



# Non-Physician Principle Investigators

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# Non-Physician investigators

- NHS Non-Physician Clinical professional
- NHS Workforce
- The benefits
- The Challenges
- The solutions

# Who are we talking about



NURSES AND  
MIDWIFES



PHARMACISTS



DIETICIANS

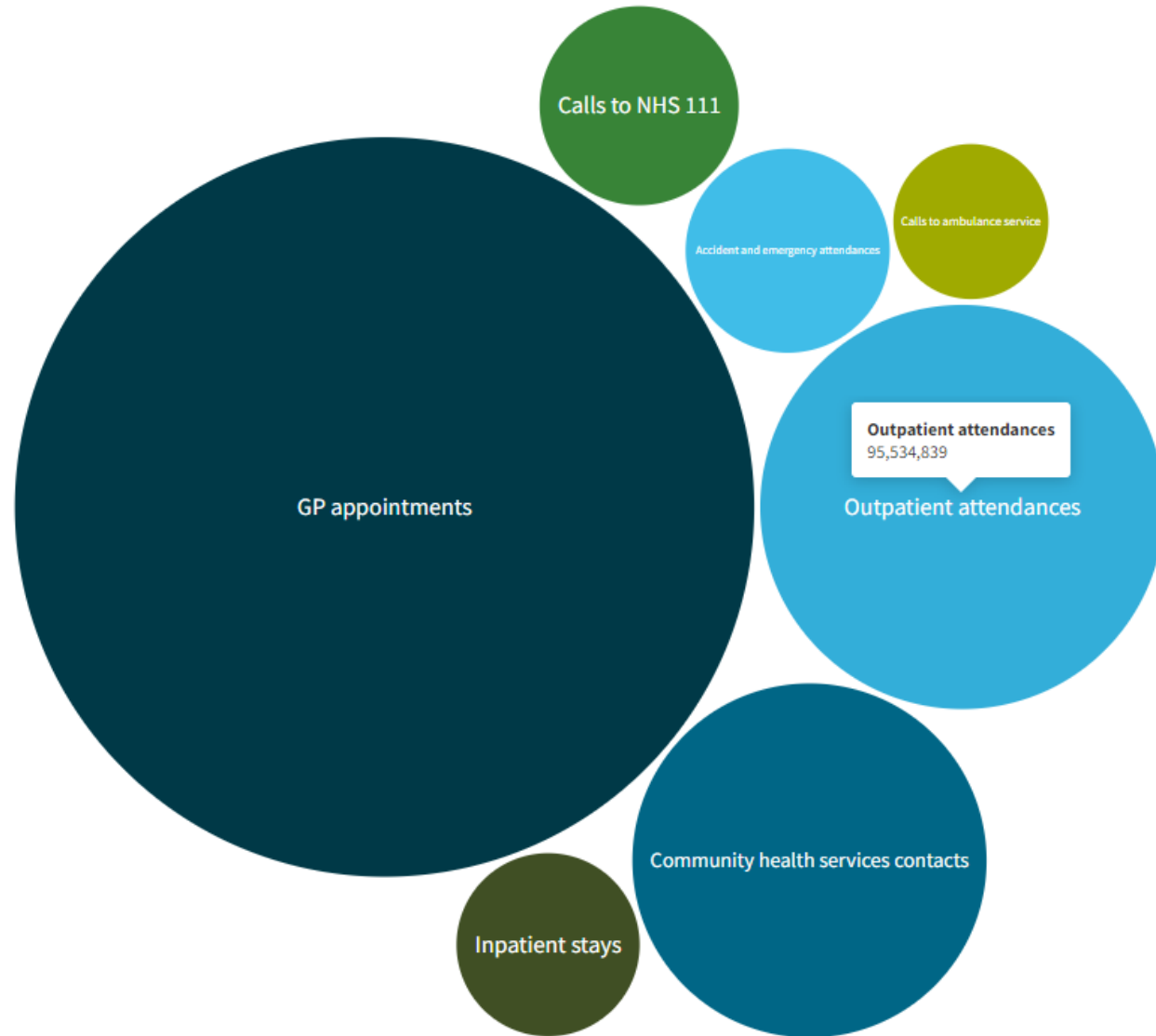


HEALTHCARE  
SCIENTISTS

# Advancing practice an opportunity

- Advancing clinical practice happens for all clinical team members
- physicians have a clear training pathway including clinical academic pathways
- Other professions it had been less clear
- Health Education England with the support of a multi professional group supported an advanced practice framework from this Master of Science programmes providing training under four pillars of advanced practice are now supporting NPCs and this has been adapted by The RCN IBD network to support advanced practice in IBD nursing.
- Research is one of the four pillars of advancing practice there are research ready individuals who want to take the next step but there are barriers.

In 2021/2022  
there were 570  
million patient  
contacts



# NHS Workforce Data

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Out of the 1.4 million people who work in the NHS just 133,486 are hospital and community doctors. (54,676 are consultants 66,335 are Doctors in training account and 12,445 other Doctors)



With Non-Physician clinicians (NPCS) accounting for 495,439 of NHS Staff



There are 3.71 times more NPCS supporting the 570 million contacts than Medical professionals.

# Engagement

- It could be argued then that patients are more likely to see a non-physician clinician in practice.
- This presents a point of contact opportunity for clinical research allowing patients a gateway to research participation.
- Supporting a research culture in teams is an important factor to increasing research participation and there by the benefits of research.

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National Institute of Health and Care Research.(2024) Embedding a research culture online @<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/health-and-care-professionals/engagement-and-participation-in-research/embedding-a-research-culture.htm> [accessed 1st January 2024]

# Benefit to patients

The benefit of clinical research to patients is increasingly documented

## **Better patient care outcomes:**

- [Patients at research active hospitals have more confidence in staff](#) (Jonker L, et al, 2019)  
This cross-sectional study found that patients admitted to more research-active hospitals tended to be better informed about their condition and medication.
- [Study activity, mortality rates and CQC ratings in NHS trusts](#) (Jonker L, Fisher J, 2017)  
A retrospective cross-sectional study showing a correlation in trusts between increased research and reduced deaths.
- [Research activity and the association with mortality](#) (Ozdemir BA, et al, 2015)  
This study found that research-active trusts have lower risk-adjusted mortality for acute admissions.
- [Cancer survival outcomes in hospitals with high research participation](#) (Downing A, et al, 2016)  
A population-based study demonstrating strong independent association between survival of colorectal cancer and participation in interventional clinical studies.



# To individuals and teams

- Engagement in research can lead to better work satisfaction allowing people to reach their potential.
- Retention is more than about pay before the Sars-CoV-2 Pandemic Buchan et al (2019)\* reported a critical moment in the retention and attrition rates in NHS staff trends solutions to this problem include involvement in research delivery and other activities that support the feeling of making a difference\*\*.
- If care should be delivered by a Multi professional team, then so should research this is a key tenant of the Future of clinical research delivery policy paper \*\*\*

\*James Buchan et al (2019) A critical Moment: NHS Staffing trends retention and attrition The Health Foundation available @ [http://alumni.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/upload/publications/2019/A%20Critical%20Moment\\_1.pdf](http://alumni.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/upload/publications/2019/A%20Critical%20Moment_1.pdf) [Accessed 1st January 2024]

\*\*\*United Kingdom Government (2021) The future of clinical research delivery Online @ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-future-of-uk-clinical-research-delivery> [Accessed 1st January 2024]

\*\*\*National Institute of Health and Care Research.(2024) Embedding a research culture online @<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/health-and-care-professionals/engagement-and-participation-in-research/embedding-a-research-culture.htm> [accessed 1st January 2024]

# Challenges

- NPCs rarely have research time accounted for in Job plans this may account for the relatively low uptake of clinical academic activity in NPC professionals currently quoted at less than 0.1% of research active clinicians
- Often managers including clinical managers do not appreciate the benefits to morale job satisfaction and to patients of research active teams.
- Opportunities are emerging but there is competition and first choice is not always the nurse, the dietician or the pharmacist as Principal Investigator.

# Solutions

- Using the evidence to support an argument for research activity individually and as a team.
- Team approach to division of labour in services ensuring job planning allows for research activity at all levels.
- Make opportunities available to enthusiastic individuals.
- Start at grass roots and work on changing the culture.
- More Multi professional funding to train research interested clinician's

# Chief investigator

- Why stop at AI and PI
- NPC led studies are doing well IBDBoost and ADDapt show that multicentre studies can be delivered with non-physician chief investigators.
- Better pathways to academic training for NPCs are emerging with 30 Million extra being invested in research training for NPCs by NIHR and NHS England\*

\* National Institute for health and Care Research (2023)  
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news/extra-30m-a-year-to-boost-research-careers-for-healthcare-professionals/34213>

# Education emerging to support

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/health-and-care-professionals/training/courses-and-support.htm>

# Shameless PLUG

Holistic Treatment & Optimised  
Psychological Wellbeing for IBD  
patients - Current Practice

