

## RCN Forum Annual Report November 2023

### **Forum Name:**

RCN Research Forum

### **Introduction:**

The Research Forum:

- Provides research leadership and expertise to support the RCN's strategic intent to influence the development of practice and policy from an evidence base.
- Supports and meets the needs of the Society's members.
- Provides a network for sharing experiences and learning and development opportunities

The forum is grateful for the support and expertise of RCN staff, including Denise Alexis (Project Co-Ordinator, Nursing Department), Dr Ada Hui (UK Professional Lead for Research) and Sally Faley and the RCN events team.

### **Membership of the forum**

The RCN Research Forum currently has 5467 members and is the first-choice forum for 1449 of these members. Membership has increased this year, and the Research Forum has two voting places at Congress.

Professor Bridget Johnston commenced as Chair in January 2023

Steering group members are:

Professor Jane Coad FRCN, Dr Gordon Hill, Professor Heather Iles-Smith, Dr Barbara Farquharson, Professor Parveen Ali and Dr Keith Couper. Dr Helen Jones chairs the clinical research subgroup.

### **Reflections on 2023: (Outputs and outcomes)**

1. **Events** – The RCN International Research Conference was held in Manchester in September and was extremely successful. We had 417 attendees £143k income with £38k surplus.

2023's over-arching theme was 'Embedding a culture of research in nursing'.

The conference provided an opportunity for nurse researchers to showcase their research through a range of media and engage in constructive critical debate with fellow nursing researchers. We had 296 submissions in total of which 232 (78%) were accepted for presentation at the conference, enabling nurse researchers to showcase and share their findings and learnings from their research projects. These were made up of 128 oral slots, 95 posters and 10 symposia. There were 27 international delegates in attendance and 11 countries represented on the programme that were not UK or Ireland, including America, Australia, Hong Kong, Finland, New Zealand, South Africa, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Spain and Italy. A number of fringe events took place and several delegate networking opportunities. The most successful of which was an Early Career Researcher event facilitated by members of the steering committee.

2. **Congress** two members attended Congress. We had a successful ‘Meet the Forum event’ at the Forums stand and a joint evening world café style meeting with other forums.
3. **Impact of COVID-19 on the Nursing and Midwifery workforce (ICON) study**  
The Research Forum designed and led a key national study exploring the Impact of COVID-19 on the Nursing and Midwifery workforce (ICON) study. This national (4-country) survey was administered at three time-points: prior to COVID-19 peak, during the COVID-19 peak, and in the recovery, period following COVID-19. The committee is grateful for RCN support in disseminating the survey in email updates. The findings continue to be disseminated thanks to a successful FFG bid and the team have now produced an animation and video as well.

4. **Research Forum sub-committee for clinical research nurses**

Established in 2019, the committee gives formal representation to clinical research nurses. The importance of this professional group, particularly in the delivery of COVID-19 urgent public health research (e.g., RECOVERY, RECOVERY-respiratory support, REMAP-CAP, vaccine trials) has been recognised both nationally and internationally.

In November 2023, the subcommittee hosted the second successful Clinical Research Nurse Conference. The event was held online.

5. **Engagement with members**

The forum actively engages with members through social media. Our follower count continues to grow, both on Facebook and X (Twitter) with 2986 followers. an increase from last year.

We have successfully commenced a podcast series The first podcast was a conversation about getting into research with Professor Johnston and Dr Hill. The pod cast is currently hosted on the RCN Research Forum web page.

6. The Research Forum steering committee, led by Professor Bridie Kent and in collaboration with Professors Hugh McKenna FRCN and Danny Kelly FRCN, have been awarded FFG funds (£11,178) to undertake a project entitled “The Research Excellence Framework 2021: exploring the impact of nursing research.” This work examined the impact of nursing research as submitted to REF 2021 and examined the trends in development since the previous REF in 2014. This will contribute to making the ‘hidden impact’ of nursing research more visible and recognise the high-quality research being undertaken by nurses. This work has been completed and submitted to a journal and under peer review.
7. The Research Forum took a leading role as part of the task and finish group for the All Forum FFG funded project on clinical supervision. The completed scoping review of clinical supervision has been published in an open access paper in Journal of Advanced Nursing. This review underpins the RCN position statement on Clinical Supervision which was published in October 2022 <https://www.rcn.org.uk/About-us/Our-Influencing-work/Position-statements/rcn-position-on-clinical-supervision>

#### **8. NIHR e-learning resources application**

Professor Ruth Harris, with involvement of the other Research Forum steering group members, led the RCN's application to the NIHR e-learning resources competition. Funding has been awarded to the Royal College of Nursing (£119,908). Due to a delay in contracting this significant educational resource will now commence in January 2024.

#### **9. Contribution to Consultations/Policy development**

Members of the Steering Committee have made a significant contribution to national initiatives to develop and strengthen academic clinical career pathways:

- Dr Barbara Farquarson represents the RCN at the Clinical Academic Roles Implementation Network (CARIN) hosted by the Councils of Deans for Health.
- Dr Keith Couper represents the RCN on the Associate of Medical Royal College (AoMRC)/ National Institute for Health and Social Care Research (NIHR) Clinician Researcher Credential Programme Board
- Dr Keith Couper represents the RCN on the CNO (England) Strategic Advisory Board – Research; CNO Strategic Plan for Research – Delivery Board.
- Professor Bridget Johnston represents the RCN on the UK Coordinated Approaches to Research and Care Embedded (CARE) group – tackling the separation of research and care in the NHS.
- As chair of the RCN Research Nurse Subcommittee, Helen Jones currently sits on the NIHR Research, Recovery, Resilience and Growth (RRG) Advisory Board as the RCN representative. She also attends the NIHR CRN Workforce Oversight Group.

**10.** Appointment in June 2023 of Dr Ada Hui as RCN UK Professional Lead for Research).

#### **11. RCN Research Strategy**

The Research Forum have been key players in developing RCN Research Strategy, this is due to be launched early 2024.

#### **Plans for 2024**

Key priorities to be taken forward include:

- Leading the RCN Annual International Nursing Research Conference to be held in September 2024 in Newcastle
- Continuing to support the Research Forum Clinical Research Nurse Sub-Committee with their work plan for 2024.
- To continue to develop a research careers framework for nurses in the UK.
- To contribute to the NIHR funded work to develop e-learning resources to support nurses to become more involved in clinical research.
- To contribute to the NIHR Health Technology Assessment research priority exercise
- To continue our research podcast series

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By Professor Bridget Johnston (Chair, Research Forum)