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| **Name & email supervisor(s):**Dr Sinéad McDonagh (SPCR Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Primary Care and Cardiovascular care, early career researcher, < 4 years post PhD viva): s.t.j.mcdonagh@exeter.ac.ukDr Rosina Cross (Postdoctoral Research Associate in Primary Care, early career researcher, < 1 year post PhD viva): r.cross2@exeter.ac.uk |
| **Proposed length of internship and when it could take place:**6 weeks – any time from June 20th until Sept 23rd 2022 (w/c 8th August til w/c 12th September would be preferable) |
| **Host department:**Exeter Collaboration for Academic Primary Care, University of Exeter |
| **How will the internship be conducted:**[ ]  In person at the university[ ]  Virtual/ from home[x]  Both are possible, depending on preference student |
| **Title internship project:**Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural primary care |
| **Summary of the internship project:** The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a huge global burden to health and healthcare systems. The outbreak resulted in considerable morbidity and mortality as well as substantial shortages of healthcare staff, equipment and resources, and changes to healthcare delivery. Even before the pandemic, rural General Practice (GP) surgeries have struggled to employ and retain multidisciplinary team members. Existing research into rural healthcare staff recruitment and retention issues is limited, and usually focusses on doctors; the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, to our knowledge, has not yet been studied in this setting. Therefore, the aim of this study is to determine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural primary care.We undertook 17 semi-structured interviews with multidisciplinary team members of rural dispensing practices across England from July til November 2021. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and anonymised.We are seeking an enthusiastic intern to join our team for 6 weeks to learn and undertake a qualitative analysis of interview data using Framework Analysis and Nvivo 12. This will enable us to identify themes relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on rural primary care.The findings from this study will provide an understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural primary care and may inform future studies and grant applications. The results from this work will be written up for a peer-reviewed publication. The opportunity to present this work at primary care conferences may also arise.The intern will be supervised by Dr Sinéad McDonagh and Dr Rosina Cross. |
| **Learning objectives:*** To develop an understanding of rural primary care practice
* To generate an understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural primary care through qualitative analysis of existing interview data
* To learn and undertake qualitative analysis techniques
* To learn how to use NVivo qualitative data analysis software
* To collaborate professionally with members of the primary care research team and members of the public
* To understand more about patient and public involvement in primary care research
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| **Any further information:**Dr Chris Clark (Clinical Senior Lecturer in General Practice) is PI for this project. He will take overall responsibility for and offer senior supervision of this internship. Dr Emma Cockcroft (SPCR postdoctoral research fellow and PPI expert) are also co-applicants on this piece of work and will be available to support the intern over the summer period too. |

# National School for Primary Care Research

# Summer 2022 Internships with the Exeter Collaboration for Academic Primary Care (APEx)

## Guidance notes and application form for undergraduate students

The Exeter Collaboration for Academic Primary Care (APEx) is delighted to invite talented undergraduate students, from *any* course and from any University, to apply for a School for Primary Care Research Summer Internship. These internships have been developed with a view to supporting students’ interests in a career in research, with a specific focus on academic primary care.

There are two internships being offered by APEx for Summer 2022:

* One post is reserved for a non-medical undergraduate (this includes those training to be allied health professionals, medical imaging and medical sciences students, along with statisticians for example, or biology undergraduates, etc.).
* Internships will last six weeks and will take place between 20th June and 23rd September.
* A bursary of £1,000 will be available to support each intern.
* The start date and use of funds are flexible, will be agreed with the research lead in advance, and can be tailored to the individual and proposed project.

During the Summer placement, interns will produce a piece of primary care-focussed academic work and will be given the opportunity to later present their work at the NIHR National School for Primary Care Research annual showcase event. Students will gain hands-on experience of primary care research whilst under the supervision of a specialised team of mentors and supervisors. Experiences may include training in research methods, literature reviewing, designing a research study, analysis of secondary data, and attendance at team meetings and seminars. Successful students may also seek opportunities for ongoing support from their research lead in order to publish their project work.

The Exeter Collaboration for Academic Primary Care (APEx) is a multidisciplinary team within the College of Medicine and Health at the University of Exeter. The collaboration’s excellence in academic primary care is reflected in its status as one of the nine departments which form the NIHR’s National School for Primary Care 2021–2026. Further information about the APEx team and our core research interests can be found on the website <http://medicine.exeter.ac.uk/research/healthresearch/apex/>

**To apply** please email Sara Hayes (S.Hayes@exeter.ac.uk) copying Jo Butterworth (J.E.Butterworth@exeter.ac.uk) by **5pm on Tuesday 3rd May 2022** and attach:

* Your completed **Expression of Interest form** (page 5)
* Your **CV**

Successful applicants will be notified by Friday 20th May 2022. Applications will be scored independently by three members of the core APEx team, followed by discussion and agreement on the two highest scoring applicants. Selection will be based on criteria including:

* evidence of commitment to primary care scholarship;
* critical thinking and reflexivity about how this award will support your future professional growth;
* and creativity and commitment to making an active contribution during the internship to the primary care knowledge field.
* Patient and Public Involvement is central to all our research themes.

## Feedback from the APEx Summer ’21 interns

*“I really enjoyed being part of the Di-Facto team last summer for my internship. My goal and desire to do this internship was to see how research looks like in the real world. John was really great at replying to all of my emails which may have contained questions about things I wasn’t sure about.*

*The first thing I did in my internship was read more about the work that the team was doing, with documents and literature being provided by John. Throughout this time, I also scheduled meetings with other members of the research team to get to know them about their role within the research.*

*I attended the online SAPC conference which had a variety of people, the majority researcher GP’s, present their work through short presentations and posters. These few insightful days allowed me to learn about research being conducted within primary care. After the conference, I wrote a blog post which was shared on the DiFacto’s website and twitter.*

*https://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/di-facto/home/news/ Blog post link.*

*As part of Di-Facto research, a questionnaire was sent out to 500 general practices within England, asking about whether digital facilitation is used within primary care, and how it is promoted. The remainder of my internship was focused on conducting free-text question response analysis from this questionnaire. With the help of Rachel, I conducted this analysis. I then wrote up a report, which was read by John. He gave me some great tips about writing which I have found extremely useful in the final year of my studies. I also learnt about qualitative analysis and how this differs from quantitative analysis.*

*In October, after my internship finished, I gave a presentation of the findings to the Di-Facto team in their monthly meeting. I was then supported to write an abstract for the upcoming Southwest SAPC conference 2022. In mid-January, I found out that my abstract had been accepted (yippee!) so I am giving a short presentation about the report findings- my very first time presenting at a scientific conference. I look forward to this greatly. I have also been accepted to showcase my abstract in the Undergraduate research showcase at Exeter University.*

*I have definitely come into my third year at University more confident in writing lots of drafts, having a better insight of translational medical health, primary care and career choices. I am extremely grateful to have been accepted for this internship. I would recommend anyone who either has a specific interest in a proposed given area of primary care or would like to broaden their perspective on what research is like on a day-to-day basis to apply for this internship!*

*Improvements that I would say for next time:*

*- Going into the internship, I didn’t really have a huge idea of what research the team were doing – I did my research on them but was still unsure. Perhaps provide my information about each project so that the individual can read about the topic in general.*

*- Also, despite it being great to have freedom on what could be done within the internship, I found this a bit stressful initially. When John helped me to narrow down the options this was more useful. It is a change going from University teaching to being a given a choice of not only what to be interested in, but how to contribute to this. Although others may have a clearer aim than I did initially!*

*It was great to have this within the summer holidays but perhaps having a template to log hours/have clear goals more aligned with what John suggests.”*

**Victoria Bak, 2nd Year BSc Medical Sciences student**

*“This internship was a fantastic introduction to research in primary care. Working as part of an amazing team of people encouraged me to use my communication and problem-solving skills to proactively contribute to a worthwhile project. I thoroughly enjoyed learning how to use the Stata software and speaking to patients present at the Patient and Public Involvement meetings. I hope to continue exploring the world of healthcare research. Thank you again for this opportunity!”*

**Kesri Gajadhar, 2nd year BMBS medical student**

## Exeter Academic Collaboration for Primary Care (APEx) Summer internships for undergraduate students: Expression of Interest form

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| **Full name** |  |
| **Email address** |  |
| **Host University; Undergraduate programme and year** |  |
| **Please answer the following questions (max 150 words for each section).**  |
| 1. **Why are you applying for this internship?** Please include information about which project you would like to join and why.
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| 1. **Do you have any previous experience of research in Primary Care?**
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| 1. **How will this internship support your future career or professional development plans?**
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| 1. **What contribution do you think you can make during the internship?**
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