

14<sup>th</sup> Edition

# GAT

George's Academic Training



St George's  
University of London

# Newsletter

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July 2023



# New Starters



@ Liza Bowen



Clinical Academic Lecturer in  
General Practice

Liza joined the Population Health Research Institute (PHRI) in January 2023 as an NIHR Clinical Academic Lecturer in General Practice. She has had a bit of a back-to-front clinical academic career. Her first degree was in Human Sciences from Oxford - an interdisciplinary course looking at humans from interconnecting perspectives across biological and social sciences. She then did her MSc (Demography and Health) and PhD (Epidemiology) at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. For her PhD she worked on the Indian Migration Study - looking at rural to urban migration in India and changes in cardiovascular risk, with her thesis focusing on dietary changes in this population.

She then studied graduate medicine here at St George's. During this time, she continued some of her Indian Migration Study work, and joined the LSHTM Cataract Impact Study team for some fieldwork experience in Bangladesh and the Philippines.

Liza completed her GP training and Academic Clinical Fellowship in London (GSTT/KCL), where her research work focused on hypertension in pregnancy and postnatal care.

Liza is now working with the Primary Care Epidemiology Group in PHRI developing a project on medication use in pregnancy. Her clinical practice (Wellsbourne Healthcare CIC) is in an underserved area of Brighton, where she is also involved in a community participatory action research project looking at the effect of cost of living on health.



# New Starters



@ Anas Tahir



Clinical Academic Trainee in  
General Practice

I am currently an academic GP trainee in my first year of training. It has been an interesting journey so far! My interest in primary care research started during my undergraduate training when my research group reviewed barriers to integration of primary and social care, which involved carrying out interviews of GPs and managers. I saw first-hand how receptive and keen primary care teams were for positive and constructive change for the better care of patients. It was really this that ignited my interest in primary care research as I felt that change could be made quickly and with full engagement from the relevant stakeholders. Having started my academic pathway with the primary care team at St George's, I have ensured to balance my clinical work with the start of my academic work. With my allotted academic time in my third and fourth year of training, it has been important to work on becoming clinically confident and competent at this moment whilst identifying areas of work that seem exciting. With the help of the primary care team, I have started reading around the work the team are doing on genomics and primary care, involving impacts of application, educating patients and how to use this new technology for better clinical care. Getting familiar with the current work and research environment, whilst contributing where I can, will hopefully put me in the best position to utilise the vast opportunities when it comes to the allotted time for academic work in a couple of years. Throughout all of this, I have been lucky enough to teach some of the medical students about leadership and quality improvement, which is a bonus of being an academic trainee. I look forward to see how my academic research develops and progresses within the area of genomics whilst being open to further opportunities the university has to offer.



# Understanding Clinical Research

Three researchers at St George's, University of London - Dr Kathryn Biddle, Anna Blundell and Professor Nidhi Sofat - have published *Understanding Clinical Research*, a book which guides healthcare professionals through the vital elements that underpin clinical research.

*Understanding Clinical Research* supports people with how to develop research questions, design and appraise research studies, and disseminate their findings. It delves into key areas which are crucial for successful clinical research, including how to source research funding, incorporating public and patient involvement, selecting the appropriate statistics, ethical considerations and research integrity.

The book shines a light on numerous case studies to showcase real-life examples of what it is like to be a trainee, and how combining clinical work with research can lead to a varied and fruitful career.

## Combining academia with medicine

Professor Nidhi Sofat, Professor of Rheumatology and George's Academic Training Lead at St George's Institute for Infection and Immunity, said:

"Over the last few years, clinical research has been a crucial driving force behind significant developments in new treatments for medicine, surgery and primary care. But many budding researchers don't know where to start - entering the world of research can seem daunting."

"This book is aimed at practising clinicians and medical students who want to take that next leap forward to explore combining a career in academia with medicine. It also provides a wealth of information to the practising clinician and researcher who needs to appraise and consider these developments in evaluating best practice."

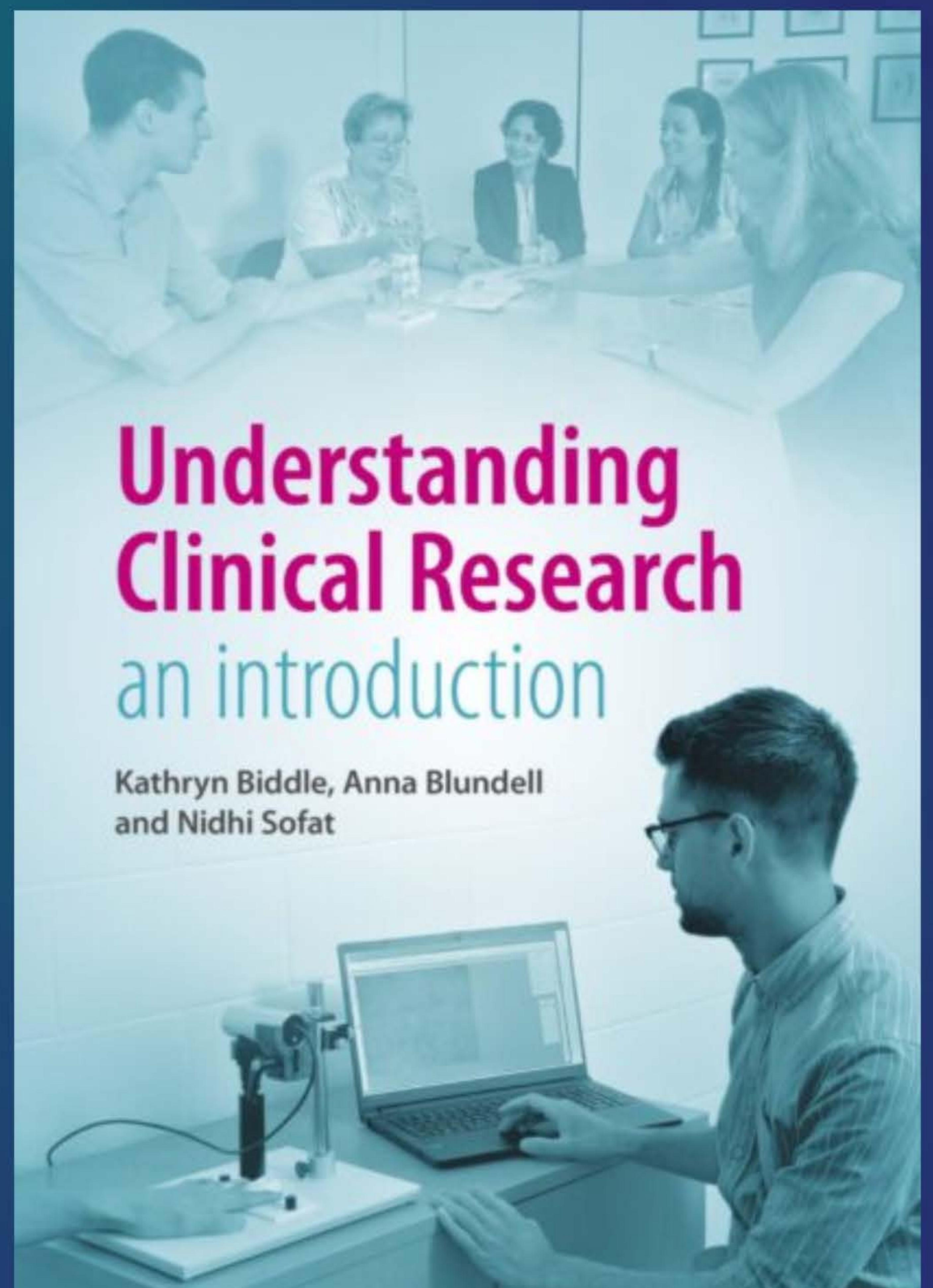
- Professor Nidhi Sofat -

The book embodies the Postgraduate Certificate in Healthcare Research Skills and Methods at St George's, which is Co-Directed by Professor Nidhi Sofat and Dr Mat Paul. It can also be used to accompany other PGCert and Masters courses in clinical research, and for those who are embarking on PhD studies.

## Get your copy now

*Understanding Clinical Research* is now available to buy on Amazon and Scion Publishing.

Explore postgraduate courses at St George's



Published: 11 May 2023



# PgCert Healthcare Research Skills and Methods

In response to trainee feedback the GAT team developed the **Postgraduate Certificate in Healthcare Research Skills and Methods** with the first intake of students in 2019/20. The course attracts students from a variety of healthcare backgrounds – medical/surgical trainees, nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists. Three students have shared their reflections on the course:-



**Maria (Rhia) Fernandez**



Lead Nurse for Renal Transplant Services  
Chief Nurse Research Fellow 2022 to 2023  
St George's University Hospitals NHS  
Foundation Trust

## Reflection on my PGCert Healthcare Research Skills and Methods

I am one of the first two nurses who was accepted for the Chief Nurse Research Fellowship in the Trust, the programme is open for aspiring nurses, midwives and allied health professionals (NMAHP). Part of the fellowship is to complete the PGCert Healthcare Research Skills and Methods at SGUL.

I have been involved in research previously and led some QI projects but in my pursuit to further my clinical academic career and future research projects, I enrolled to this programme to further develop my research knowledge and skills which would benefit my department and/or St George's as whole. I have learned and understand the research methods and was able to write my research proposal, developed skills in critical appraisal, research project and planning management, and statistics.

All these have strengthened my research knowledge foundation and enhanced my networking and collaborative working skills which will be applied on first project after this course looking at the association between patient engagement and pre-emptive transplant listing.





## PgCert Healthcare Research Skills and Methods



Niamh O'Neill



Foundation Year 1 Doctor - Plastic Surgery  
St George's University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust



I enrolled on the PGCert in Healthcare Research Skills and Methods to further my understanding of research in medicine. This is a topic that is generally not taught in much detail at medical school and given that research is an integral part of being a doctor, I wanted to deepen my appreciation of the theory behind research. It is taught by career statisticians and researchers who have a thorough appreciation of the intricacies of research and statistics, and it is taught in an accessible and engaging way. It covers everything from study design, the process of different research studies through to analysis and presentation of the data collected. I think this is a very valuable course to enrol on if you are someone who sees research in their future careers, and it is very accessible even working full time as a junior doctor, as lectures are only once a week for a few months.





## PgCert Healthcare Research Skills and Methods



**Robert Oakley**



Senior Pharmacist/HEE-NIHR ICA  
Pre-doctoral Clinical and Practitioner  
Academic Fellow  
St George's University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

I enrolled onto the Post Graduate Certificate in Research Skills and Methods to help compose my ideas and develop my research proficiency. The course has provided me with an excellent foundation in which to excel my research career.

I started with a clinical problem in mind, which the course nurtured via its structure to help me develop a research question. The sequential statistics/data analysis, critical appraisal, research proposal and reflective components were key to this. As was the time I needed to network and mature my ideas. By equipping me with an arsenal of skills, the course empowered me to generate a competitive Masters application and secure funding. This has enabled me to apply the skills I learnt on the PG Cert into my clinical practice, through generating both quantitative and qualitative research study protocols

In summary, the course experience nurtured my independence in generating a research question and pursuing it. This has been an invaluable asset to develop a PhD proposal alongside my clinical practice.





## News from Academic Neurosurgery

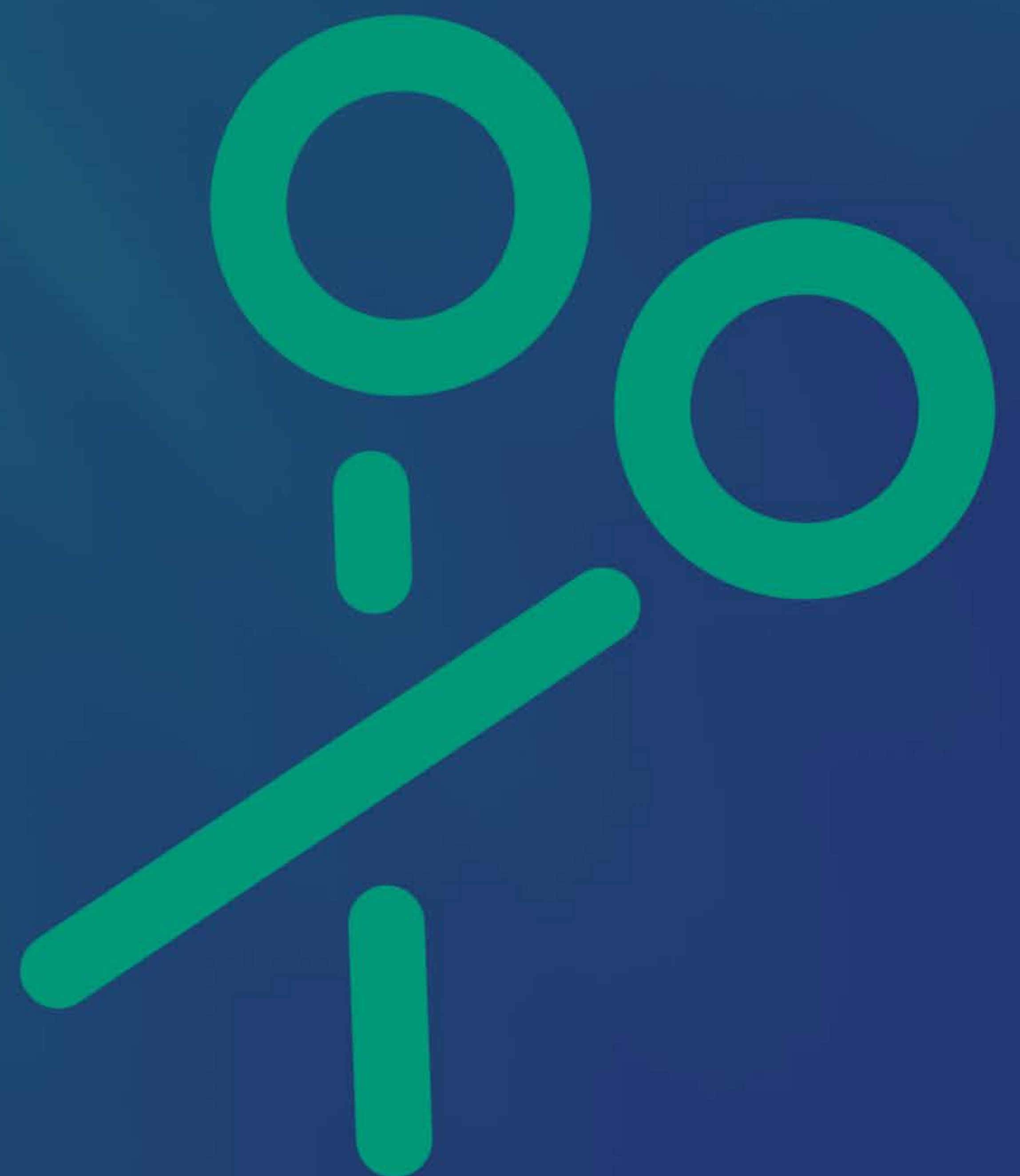
NIHR CL Abteen Mostofi has obtained CCT and recently published “Raising standards of accuracy in deep brain stimulation requires consistent definitions and unbiased reporting” in Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry.

NIHR CL Rahul Shah is establishing a neuromodulation laboratory for electrophysiological studies of patients receiving deep brain and spinal cord stimulation.

Senior Lecturer in Neurosurgery Mike Hart is undertaking 7T MRI of patients before deep brain stimulation at Guy’s and St Thomas’ and supervising BSc and MSc MRI projects.

Neurosurgery will be offering academic foundation posts from next year with a functional neurosurgery theme.

Mr Pereira and Mr Hart are hosting a Royal Marsden Cancer Pain Interventions course in December and the British Society of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery annual meeting in May.







## News from Academic Vascular Surgery

NIHR ACF Aurélien Gueroult has a multi-centre study off the ground to provide long term outcomes for fenestrated endovascular aneurysm repair which will be a world first "Long-term outcomes and durability of fenestrated endovascular aneurysm repair: a meta-analysis of time-to-event data". This was presented orally at the British Society of Endovascular Therapy Annual meeting in June and has been accepted for a poster presentation at the European Society of Vascular Surgery Meeting in September.

Two of the Vascular Surgery Specialised Foundation Programme trainees from last year have published as first Author:-

Kayla Chiew published "The Fate of Patients Opportunistically Screened for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms During Echocardiogram or Arterial Duplex Scans" DOI: 10.1016/j.ejvs.2023.05.042 (open access) in the European Journal of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery - 6.427.

David Sidebottom has had accepted (awaiting publication) "Antithrombotic drugs for cardiovascular risk reduction in patients with lower limb peripheral arterial disease: protocol for a systematic review & network meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials" DOI: awaited, in the BMJ Open - 3.007.

During his Clinical Lecturer post Mr Iain Roy successfully applied for an NIHR Research for Patient Benefit award (£85,445), with Professor Peter Holt as co-applicant - "Systematic review & network meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials comparing antithrombotic drugs for cardiovascular risk reduction in patients with lower limb peripheral arterial disease". This research aims to define the relative efficacy and risks of previously investigated antithrombotic medications in preventing major cardiovascular events, limb loss and mortality in patients with PAD. The secondary aim is to investigate whether different patient groups have differing outcomes from alternative antithrombotic regimens. <https://fundingawards.nihr.ac.uk/award/NIHR204123>.

Mr Iain Roy and Professor Christopher Owen (PHRI) along with co-applicant Mr James Budge (NIHR Clinical Lecturer) have an award of £249,625 "Prediction of Complications In patients with Diabetes Mellitus Utilising Pan-London Linked Electronic Health Records Data". The aims of the project are to use a Pan-London cohort of patients with diabetes mellitus (DM) to model longitudinal progression to complication of DM and identify the characteristics of those that progress more rapidly than others.



## News from Academic Vascular Surgery'

### Grants:

Systematic review & network meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials comparing antithrombotic drugs for cardiovascular risk reduction in patients with lower limb peripheral arterial disease.

Award: £85,445.00 by NIHR; Research for Patient Benefit

<https://fundingawards.nihr.ac.uk/award/NIHR204123>

This research aims to define the relative efficacy and risks of previously investigated antithrombotic medications in preventing major cardiovascular events, limb loss and mortality in patients with PAD. The secondary aim is to investigate whether different patient groups have differing outcomes from alternative antithrombotic regimens.

Chief Investigator: Mr Iain Roy (applied while Clinical Lecturer)

GAT Co-Applicant: Prof Peter Holt

Prediction of Complications In patients with Diabetes Mellitus Utilising Pan-London Linked Electronic Health Records Data

Award: £249,625 – Start Date TBC.

The aims of the project are to use a Pan-London cohort of patients with diabetes mellitus (DM) to model longitudinal progression to complication of DM and identify the characteristics of those that progress more rapidly than others.

Chief Investigator: Mr Iain Roy & Prof Christopher Owen (Population Health)

GAT Co-Applicant: Mr James Budge (Clinical Lecturer)





News from Clinical  
Academic Trainees



# Liban Ahmed

## NIHR ACF – Rheumatology

I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology (EULAR) this summer. It brings together health professionals in rheumatology, people living with arthritis and researchers. It is an exciting opportunity to collaborate with members of the international community. As well as hearing about pioneering research findings, there are numerous hands on sessions and updates about best clinical practice.

During my ACF in Rheumatology, I have been working with Prof Sofat's team on a clinical trial assessing pain in rheumatoid arthritis. Pain remains a key issue in rheumatoid arthritis that should be explored further to benefit the needs of our patient population. Over the past few years, Professor Sofat's research group have worked on a clinical trial comparing two biologic disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs). The focus of the study was to see if there was a difference between pain outcomes, which may help to develop more stratified care in the future

Personally, I have never worked on a clinical trial before and it has been an illuminating part of my Academic Clinical Fellowship to see the process, from patient visits, to analysis and to presenting our work at EULAR. We were very pleased present a poster, alongside other eminent members of our research field. It was a rewarding challenge to summarise years of work in just three minutes and I enjoyed the stimulating question and answer session that followed. Connecting with fellow rheumatology colleagues from around the world was both interesting and inspirational, comparing and contrasting experiences in different contexts.

We hope as a research group to take this work further, to address patients' unmet needs and create better stratification of biologic DMARD choice for patients.



# News from Academic General Practice

## Congratulations to

Dr Felicity Knights -Felicity has been awarded a highly competitive NIHR In-Practice Research Fellowship. Felicity has now completed her clinical training and will be working at Monkfield Medical Practice in Cambourne alongside her academic research which centres around migrant health.

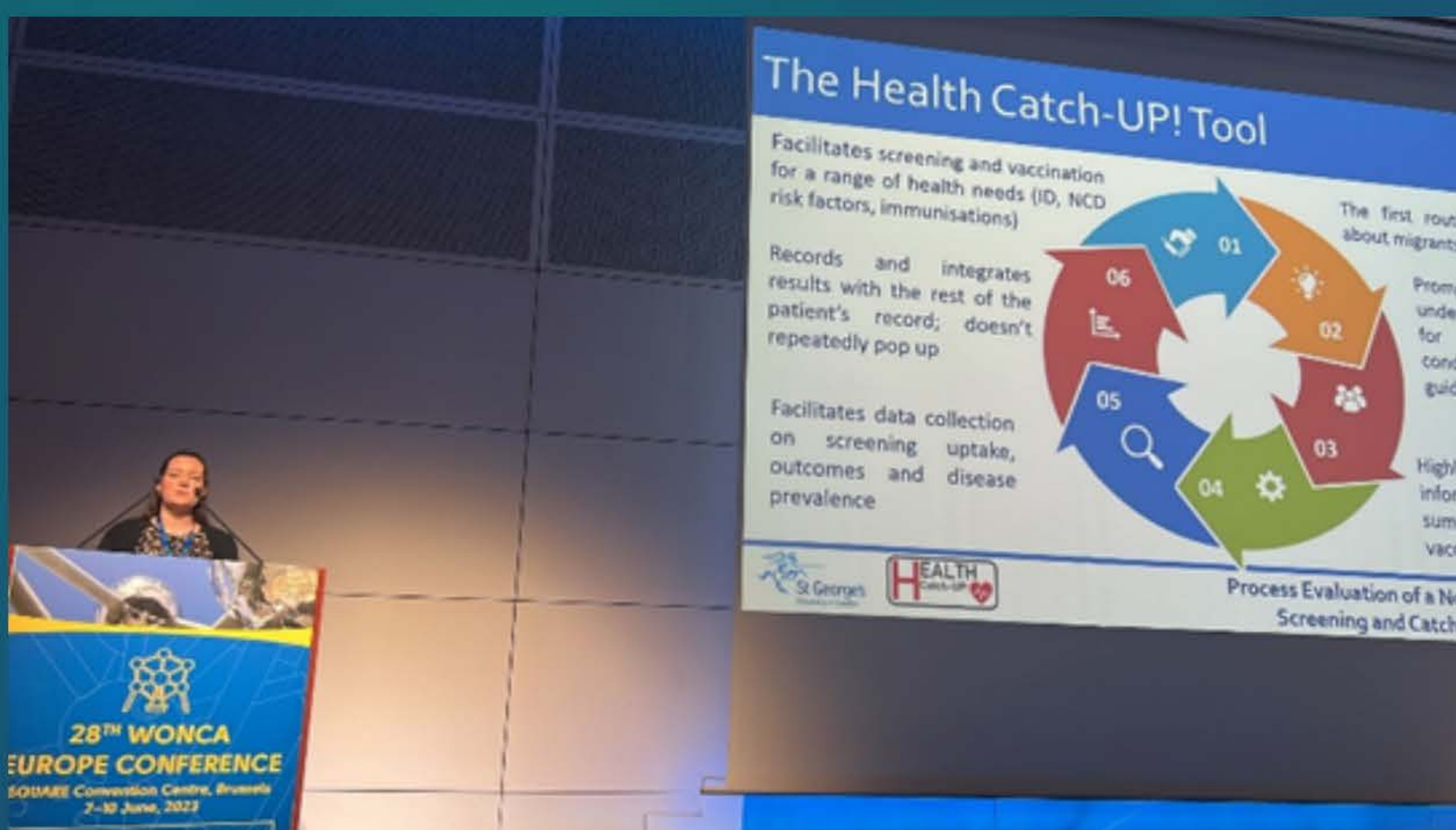
Dr Roaa Al-Bedaery -Roaa has been appointed to a one year teaching fellowship at SGUL. Roaa completes her clinical training on 1 August and will be working locally at a practice alongside her academic role.

The Academic General Practice group are delighted that Felicity and Roaa will continue to work with SGUL colleagues following completion of their clinical training.

## News

Felicity Knights and Mohammad Razai led a workshop at the WONCA Europe 2023 Conference, Brussels, Belgium, 7-10 June, "Learning from the COVID-19 Vaccines: Practical approaches to addressing vaccine hesitancy in minority ethnic groups and migrants"

Felicity also had an oral presentation: 'Process Evaluation of a Novel Digital Tool to improve Multi-disease screening and catch-up vaccination for migrants in UK primary care' on behalf of the Migrant Health Research Group and contributed to two further workshops as the Migrant Health Lead for the European Young Family Doctors Movement.





## News from Academic General Practice

Umar Chaudhry won the early career research award at the Society for Academic Primary Care annual scientific meeting July 2023.



## Publications

### Mohammad Razai publications 2023:-

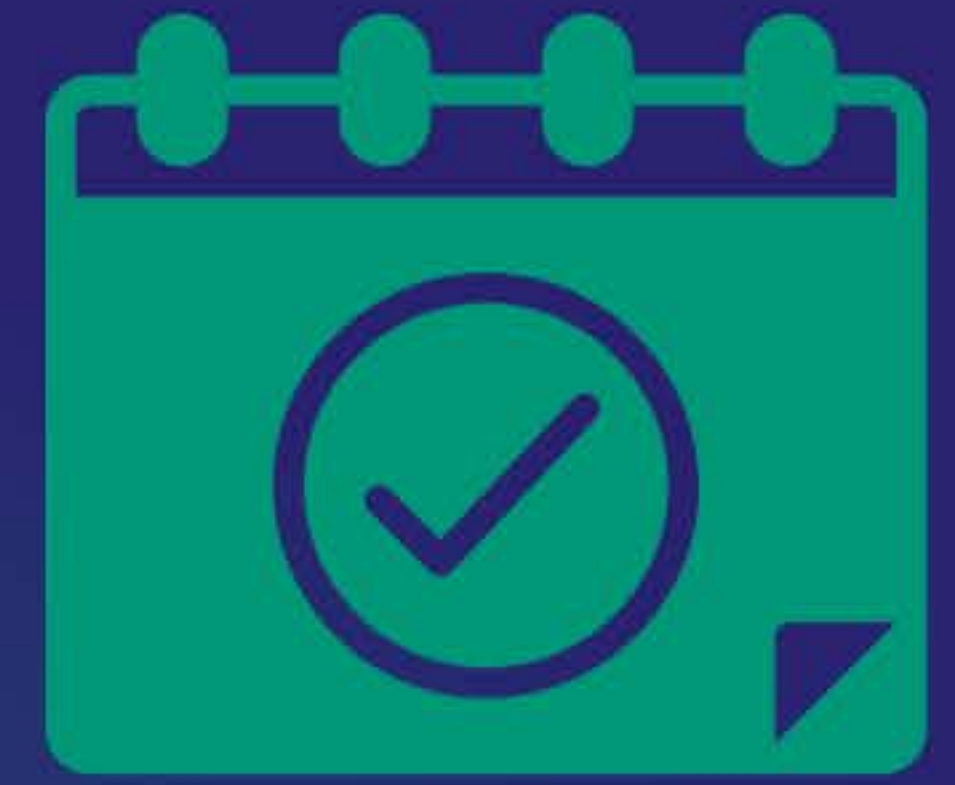
Razai MS, Kooner P, Majeed A. Strategies and Interventions to Improve Healthcare Professionals' Well-Being and Reduce Burnout. *J Prim Care Community Health*. 2023 Jan-Dec;14:21501319231178641. doi: 10.1177/21501319231178641.

Razai MS, Trinder B, Perry A, Cauldwell M, Reid F, Oakeshott P (2023) Encouraging brisk walking with the free Active10 app in postnatal women who had a hypertensive pregnancy: "Just Walk It" feasibility study. *PLoS ONE* 18(2): e0282066. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0282066>

Mansour R, Houston A, Majeed A, Boum Y, Nakouné E, Razai M S. Human monkeypox: diagnosis and management *BMJ* 2023; 380 :e073352 doi:10.1136/bmj-2022-073352



## Save the Date: Research Day



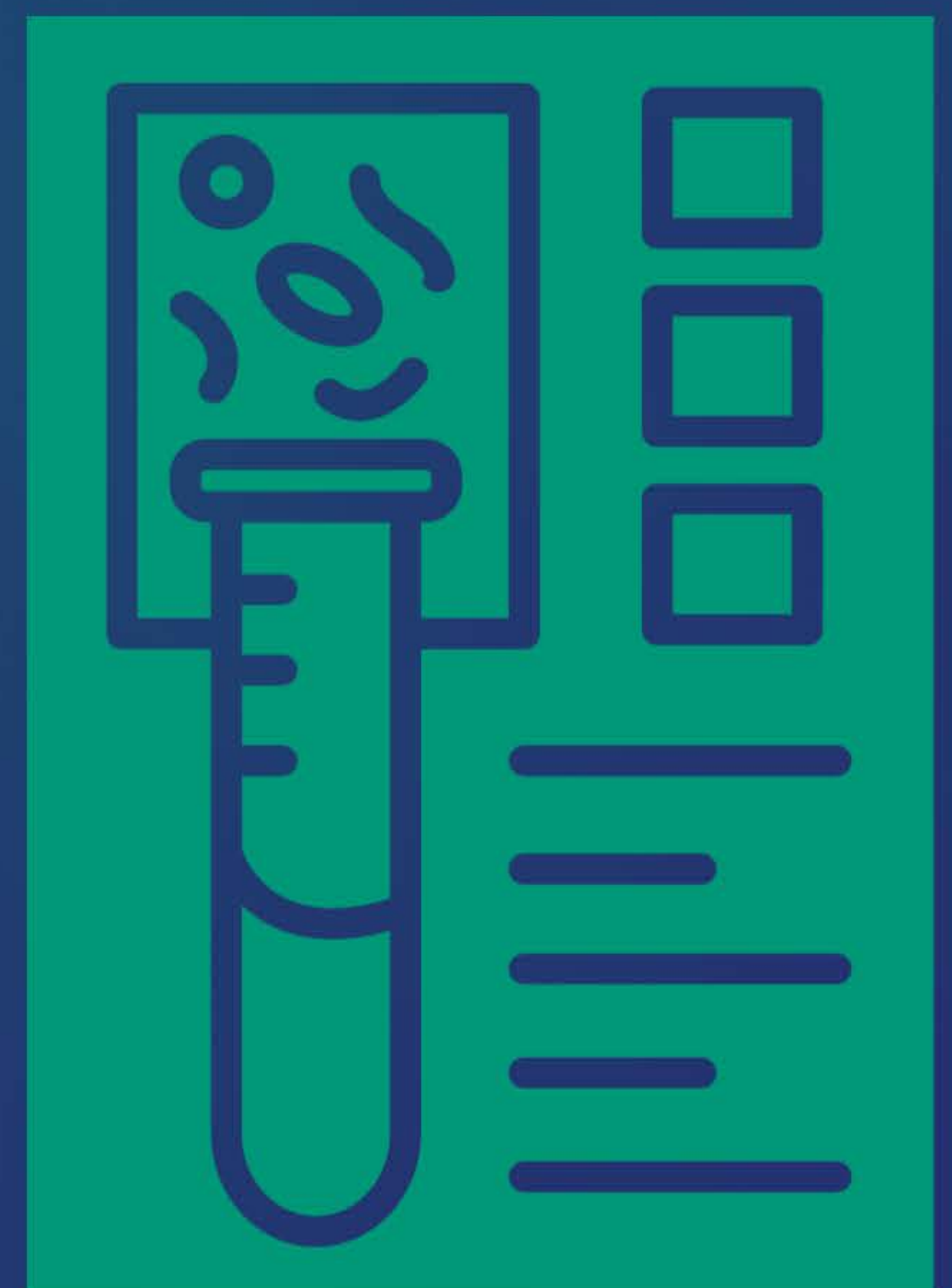
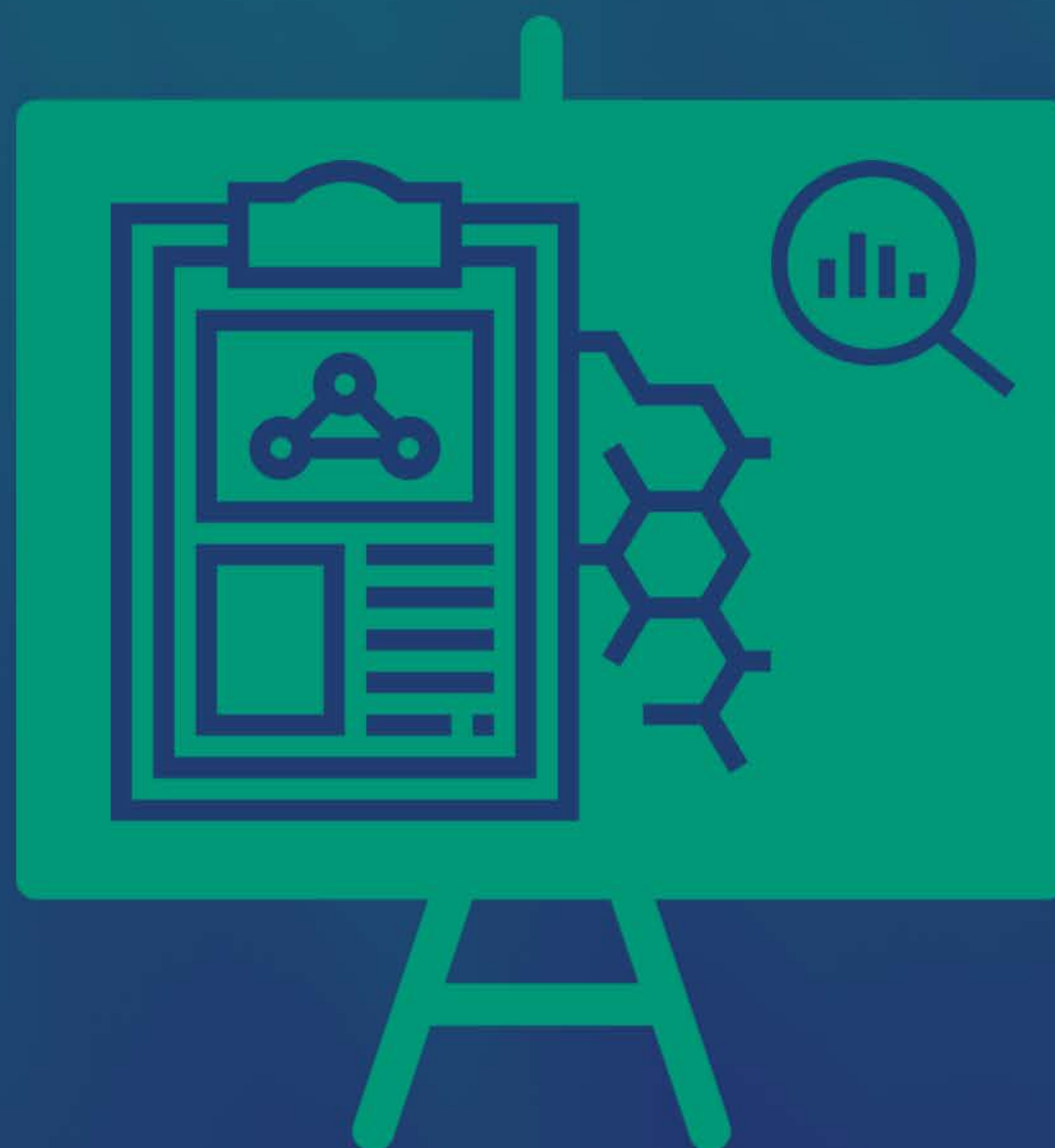
# Date: Wednesday 6 December 2023

Research Day is an annual event held in December to showcase the world-class research and enterprise that has happened at St George's over the year.

It is an opportunity for staff and students to come together, share ongoing research work and ideas, to promote discussion and to strengthen collaboration across the university. It's also a key moment for non-research staff to feel more connected with our research.

We are thrilled to announce that Sir Paul Nurse will be this year's invited speaker who will give the Thomas Young Lecture. Sir Paul Nurse was awarded the 2001 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine and is the Director of The Francis Crick Institute.

Research Day will be an in-person event this year, but for those who have access needs or working overseas, we will provide online access on request. Details on the Research Day website will be updated throughout the year.





# NIHR Academy Members' Conference 2023



This year's conference is taking place in a hybrid format in Leeds on 10 and 11 October. The event is aimed at early career researchers. In-person places are allocated to NIHR Academy Members currently on an NIHR academic path, but virtual attendance is open to all.

The conference will feature inspiring speakers, panel discussions and a number of exhibitors. Please contact [academy.comms@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:academy.comms@nihr.ac.uk) if you're interested in exhibiting a programme.

Conference registration is now open About - NIHR Academy Members' Conference 2023 ([cvent.com](https://cvent.com)). In-person registration closes on 7 August, and virtual registration closes 10 October.



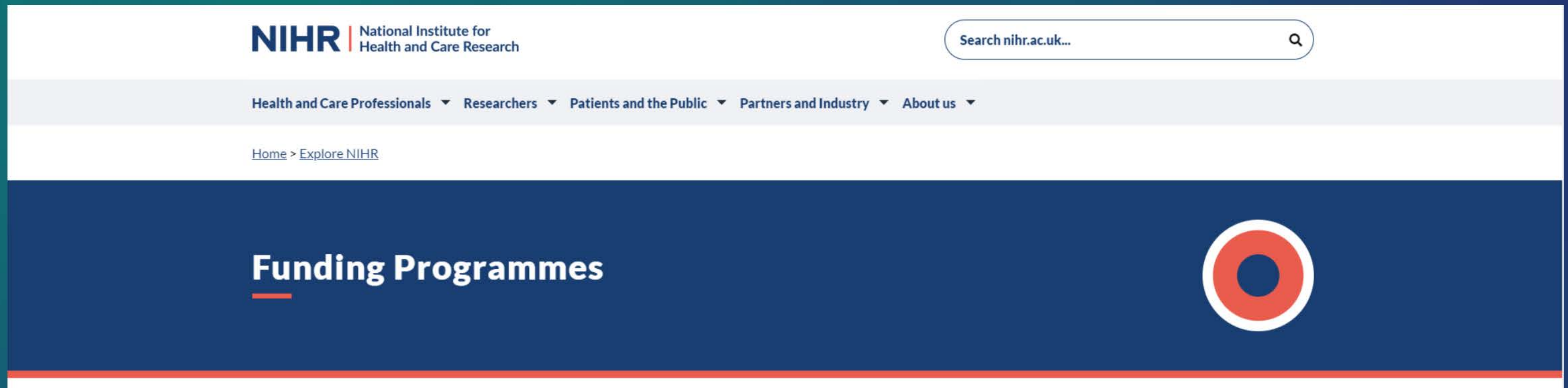
### Starter grants – The Academy of Medical Sciences

To apply for the Academy's Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers, Springboard, GCRF, Networking, Newton Fellowship, and Daniel Turnberg Travel Fellowship schemes please use Flexi-Grant, the Academy's online application system. A Flexi-Grant user guide can be downloaded from the link below. In addition, when an application is open, you can download a template application form for the scheme you want to apply from the scheme's webpage:

<https://acmedsci.ac.uk/grants-and-schemes/grant-schemes/information-for-applicants/start-your-application>

You can find application tips just below the application link. In the Learning Hub you can find more tips for researchers at all stages of their careers.

### NIHR funding programmes



### Clinical Academic Training & Careers Hub | CATCH

