

Member profile for QNI Community Nursing Research Forum



Name: Helen Lyndon

Job title: Consultant Nurse Older People / Research Fellow

Employing organisation: Cornwall Foundation NHS Trust / University of Plymouth

Country of residence: England

How would you describe your current role and research interests?

I am a clinical academic combining research leadership and clinical practice. My doctoral study, supported by an NIHR Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship was a mixed-methods feasibility study which developed an intervention based on nurse-led comprehensive geriatric assessment (CGA) for frail older people in primary care. I conducted a feasibility cluster randomised, controlled trial with an embedded qualitative study which demonstrated that the intervention is feasible and provided information to inform the conduct of future research. I have NIHR post-doctoral funding to continue this programme of research and have recently applied for a NIHR Advanced Clinical Academic and Practitioner Fellowship.

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

I have always worked in community nursing and older peoples' care. I led the development of a frailty pathway in Cornwall, and this led to a secondment to the national nursing directorate of NHS England. Having the opportunity to support and witness the development of frailty services nationally, I found I had more questions than answers about how to deliver best practice in this area. I decided to develop my own research and undertake a PhD to try to answer some of my clinical questions.

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

The NIHR Integrated Clinical Academic (ICA) pathway has been a fantastic opportunity for me. I first applied for an ICA internship which enabled me to refine my research ideas, gain patient and public involvement contributions and develop my PhD application. The NIHR Clinical Doctoral Fellowship (CDRF) provided time and funding to carry out my research, undertake specific research methods courses and complete my PhD. The NIHR Post-Doctoral Bridging Award has supported me to gain further research skills, expert mentorship and develop an application for a NIHR Advanced Clinical Academic and Practitioner Fellowship to deliver the next phase of my research.

What has been your favourite research experience so far?

That is hard to say as I have had so many enjoyable moments. Being awarded my PhD is of course a highlight but I have also enjoyed being able to participate in all the aspects of study delivery. Interviewing participants, hearing their stories about the challenges of frailty and how they overcome them has been challenging and humbling. I also love learning new research methods and how I can add them to my portfolio with the aim of becoming an established researcher using mixed methods to evaluate complex interventions for the care of older people.

How did you develop your research career?

I have always been curious, keen to challenge, and apply evidence to improve practice, consequently, I have developed an interest in research to answer clinical questions and have taken every opportunity to be involved in and lead a number of research grants and studies. As a Community Nursing Clinical Lead and for my MSc dissertation, I developed and led a Hospital at Home scheme and evaluated the services' impact against traditional hospital care. As Clinical Lead for one of the first Telehealth Services in the UK, I was principal investigator in a multi-centre randomised controlled trial with a budget of £7million to investigate the use of

telehealth in the care of patients with long term conditions (LTCs). During a secondment with NHS England, I collaborated with other researchers on several

projects including a Programme Grant team (NHS England/Public Health England/Scottish Government) to develop the European Union Joint Action on Frailty 'New Models of Care for Frailty' work package, a standard set of outcome measures for older people and as an expert panel member for the NIHR Themed Review

"Comprehensive care: Older people living with frailty in hospitals". This led on to becoming an independent researcher and achieving the PhD.

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

I would say there is no linear or "correct" path to becoming a clinical academic. I have taken every opportunity available to progress both my clinical and academic career. Sometimes, this means stepping out of your comfort zone and imposter syndrome is very real! To me, being curious about how we can improve patient care is my motivation and everything I do clinically and academically is driven by this. Get involved in any way you can, shadow the research team in your NHS organisation, set up a journal club for your team, speak to your local university about research training.

Where can we access your recent work?

- The holistic assessment and care planning in partnership (HAPPI) study a mixed methods feasibility study of a nurse-led intervention for older people who live with frailty. <https://pearl.plymouth.ac.uk/handle/10026.1/17302>
- Lyndon, H., Latour, J. M., Marsden, J., & Kent, B. (2022). Designing a nurse-led assessment and care planning intervention to support frail older people in primary care: An e-Delphi study. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 78(4), 1031–1043. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.15066>
- Lyndon, H., Latour, J. M., Marsden, J., Campbell, S., Stevens, K., & Kent, B. (2019). The holistic assessment and care planning in partnership intervention study (HAPPI):

A protocol for a feasibility, cluster randomized controlled trial. Journal of advanced nursing, 75(11), 3078–3087. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14106>

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