Innovative Research Roles

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Introduction:
The changing landscape of healthcare and how research delivery in the UK has encouraged the development of new innovative and cost-effective ways of working. The purpose of this poster is to inform and inspire other research teams who may be considering developing new or similar roles.

Methods - Developing the role:
Development of the Senior Clinical Trials Assistant (SCTA) role was first considered to address clinical, cost and workforce pressures, particularly in relation to shortages of Registered Nurses in the UK and more specifically to support research delivery.

In Leeds, the role was developed specifically to support the CRUK Stratified Medicine Programme (SMP). The SCTA is an enhanced support role that works in partnership with the Research Nurse recruiting patients to translational, quality of life and device trials. The SCTA role complements that of the research nurse, concentrating skills and knowledge to the appropriate elements of the research delivery protocol/pathway.

In Leeds we embrace our organisational values, working towards The Leeds Way which is who we are and what we believe. It is how we work to deliver excellent high quality care for our patients.

The role enables flexibility with recruitment processes to employ staff with a diverse skill mix that can be utilised in different clinical areas.

- The SCTA role can support skill mix across both complex early phase interventional trials and simple observational studies
- SCTA training can be delivered in house and specialty training can be given as required, examples include sample processing, device training
- The role improves communication and acts as a hub of contact the SCTA is able to bridge between the patient and the multidisciplinary team. The SCTA ensures that the respect and dignity is maintained during the recruitment process and recruitment is performed in a fair and collaborative way
- The role provides an opportunity for the multidisciplinary team to work flexibly and to share responsibilities
- The role enables flexibility with recruitment processes to employ staff with a diverse skill mix that can be utilised in different clinical areas

• Improvement in patient experience, supported by increased continuity of care.
• Improvement in role satisfaction;
• High levels of motivation by developing a more challenging and engaging role;
• Increased level of retention.

Conclusion:
The SMP2 programme has been a continually evolving project as the technology of genomic testing develops. The SCTA post therefore has to remain flexible to change and afford opportunities for patient pathway development, multi-disciplinary team working and project management skills development for which the individual and patient can greatly benefit.

Quotes from members of staff:

• “The SCTA role can help reduce patient waiting time in clinic and this has a positive impact on the patient experience especially when these patients are the most vulnerable time in that journey.”
  - Johanne Sugden, Research Nurse Melanoma Team.

• “Our SCTA offers an insight into the patient pathway and the importance of why good conduct and best practice should be shared across all new staff for the benefit of the patients.”
  - Jade McCann, Senior Trial Assistant, Setup Team.

• “Our SCTA has used her research experience and clinical skills to help with recruitment into my research project. Her assistance has ensured that the maximum number of patients have been recruited. Her communication skills are excellent and she always puts patients at ease.”
  - Suzanne Rogerson, Senior Research Nurse.

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