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| Host department: QMUL |
| Project Title: |
| Improving medication reviews from the inside out: a linguistic ethnographic study in general practice |
| Proposed supervisory team:  Dr Nina Fudge (Queen Mary University of London): Social scientist and THIS-funded post-doctoral fellow with methodological expertise in ethnographic and participatory research approaches and experience of embedding patient and public involvement and engagement in research projects. Dr Fudge’s research interests explore the interrelationships between knowledge, expertise, and practice in complex healthcare settings.  Professor Deborah Swinglehurst (Queen Mary University of London): Practising GP with international profile as a qualitative researcher. Prof Swinglehurst conducts research at the interfaces between medicine, social science and linguistics, with a particular interest in the role of interaction and social relationships in primary health care settings.  Dr Rebecca Barnes (Oxford): Dr Barnes is an NIHR-funded research fellow and an internationally recognised researcher and teacher of conversation analysis methods as applied to communication in health care settings. Rebecca’s research interests encompass the delivery of routine health care services and communication-based interventions in primary care settings. |
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| Potential for cross consortium networking and educational opportunities: |
| This project is a new collaboration between supervisors at QMUL and Oxford which aligns with the supervisors’ ongoing interests in polypharmacy and deprescribing with a particular focus on Structured Medication Reviews as an intervention to reduce problematic polypharmacy.  The successful candidate will be based in the Wolfson Institute of Population Health Science at QMUL with access to formal (MSc modules) and informal (peer support groups, research seminars, discussion groups) educational opportunities - see the training and development section for more details. With a supervisor based at Oxford University, the candidate will have the opportunity to spend time as a visiting researcher at the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences and to participate in Oxford Research in Conversation Analysis (ORCA) group data sessions.  Additional opportunities for enrichment and development will be made possible through the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, QMUL, with links to world-leading clinicians. |
| Project description:  Background  In the UK the number of people prescribed five or more medicines, known as polypharmacy, is increasing. Sometimes polypharmacy is problematic. It can increase the risks of falls, hospitalisation, and adverse drug reactions. Problematic polypharmacy creates a burden of work for both patients and clinicians (e.g. processing prescriptions, assembling and organising medicines, managing medicines supplies). Some prescribed medicines may not be needed or taken, resulting in financial waste and environmental harm. Optimising the use of medicines in general practice is seen as a way to reduce the harms and risks of polypharmacy. Medication reviews are considered an evidence-based intervention to address the problems of polypharmacy: patient safety, the treatment burden, and environmental and financial waste. Recently a new contract has been introduced in England which requires Primary Care Networks to deliver structured medication reviews (SMR) to patients at risk of problematic polypharmacy. The introduction of SMRs builds on recent initiatives to integrate clinical pharmacists into the general practice workforce, with an expectation that clinical pharmacists will undertake most of the SMRs.  The proposed PhD will be aligned with an existing project (PI Fudge, THIS) which is evaluating this policy and collecting audio and video data of consultations involving a SMR. This provides an ideal opportunity for a PhD candidate to:   1. develop advanced qualitative research skills, including microanalysis of clinical consultation data using the techniques of conversation analysis 2. contribute detailed analysis of SMRs as a reflexive tool within multidisciplinary workshops involving primary care clinicians 3. collaborate with researchers evaluating SMRs in primary care as an intervention to address problematic polypharmacy   Aims and objectives  The aim of this PhD is to understand, using techniques of conversation analysis, how and to what extent structured medication reviews address problematic polypharmacy with a view to recognising transferable strategies that can be employed within primary care settings. The specific focus of the study will be tailored to the student’s interest but may include one or more of the following areas:   * How do SMRs contribute to ensuring medication safety for patients prescribed multiple medications? * How do SMRs contribute to reducing financial and environmental waste in terms of costs of unused and/or unnecessary medicines? * How do clinicians and patients negotiate deprescribing within the SMR? * How are patient preferences successfully incorporated into structured medication reviews? * How do different health care professionals within primary care work together to deliver structured medication reviews and what does ‘successful’ collaboration look like?   Impact  The project has the potential to impact the delivery of health services in terms of identifying best practices for reducing instances of problematic polypharmacy, reducing impact of unnecessary medicines which lead to financial waste and environmental harm, and understanding collaboration between primary care health professionals. |

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| Training and development provision by host: |
| **Formal training:**  The successful candidate will have access to an MRes level module on Qualitative Research Methods which is hosted in the Wolfson Institute of Population Health (WIPH) at QMUL. The candidate will also be encouraged to undertake training in conversation analysis techniques. Access to a short course in these techniques will be made available through the partner institution, Oxford University.  QMUL has robust monitoring arrangements to ensure students successfully complete their doctoral studies. The successful candidate will have regular supervisions with the supervisors (at least once per month, more frequent in the early stages of the PhD) which are documented through the MYSIS graduate student online system. The student will also complete PhD progression reports at 9 months, 18 months and 30 months of the PhD time. Progression at 9 and 18 months includes a viva voce. Progression reports will be read and assessed for progress and capability to complete the PhD by two panel members who are external to the PhD supervisory team and selected for their relevant academic expertise. The delivery of post graduate education is guided by robust academic regulations, with oversight of the implementation of these procedures by the Institute Director of Graduate Studies, and the support of the post graduate research administrator. PhD supervisors are required to engage in regular PhD supervision training, including mental health training. |
| **Informal training:**  Both institutions will provide the successful candidate with informal support and development. The successful candidate would become a member of the APOLLO social science team (led by Prof Deborah Swinglehurst) which meets weekly to provide discussion, support and development on individual team member’s projects.  The candidate will have access to:   * monthly informal discussion groups where qualitative research methods, data analysis and application of theory are discussed with WIPH colleagues and researchers from other universities (Curiosity Workshop, Thinking Between the Lines) * WIPH monthly research seminar where external guest speakers and Institute staff present their research; early career researchers and PhD students are encouraged to present their work at this seminar * an active Early Career Researchers Group which meets monthly to discuss career development, support and development during the PhD and post-doctoral period * WIPH’s annual showcase event where PhD students are encouraged to present their work and network with Institute researchers * QMUL’s Student Services for (pastoral support and study needs) * QMUL Academy delivering university-wide support and development for education and research   Additional opportunities for enrichment and development will be made possible through:   * WIPH and Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences networks with links to national and international collaborators * the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, QMUL, with its links to world-leading clinicians. |
| **PPIE:**  PPIE activities (focus group discussions with people who are prescribed multiple medications, discussion with health care professionals about the study design and questions) have been undertaken in preparation for the project from which the PhD data set will be drawn. The successful candidate would be encouraged to establish their own PPIE advisory group to help refine and develop the research going forward. The candidate may also want to consider approaching existing groups for PPIE support such as GP Patient Participation Groups and the Wolfson Institute of Population Health’s Public Advisory Panel. |