	Kay Wang	Oxford
Southampton communication study (SoCS): managing multiple health concerns	Geraldine Leydon	Southampton
Systematic review of prostate cancer risk prediction models for use in the general population	Greg Irving	Cambridge
Systematic reviews of literature to inform development of a primary care intervention to improve uptake and completion of exercise/activity programmes in people with peripheral arterial disease	Ricky Mullis	Cambridge
The Association Between Evidence-Based Medication Use And Unplanned Hospital Admissions: A National Observational Study in Primary Care	Kamal Mahtani and Niklas Bobrovitz	Oxford
The development of a digital GP behaviour change intervention to support GPs in the delivery of evidence based practice around the management of PSA screening and active surveillance in primary care	Sam Watts	Southampton
The diagnostic and prognostic value of the symptom of shortness of breath in primary care: a cohort study	Ying Chen	Keele
The impact on children of exposure to domestic violence and the implications for a primary care response: a systematic review and secondary analysis of qualitative evidence	Alison Gregory and Alison Heawood	Bristol
The role of primary care in liver disease: early detection and end of life care? A qualitative study of the perceptions of primary health care professionals	Barbara Hanratty	Newcastle
The role of systemic inflammatory diseases in long-term morbidity and mortality: a retrospective, matched-cohort study in the Clinical Research Practice	Lorna Clarson	Keele
UNderstanding medical and non-medical antibiotic prescribing for rEspiratory tract infections in primary care out of hours services: a qualitative analysis	Geraldine Leydon	Southampton
Validation of existing risk prediction models for colorectal cancer	Juliet Usher-Smith	Cambridge

## MBE awarded for services to general practice

Dr Clare Taylor (SPCR trainee 2010 - 2012) has received an MBE for services to general practice, in particular for her role representing trainees and new GPs as Chair of the Associates in Training committee at the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP). Clare also set up and ran the RCGP First5 initiative which supports new GPs through the first five years after training.

Clare won the **RCGP Yvonne Carter Award** for Outstanding New Researcher earlier this year alongside SPCR researcher Sophie Park (UCL) who received Highly Commended.

This is the second year in a row that a SPCR trainee has been successful in receiving the Yvonne Carter award with Helen Atherton (Oxford) winning it in 2014. The first Yvonne Carter award was presented to SPCR Training Director, Christian Mallen (Keele) in 2011, while new SPCR member Greg Irving (Cambridge) received the award in 2012.

The annual Yvonne Carter Award, presented jointly by the RCGP and the Society for Academic Primary Care (SAPC), supports the career developments of a promising new researcher in primary care. The award winner is provided with the opportunity to develop

“ I became involved with research into cardiovascular disease as an academic GP trainee and, thanks to funding from the NIHR and the NIHR SPCR, I have been able to continue and develop as a researcher. ”

Dr Clare Taylor



international networks and partnerships and as such, Clare spent some time on a research visit to Australia.

Clare's investigations into cardiovascular disease consider core challenges facing primary care practitioners by studying how to address the personal needs of people living with cardiovascular problems. During her School funded academic clinical fellowship, Clare completed a mixed method analysis of the diagnostic pathway for heart failure in primary care.

Dr Sophie Park was awarded Highly Commended for her innovative work in developing a distinct body of educational research. She currently holds a School funded grant to investigate patient participation in under graduate medical education in general practice at UCL.

Clare and Sophie were presented with their awards at the annual SAPC Academic Scientific Meeting on 9 July in Oxford.



## Pitching ideas for research

The University of Manchester's PRIMER (Primary Care Research in Manchester Engagement Resource) held its second Patient Hack Day on 30 September with members of the public pitching their ideas for research projects to an audience of researchers and other public members. After getting into teams the groups used a research toolkit to turn their ideas into early stage research proposals. The day provided an opportunity for non-researchers to see how the process of research works and to think about its potential challenges and for researchers to see what members of the public would like researched based on their real life experiences of interacting with the NHS.

## SPCR Blog

### Participatory research vs patient and public involvement

Sarah Knowles, Jennifer Voorhees and Claire Planner from the University of Manchester, discuss community based participatory research (CBPR) in the US and Canada, and public involvement in the UK, in a recent SPCR blog. They explain CBPR as an approach that emphasises longer term work with communities to design and conduct research. It is inclusive of all relevant stakeholders as partners, rather than excluding health professionals as commonly occurs in the UK in the context of traditional patient and public involvement. [Read the blog.](#)



Left: Jeremy Howick (Research Fellow) and Sarah Stevens (DPhil student) at the University of Oxford.

**NEW**  
**The SPCR brochure**  
 ... aims of the School over  
 the next five years  
 ... timeline of  
 impacts since  
 2006

## Future events

NIHR Trainees' Meeting 2015	24 - 25 November	Queens Hotel, Leeds
UK Society for Behavioural Medicine Conference	8 - 9 December	Newcastle University
Arthritis Research UK Centre for Sport, Exercise and Osteoarthritis Conference	17 December	Loughborough University
NIHR SPCR Annual Trainees' Event 2016	19 - 20 September	Queen's College, Oxford

## NIHR Obesity themed call

In December 2015 the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) will issue a call for research into the evaluation of interventions or services for the prevention and treatment of obesity in adults and children.

Preventing obesity and type 2 diabetes is a priority for the UK Government. With over 60 percent of the adult population either overweight or obese and more than 2.7 million people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, the health burden and economic impact of obesity in the UK are increasing.

This call is an initiative by the NIHR in recognition of the need for further research-based evidence to underpin the prevention and management of overweight and obesity in adults and children.

Issues of particular importance for this call include the prevention of type 2 diabetes and increasing levels of physical activity.

More information and to sign up to the researcher workshop on 19 January.

## From the NIHR

[NIHR Clinical Research Network Study Support Service Programme](#)

[NIHR Central Commissioning Facility October news](#) and funding opportunities

[NIHR HS&DR Programme bulletin Autumn 2015](#)

## Blogs

11 November

**NIHR School for Primary Care Research trainee event**  
**Hilary Davies and Sonia Coton**

29 October

**Participatory Research vs PPI**  
**Sarah Knowles, Jennifer Voorhees and Claire Planner**

11 August

**#whyGP? How about #whyacademic GP?**  
**Kamal Mahtani**

**SPCR research themes**

## 2015 - 2020

- [Disease prevention and diagnosis](#)
- [Non-communicable disease, multimorbidity and ageing](#)
- [Acute care](#)
- [Organisation and delivery of care](#)
- [Research innovation and new technologies](#)