

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.

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 speciality training can be given as required, examples include sample processing, device training



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 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 SCTA role is patient centred; The SCTA is an enhanced support role that works in partnership with the patient and research nurse supporting patients recruited to translational, quality of life and device trials, ensuring they are cared for safely, with dignity, respect and compassion.

The SCTA role is fair; by acting as a point 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 SCTA is collaborative; the role improves communication and acts as a hub of contact for translational studies where results are an important part of the patient treatment pathway. By having someone who is a central point of contact between the sponsor and the multidisciplinary team, the nursing staff are able to focus on the patient's treatment pathways and plans. The SCTA is able to deliver the project targets successfully with good multidisciplinary team work.

The SCTA is accountable; the role facilitates effective communication with the clinical research facility and investigators. The SCTA is responsible for their actions and is honest with their colleagues and patients at all times. Working accountably to the Research Nurses in a collaborative way ensures that results are disseminated to the multidisciplinary team in a timely manner.

The SCTA is empowered; Encouraging research teams to be innovative in terms of workforce and skill mix challenges, provides a platform for new ideas and approaches. Recognising that every team member brings different skills and experiences to the wider team builds confidence, enables role development opportunities and cohesive teams contributing to successful research delivery.

- Screening and identification of potentially eligible patients;
- Receiving informed consent;
- Sample collection and processing;
- Investigator and sponsor liaison.

- 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.

- Improvement in study performance;
- Increased data quality;

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 afforded 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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