



Research for all: Developing, delivering and driving better research

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) is an independent, patient-centred and clinically led organisation with a membership of over 30,000 members in the UK and 38,000 members worldwide. We draw on over 500 years of our members' knowledge and expertise to develop and deliver evidence-based policy in key areas of healthcare that drive improvements in clinical practice. We champion medical professionalism in all its forms and clinical leadership at all times.

There is growing evidence that clinical research activity improves patient outcomes and this has led to the Care Quality Commission examining for research activity during its inspection of NHS trusts. We also know that research involvement is linked to better staff morale with improved retention and recruitment. The benefits are clear and as such the RCP seeks to deliver research for all.

Why do we need a research strategy?

We are responding to the needs of our members and fellows, most of whom work in NHS trusts.

In January 2020, a survey of over 1,100 RCP members and fellows revealed a strong enthusiasm for clinical research. However, there were three key barriers that hampered involvement.

The most important barrier was a lack of time, but credibility and NHS trust culture are also key obstacles. Women, members who work less than full time and those in non-university teaching hospitals particularly struggle to become involved in clinical research.

Key findings from the survey have informed our research strategy and are outlined overleaf.





Key findings



67% Two-thirds (67%) of physicians surveyed said having dedicated time for research would make them more likely to apply for a role



53% A lack of time is the biggest obstacle to more research participation, cited by over half (53%)



12% Women are 12% less likely to participate in clinical research than men, despite over a third (35%) of women saying they want to become involved in research



13% Respondents from BAME backgrounds are 13% less likely to report being formally employed in research roles



18% Physicians working in rural hospitals are 18% less likely to participate in clinical research than those in cities, although 40% of them say they do want to become involved in research



80% 80% say they participate in clinical research because it improves patient care

Recommendations

- ▶ NHS trusts must explore viable ways to allow clinicians more time to participate in patient-facing research through job planning, whether this is on an individual or team basis.
- ▶ NHS trusts must do more to publicise research-focused mentoring schemes, especially to those under-represented in research such as women and physicians in rural hospitals.
- ▶ NHS trusts should support high-quality research and clearly explain the different ways clinicians can become involved.
- ▶ NHS England should enable trusts to address equality, diversity and inclusivity of access to research for staff and the patients they care for.
- ▶ National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) must actively target those regions where less research activity is taking place, especially in rural areas and those where the burden of disease is high.
- ▶ NIHR, NHS trusts, royal colleges and education bodies should work to provide alternative routes into research – for example through credentialing schemes.

Find out more and access the full survey results

www.rcplondon.ac.uk/news/delivering-research-all-analysis-participation-clinical-research



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Vision

Every clinician is supported to become research active for the benefit of patients and the public.

Mission

As a leading body for physicians in the UK, we strive to engage more physicians in research that improves health and care as well as their wellbeing.

Aims

- > To develop and support the workforce to become research active and innovative.
- > To deliver a system that enables physicians to do research as part of improving care.
- > To drive new collaborative ways for physicians to accelerate research for patient and public benefit.

Principles

In support of research, we will act in line with the following principles:

- > Research is defined in its broadest sense to capture the systematic investigation into health and care that establishes facts and reaches new conclusions.
- > Research access for clinicians and patients needs to be equitable across the UK to ensure that all hospitals benefit from the research effect.
- > Research needs to extend across multidisciplinary health and care teams and have patient and public engagement.
- > Research direction will be informed by clinical needs and aligned with the research ambitions of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

Priorities

To develop and support the workforce to become research active and innovative

We will do this by

- > establishing a clinician researcher credential and encouraging participation in clinical research networks
- > providing resources and funding awards to promote and celebrate research activity
- > understanding and addressing the barriers deterring RCP members from participating in research, especially in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

To deliver a system that enables physicians to do research as part of improving care

We will do this by

- > increasing clinical time for research by influencing job planning, guidance on advisory appointment committees and criteria in excellence awards
- > working in partnerships to model/pilot ways for trusts to protect time for research that benefits patients and improve funding opportunities
- > ensuring patients feel empowered to support clinicians integrating research into care.

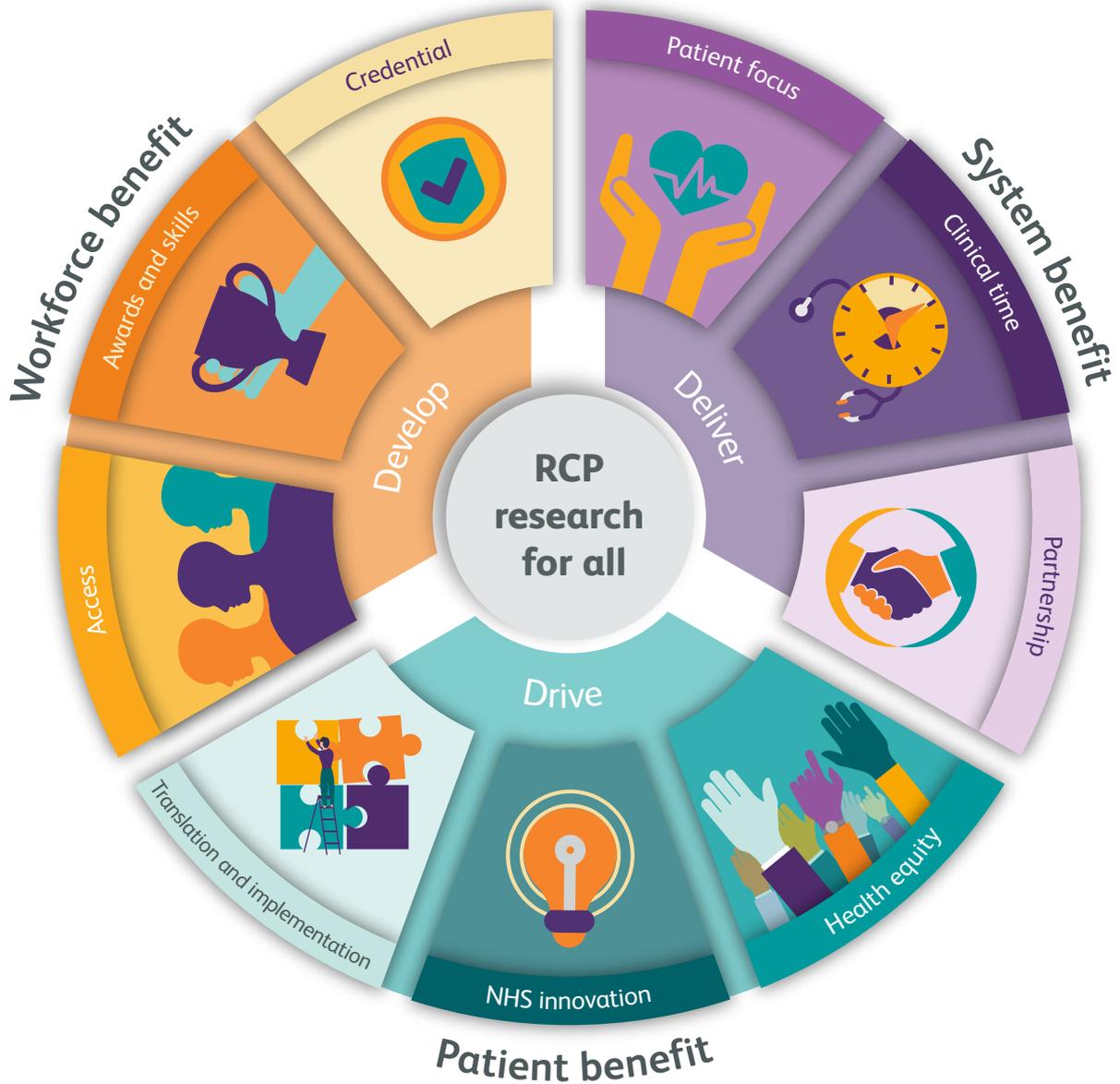
To drive new collaborative ways for physicians to accelerate research for patient and public benefit

We will do this by

- > promoting opportunities to grow and translate evidence with partners in the health and innovation sectors
- > building alliances to jointly tackle existing and urgent health and care challenges, such as health inequalities and multimorbidity
- > sharing learning and best practice with NHS trusts on integrating research and clinical care.

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Strategy priorities



Find out more and keep up to date as we continue to deliver our research strategy:

www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/rcp-policy-research-and-innovation

