

Member profile for QNI Community Nursing Research Forum



Name: Shelley McLetchie-Holder

Job title: Lecturer in Nursing Education & Head of Department Child and Family Health

Employing organisation: Department of Child and Family Health, King's College London

Country of residence: England

How would you describe your current role and research interests?

I am a Lecturer in Nursing Education and Head of Department for the Child and Family Health Department, King's College London. My background is in Specialist Community Health Nursing (Health Visiting). I have research interest in early intervention and public health. However, upon embarking on a career in academia, my interests have extended to the experiences of Black female academics and Black students within the Higher Education sector.

How did you first get involved in doing clinical research / your own research?

My interest in research developed over the years. I undertook research for my BSc Specialist Community Public Health Nursing degree, exploring the experiences and effectiveness of the antenatal contact, by interviewing women in the third trimester of their pregnancy. I further undertook research for my master's degree in Learning and Teaching, examining the value of adopting a personalised learning approach within the short-term placements of student nurses. I am currently in the 3rd year of a Doctorate in Education. For this programme, I have so far undertaken research looking at the leadership experiences of Black female academics in Higher Education and I am currently exploring the experiences of Black students as personal tutees in the faculty, examining how the relationships with personal tutors may impact on their experience at university, this will be developed further as I progress to my thesis. I also supervise students with BSc and MSc dissertation projects, topics are wide ranging which makes supervision extremely worthwhile.

What difference has your research training and experience made to your career / clinical practice / academic practice?

Though research was undertaken for successful completion of my BSc and MA degrees, during my career as a health visitor, undertaking research was not given prominence in my day-to-day practice and there were minimal conversations about research. I am fully aware the dialogue is shifting and community practitioners are being encouraged to become more research active. Within Higher Education, research is extremely high on the agenda and given much prominence and status. Participating in research is of great benefit to me in

further enhancing my teaching as I can draw on research in support of my teaching and learning. I teach on the Specialist Community Public Health Nursing Programme and on pre and post registration programmes within the faculty. Basing my work on research-based knowledge not only supports the requirement for evidence-based learning and practice and emphasises the importance of research to students, for example making research known and encouraging students to become research active themselves. My research knowledge and experience allow me to credibly support students undertaking their research projects.

What has been your favourite research experience so far?

I am a qualitative researcher and having opportunities to interview participants is always a privilege. I am always grateful for their time and interest. Though a small scale study, listening to the voices of Black female academics and the strategies for success was indeed a privilege and a rewarding experience.

What are your top tips for anyone wanting to become a clinical academic / become more research active?

- *Becoming more research active is certainly a step in the right direction. Becoming research active could range from having a research idea, attending conferences to data collection or analysis and implementing research findings.*
- *Do homework, as liaising with the appropriate individuals in navigating the system is essential. Undertaking research or even a doctorate, is not straightforward, it can be a complex process, therefore making the right enquiries is crucial in obtaining the appropriate avenues of support. Discuss your research interest with your line manager so they can support you. It's also good to share findings and experiences by presenting to colleagues and at conferences where possible. Networking is always helpful.*
- *There will always be challenges e.g. time, service demands or obtaining funding; having a mentor and peer support would also be of benefit.*

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