

CLAHRC BITE

Research training needs amongst health care and public health staff January 2017

The CLAHRC North Thames Academy undertook a needs assessment asking front line NHS and public health staff to identify key tasks in their role, relevant research-related tasks, priority areas requiring training and barriers to getting involved in research in their organisation

Background

Efforts to improve health care and population health depend partly on the ability of health organisations to use research knowledge and participate in its production. Building local research capacity and capability is essential to the delivery of improved care, and cultivating “research active” organisations and workforces ensures they are well-placed to adopt and innovate best practice treatments.

Before being in a position to increase research capacity and capability an assessment of workforce needs is necessary.

This research documents an exercise to assess research training needs and priorities amongst health care and public health staff across England's largest CLAHRC, NIHR CLAHRC North Thames.



CLAHRCs - building research capacity

The remit of CLAHRCs include bridging the gap between knowledge/research and the “real world” of health and social care. **Research Capacity Building** is one of the essential “pillars” of CLAHRCs and contributes to the development of sustainable skills across institutions, and research-active individuals and organisations.

CLAHRCs have a role in driving a shift from a “supply-driven” culture of research production, towards a more “demand-driven” approach, fostering a culture of partnership between academics and decision-makers. Within this, staff in health care and public health organisations have a key role to play.

Overview

Our study, the first of its kind in England, examined self-identified opportunities to improve research use and comparing across professional groups.

Design

A questionnaire survey using a validated tool, the Hennessy-Hicks Training Needs Assessment Questionnaire. Participants rated 25 tasks on a five-point scale with regard to both their confidence in performing the task, and its importance to their role.

Setting

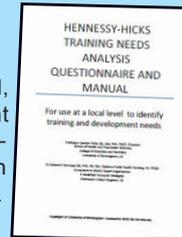
A questionnaire web-link was distributed to a convenience sample of 35 health care and public health organisations in London and South East England, with a request that they cascade the information to relevant staff.

Participants

203 individuals responded from 20 health care and public health organisations (breakdown overleaf).

Outcome measures

Training needs were identified by comparing median importance and performance scores for each task. Individuals were also invited to describe up to three priority areas in which they require training.



Results of needs assessment exercise

Types of health organisation represented

	No. of organisations	No. of respondents
Teaching Hospital	4	105
District General Hospital	5	31
Mental/Community Health Provider	5	47
Local Government Public Health Dept	3	15
Clinical Commissioning Group	3	5
Total	20	203

Training and development needs identified

Participants' self-assessment of the importance of the 25 tasks included in the questionnaire

Key tasks identified across the study sample

- evaluation
- teaching
- making do with limited resources
- coping with change
- managing competing demands

Most relevant research-related tasks identified across the study sample were **assessing the relevance of research** and **learning about new developments**.

Priority areas requiring training included

- evaluation
- finding, appraising and applying research evidence
- data analysis

Key barriers to involvement included **time and resources**, as well as a **lack of institutional support** for undertaking research.

Conclusions

This research identifies areas in which health care and public health professionals may benefit from support to facilitate their involvement in and use of applied health research. We also describe barriers to participation and differing perceptions of research between professional groups.

Read the full paper

Building capacity to use and undertake research in health organisations: survey of training needs and priorities amongst staff

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BMJ Open 2016;6:12 e012557 doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2016-012557

<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/6/12/e012557.full>



The NIHR CLAHRC North Thames Academy is the training arm of the Collaboration. In addition to a PhD programme and one-year Fellowship scheme for Allied Health Professionals the Academy runs short courses for NHS and public health staff.

Academy homepage: www.clahrc-norththames.nihr.ac.uk/academy

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About NIHR CLAHRC North Thames

A university, NHS, local authority partnership to conduct and then promptly implement the most important world leading research of direct relevance to patients and the public.

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