

Optimising the Research Capacity and Capability within a Multi-Disciplinary (District General Hospital) Elderly Care Department

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Introduction

Older adults, particularly those with multi-morbidity, frailty or cognitive impairment, are under-represented in clinical research studies. To facilitate inclusive research for this population requires empowerment of all members of the multi-disciplinary team to promote and advocate for this underserved population. However, understanding of the personal and organisational barriers to staff engagement with research within Elderly Care remains limited.

Method

Using an amended version of the research capacity and culture tool an anonymous online survey open all staff members of an Elderly Care Department (n=351) in a District General Hospital was undertaken. The survey results were used to inform the departmental 5-year research strategy and launch a multifaceted educational and engagement programme

References

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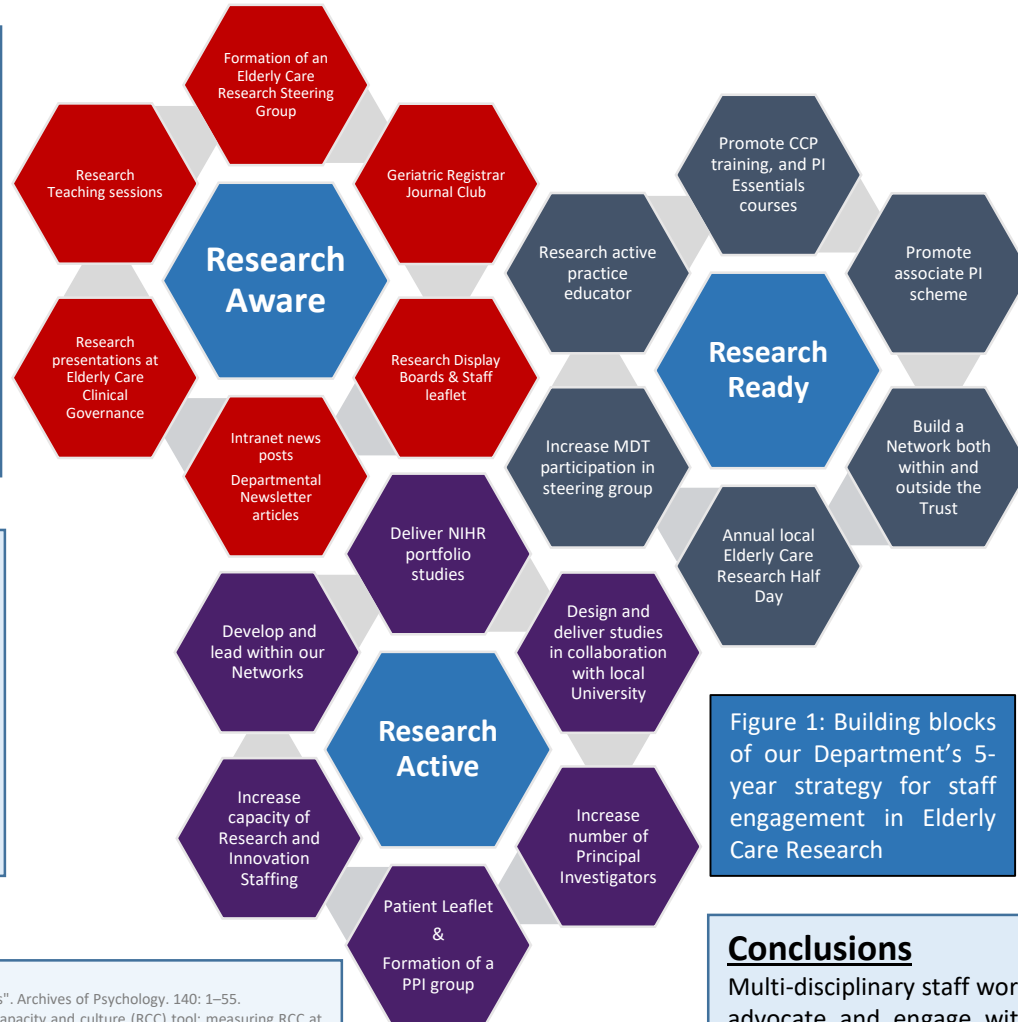


Figure 1: Building blocks of our Department's 5-year strategy for staff engagement in Elderly Care Research

Results

107 responses to the survey were received with a wide multi-disciplinary contribution.

89% of respondents stated research was not part of their job but 96% were willing to be more involved in research.

Motivators to staff engagement in research included:

- dedicated time for research (74%),
- research skills training (73%),
- mentors (67%),
- research relevant to elderly care (62%),
- hearing from researchers within the department (54%)
- promotion of research studies (49%).

Barriers to research included:

- lack of time (78%),
- unsure of opportunities (65%)
- lack of skill (47%).

As a result of the survey numerous departmental interventions have been staged – see figure 1.

Conclusions

Multi-disciplinary staff working within Elderly Care can be motivated to advocate and engage with research opportunities for older adults. Supporting their engagement through the provision of dedicated time, research skills training and promotion of opportunities is key.