

REACH: Setting up a new trainee-led research network



REACH
Research, Evaluation & Audit for Child Health

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The involvement of trainees in research in paediatrics is dependent on individual enthusiasm and access to appropriate opportunities and support. These are affected by the frequency of rotations, the demands of busy paediatric training jobs and a lack of guidance on how to get involved. The relatively new RCPCH academic tool-kit goes some way to providing support and guidance and the college's Trainee Research Network initiative aims to support existing trainee research networks and facilitate collaborative working regionally and nationally. Trainee ownership and leadership of collaborative multi-centre governance and research projects provides trainees with research skills mandated by the RCPCH Progress curriculum and additional opportunities for peer networking and steering of research priorities.

Whilst over the past 5 years several trainee-led research networks have been set up, there are gaps across the country. Arguably, the most successful are those focussing on sub-specialty projects with General Paediatrics falling behind.

Objectives

We set out to set up a pan-London, trainee-led network that exists to support the conception and coordination of multi-centre research, audit and service evaluation projects to answer relevant clinical paediatric questions.

Methods

Founding trainees sought experience of existing trainee network organisations active in research and clinical governance before a working group was set up and promoted on social media and through the regional trainee network. A group of 16 interested trainees from ST1 through to ST8 was formed and initial meetings were held monthly in May-Dec 2021.

The working group set to work on the 3 main workstreams and developed an initial set of resources.

Conclusion

The London REACH – Research, Evaluation and Audit for Child Health – network collaborative established its central committee, core guidance documents and communication infrastructure. A first regional trainee-led multi-site project will be conducted in 2022.

Work Streams

Guidance documents & plan for first project

- Constitution
- Project proposal form
- Standard operating procedure guidance for projects

IT/Communications

- Branding, network name and logo
- Social media presence
- Website¹ and dedicated email address
- Newsletter outline & mailing list template

Trust network set-up

- Review of regions and hospitals
- Plan for recruiting interested trust leads

In parallel the working group conducted successive brainstorming exercises of potential first projects, taking into account the outputs of other trainee networks, feasibility and current views on research priorities. Additionally, in recognition of the need to hear parent and patient as well as pan-region trainee voices, links to patient and public involvement (PPI) organisations are being established and a priority setting exercise is planned for 2023. A central committee was formed in December 2022.



1. <https://www.reachnetworkldn.com>