

Masterclass: Applying for clinical academic fellowships **SUMMARY**

Thursday 11 July 2024
1pm - 2pm, via Zoom

Dr Ben Bowers QN, Community Nursing Research Consultant, The QNI, ben.bowers@qni.org.uk, [@Ben_Bowers__](https://www.instagram.com/Ben_Bowers__) ; Kumbi Kariwo, Health Inequalities Lead

Welcome to everyone from Ben and today's co-chair Kumbi - this forum is for nurses who are undertaking or considering carrying out research in the community and those keen to be more research aware. It aims to strengthen the capacity of community-based nursing research through peer support, mentorship, and supporting personal development and research opportunities. We offer monthly newsletters about research and research activities, webinars, masterclasses.

- We have a private Facebook group, join it here:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/qnicommunitynursingresearchforum>
- This is the third masterclass of 2024. The next one will be on 5 September and will be on 'Routes into Research for Community Nurses.' To sign up and/or find out more, go to:
- <https://qni.org.uk/nursing-in-the-community/community-nursing-research-forum/> or scan the QR code below:



1. Becoming a clinical academic community nurse

Sally Kendall MBE PhD, Professor of Community Nursing and Public Health, University of Kent, Co-Director International Collaboration for Community Health Nursing Research

- I am a Professor of Community Nursing and Public Health, I have a background of health visiting but work across areas of community nursing

Definition of Clinical Academic

- 'A clinical academic is a health professional who is engaged concurrently in both clinical and academic activities and can provide clinical leadership in the pursuit of excellent evidence based healthcare. Activities will include research, scholarship and clinical practice, and will also involve contribution to teaching.' Council of Deans 2007
- In this case it's obvious we're talking about nurses who combine clinical excellence and practice and academic work.
- Historically, Florence Nightingale was the first nurse researcher; 'In dwelling upon the vital importance of sound observation it must never be lost sight of what observation is for. It is not for the sake of miscellaneous information or curious facts, but for the sake of saving life and increasing health and comfort.' (Nightingale, 1859)
- Becoming a clinical academic starts with observation from practice, understanding what you're noticing in practice and how you can develop a systemic methodological approach, asking questions that will improve the life and quality of life outcomes and comfort for your patients and communities.



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The right questions

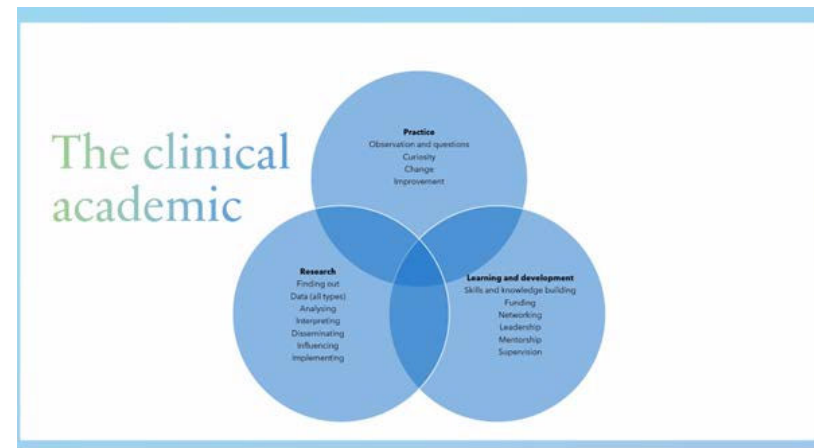
- Research begins in practice: you're working with patients and families: ask the right questions and develop them, be curious, this is the best possible way to manage our case loads. Asking questions all the time and never been satisfied with the status quo.
- How you make a general observation about practice into a research question is a skill in itself.
- Reflect on the questions, seek ways to find answers and solutions to improve practice, care and outcomes

The Clinical Academic

- You need a research plan of how you're going to investigate those questions - your own learning and development, no one can become a clinical academic without furthering themselves
- What are your learning development needs? It's very important to consider this in relation to leadership, mentorship along with your research plan.

4 inner quartiles

1. Knowledge and intellectual abilities (ability to use intellectual insight and arguments for your writing).
2. Personal effectiveness; enthusiasm preparation, time management, career management, whole range of personal qualities.



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3. Research governance and organisation (any gaps, research funding, budgets, ethics and governance in NHS which can be quite challenging)

4. Engagement influence and impact; another v important area, how do we develop research career to engage with our communities / public, with policy and practice to influence on how things can be improved

- Lots of settings in which fellowships can be used, so in particular for us is the NHS, but also local authority, voluntary and charity. You need to look for you: what is the best fit for you as a clinical academic?

NIHR Integrated Clinical Academic Programme for non medics

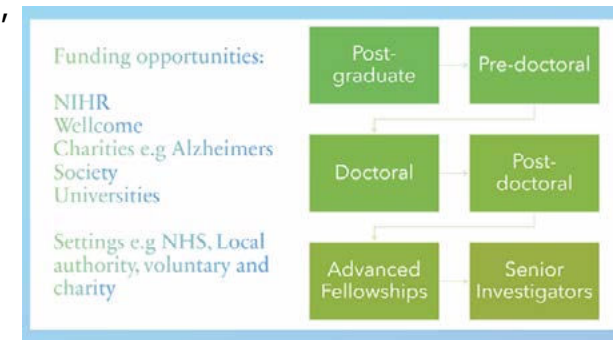
- see more here: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/academy-programmes/hee-nihr-integrated-clinical-and-practitioner-academic-programme.htm>

Internship programme

- provided by universities, post graduate learning and development based on a one year part time programme; covers methodology, ethics, literature searching, writing skills, public engagement in research; output usually a piece of writing such as literature review; funded by NIHR on a day/week basis with your employer.
- Good start for people feeling their way at first.

Insights programme

- Also funded by NIHR, it replaces MRes programme, slightly different version. Master level, full or part time. More in depth in research skills and methodologies. Output is dissertation.



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Pre-doctoral

- Have to put in application, self directed. Year of preparation for doctoral application which is the output.

Doctoral

- Full time for 3 years, or part time for 5 years. Supervised by 2 people.

Support

- Mentorship, formal or informal, you need someone experienced, right at the beginning or even at post-doctoral level. Use your networks to help you.
- Identify supervisors
- Applied Research Collaborations (ARCs) in your region - only in England. Get in touch with your ARC through NIHR academy to think about which fellowship would be best for you and how to go about planning it. Most ARCs have thematic areas of research, see if your area fits.

Other funding opportunities

- Wellcome Trust Early Career Awards UK wide: provides funding for early-career researchers from any discipline who are ready to develop their research identity. Up to £400k to cover your time, research costs, mentorship and supervision, learning and development
- Find out more here: <https://wellcome.org/grant-funding/schemes/early-career-awards>



2. My Clinical Academic Journey

Dr Sharin Baldwin QN, PhD, Senior Health Visitor Research Lead, IHV/MECSH, Adjunct Fellow, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Western Sydney University; Honorary Research Fellow, University of Kent

My background & research

- I qualified as a Nurse in 1998 - at the time research wasn't on my agenda I wanted to make a difference by being a good nurse. I would have thought research was not for nurses like me.
- I trained to become a midwife and had to carry out research dissertation. I was interested in home births and wanted to find out more about them as there were very low home birth rates at the time.
- My study was on 'What factors influence women when choosing their place of birth?' It was a small scale quantitative study with questionnaires of 100 postnatal women and I had a 37% response rate. I found that age, parity and previous experience influenced choices, hospitals were seen as being safer.
- I then trained as a health visitor and became interested in peri mental natal health. I did a research paper on 'Do Specialist Community Public Health Nurses Assess Risk Factors for Depression, Suicide and Self-Harm among South Asian Mothers Living in London?' but I wanted to do more with my findings. I used them to raise awareness, staff training and also went to local policy and publications to develop my research skills. But I wanted to do more..

Dilemma

- How can I progress my research career and stay in practice?
- Look into ICA HEE/NIHR Integrated Clinical Academic Programme for non-medical professionals



2. My Clinical Academic Journey

Dr Sharin Baldwin QN, PhD, Senior Health Visitor Research Lead

The process

- Before you apply, you have to have a number of things in place:
- Support systems: university support, potential supervisor, research ideas, NHS support. I contacted other successful awardees and asked for help and tips, I also networked with other researchers

The setbacks

- I was interviewed by 13 academics in a room, so it was a bit daunting, but this time round I wasn't successful. I felt bad, that I'd disappointed everyone. Spent all the way home crying on the train. I asked for feedback which was encouraging and I applied again in 2014. I was unsuccessful again and was ready to give it all up.
- Supervisors helped me try again and I received helpful feedback from the panellists: I used 'we' a lot and they felt I didn't 'own' the project. I had wanted to acknowledge the whole team, but I realised that I had to take ownership of the project and say this is my idea and I will do x, y. This time I gave it everything, I went to presentation skills training and asked any colleagues to interview me.

Success!

- The third time, I was successful! I started my PhD about a new Dads study to do with mental health and well-being, a study conducted in 3 phases and completed in 2020.



2. My Clinical Academic Journey

Dr Sharin Baldwin QN, PhD, Senior Health Visitor Research Lead

- I'm now on a NIHR Award Selection Committee, it's very interesting being on the other side!
- Research is like having four fantastic jobs in one:
 1. it's like being a detective: finding causes
 2. an artist: creating new things and breaking new ground
 3. an adventurer: discovering new things
 4. a storyteller: sharing your findings with others.
- My last tip: having mentors taking you through that journey was very important, without that support, I don't think I would have carried on.
- Contact me sharin.baldwin@ihv.org.uk, or on Twitter: @BaldwinSharin
- Find out more: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sharin-Baldwin>



3. Clinical Academic Fellowship - overview of the requirements

Christopher Sweeney, clinical academic fellow and a current PhD student at the University of Edinburgh

- Always read through the guidance, look through it all, reach out to the funder if you have any questions, I found they're always happy to answer any questions

My background

- I qualified as an Adult Nurse in 2008, specialist community public health nurse in 2013
- I hold a diploma in tropical nursing and a Masters of Public Health
- I worked as a nurse, health visitor, practice development nurse and for Medecins Sans Frontieres
- My PhD explores how new parents in Scotland respond to childhood illness and decide to access urgent care services

Their requirements

- Academic qualifications and post graduate career; research experience to date; impact of fellowship; research plan (including patient and public involvement)
- They are looking for academic awards and research experience
- Apply to editorial boards, they are always looking for people, same for peer review

My research experience

- Literature reviews, primary research, research in the NHS, editorial boards, peer review, patient and public involvement
- I reviewed research documents, you can reach out to PPI groups to get experience



3. Clinical Academic Fellowship - overview of the requirements

Christopher Sweeney, clinical academic fellow and a current PhD student at the University of Edinburgh

Your application

- Be clear on what university modules you took as undergraduate. What skills you have. It's also good to be aware of university courses, seminars, there's a massive open online course on MOOC
- Qualitative interviews, focus groups, analysis etc have you taken part in a focus group for example.
- Key publications? If you've carried out published research, think of disseminating that research. So for example through blogs, conferences, public consultations. Build on previous experience, try and tell a journey.
- Recognise that PhD is training

Future opportunities

- Be clear on your application what your plan is for after - make it clear why it's YOU who should be doing this.
- Find research supervisors early, I identified my supervisor 3 years before I started my PhD
- For patient and public involvement (PPI) don't wait to involve them, do it at an early stage.
- Start early! And keep going, it can take years to get the funding.
- It's good to have social media presence: people can see your experience/background
- <https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/christopher-sweeney>



Thank you to all delegates who attended the Masterclass.

The next masterclasses:

- 25 September - [Conducting systematic reviews and critical literature reviews](#), with Dr Diane Bunn.



To join the forum or book your free place on a masterclass, scan the QR code
or go to www.qni.org.uk/news-and-events/events/

As a Community Nursing Research Forum member we'd be very grateful if you could take our short survey.



Take part in our survey



Join our private Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/qnicommunitynursingresearchforum>

Thank you to all delegates who attended today's meeting.

FEEDBACK:

Sharin, you are an inspiration and I agree about the 'we' - our work to 'own' as a fellowship even though it's always collaboration

Wonderful session, thank you all-fantastic!

Congratulations Sharin....thank you for sharing your journey....love the fact you persevered! Great presentation!

This has been really helpful. Thank you :-)

Thank you, very inspiring Chris

Professor Sally Kendall, thank you so much for sharing the knowledge and guidance for us, which are so helpful and supportive.

what a great presentation Sharin. You are giving me hope that I too can do this!

So inspiring, I feel so promising now, thank you very much for bringing your own journey, Dr Sharin Baldwin.

Hi Sharin, your presentation highlights the importance of preparation, support and determination! Thank you

