

Establishing and evaluating research link practitioners; a pilot

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Background

Aiming to increase awareness of research opportunities for clinical staff at a London teaching hospital, a research link practitioner role was piloted.

Research active Trusts improve patient outcomes and this project sought to foster a sustainable and evidence-based culture empowering nurses and midwives to be research active¹.

The pilot linked with R&D but focused on supporting nurses and midwives to become research advocates and facilitate nurse and midwife led research rather than on research delivery.

Scoping review / context

We conducted a scoping review in collaboration with a fellow teaching hospital, established a steering group, and consulted key stakeholders.

The scoping review of published literature addressing research link roles in clinical settings identified 16 relevant papers but found no pre-existing validated measures of success².

Pilot

The pilot provided baseline training, monthly networking and education sessions, buddying, and a research community for clinical nurses and midwives.

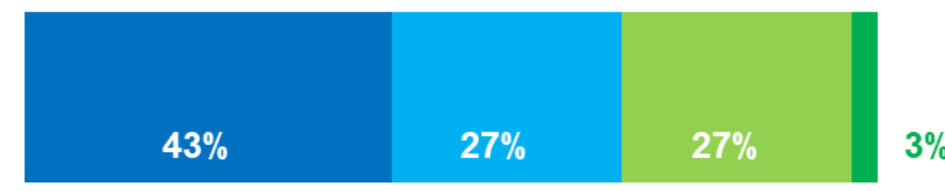
Participants were encouraged to complete GCP training. Managers and participants signed an agreement form detailing shared expectations and commitment.

Not at all
A little
Unsure
Quite
Very

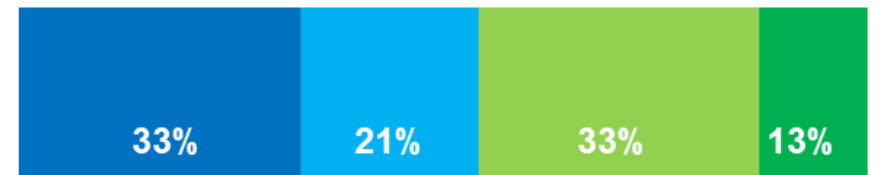
Knowledge
at baseline



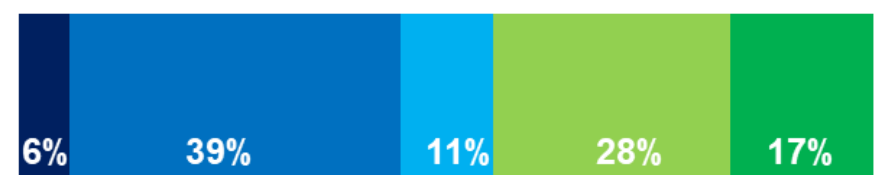
Knowledge
at 6 months



Confidence
at baseline



Confidence
at 6 months



Evaluation

Data were collected at baseline and 6 months, activity diaries were maintained (including predicted impact), and qualitative interviews conducted with participants and managers. Equality and diversity and process data were collected to contextualise data.

Self-reported knowledge increased through GCP training and monthly education and networking sessions.

Competence and confidence decreased, potentially reflecting a greater awareness of research complexities. It is anticipated that confidence and competence will improve as the programme continues.

Implications

Feedback was positive. Participants used the time to develop skills and experiential knowledge whilst supporting colleagues with research interests. One manager reported that the programme allowed recognition and reward for highly motivated nurses where job progression was not possible.

Patients are better informed about studies via improved staff engagement with research and local communication boards.

Time, clinical pressures and self-motivation were limiting factors.



Thank you to the steering group



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