

# Developing and evaluating packages to support implementation of quality indicators in general practice: the ASPIRE research programme, including two cluster RCTs

Robbie Foy,<sup>1\*</sup> Thomas Willis,<sup>1</sup> Liz Glidewell,<sup>1</sup>  
Rosie McEachan,<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Lawton,<sup>2,3</sup> David Meads,<sup>4</sup>  
Michelle Collinson,<sup>5</sup> Cheryl Hunter,<sup>6</sup> Claire Hulme,<sup>4</sup>  
Robert West,<sup>7</sup> Vicky Ward,<sup>1</sup> Suzanne Hartley,<sup>5</sup>  
Paul Carder,<sup>8</sup> Sarah Alderson,<sup>1</sup> Michael Holland,<sup>5</sup>  
Peter Heudtlass,<sup>9</sup> Daniele Bregantini,<sup>10</sup>  
Laetitia Schmitt,<sup>11</sup> Susan Clamp,<sup>12</sup> Tim Stokes,<sup>13</sup>  
Emma Ingleson,<sup>5</sup> Martin Rathfelder,<sup>14</sup>  
Stella Johnson,<sup>8</sup> Judith Richardson,<sup>15</sup>  
Bruno Rushforth,<sup>16</sup> Duncan Petty,<sup>17</sup>  
Armando Vargas-Palacios,<sup>4</sup> Gemma Louch,<sup>18</sup>  
Jane Heyhoe,<sup>2</sup> Ian Watt<sup>19</sup> and Amanda Farrin<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Leeds Institute of Health Sciences, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK

<sup>2</sup>Bradford Institute for Health Research, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Bradford, UK

<sup>3</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK

<sup>4</sup>Academic Unit of Health Economics, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK

<sup>5</sup>Clinical Trials Research Unit, Leeds Institute for Clinical Trials Research, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK

<sup>6</sup>University of East London, London, UK

<sup>7</sup>Centre for Epidemiology and Biostatistics, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK

<sup>8</sup>NHS Bradford Districts Clinical Commissioning Group, Bradford, UK

<sup>9</sup>Centre for Health Research & Evaluation, National Pharmacy Association, Lisbon, Portugal

<sup>10</sup>Management School, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK

<sup>11</sup>Centre for Health Economics, University of York, York, UK

<sup>12</sup>Yorkshire Centre for Health Informatics, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK

<sup>13</sup>Dunedin School of Medicine, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

<sup>14</sup>Socialist Health Association, Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port, UK

<sup>15</sup>National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, London, UK

<sup>16</sup>Foundry Lane Surgery, Leeds, UK

<sup>17</sup>Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Bradford, Bradford, UK

<sup>18</sup>Yorkshire Quality and Safety Research Group, Bradford Institute for Health Research, Bradford Royal Infirmary, Bradford, UK

<sup>19</sup>Department of Health Sciences, Hull York Medical School, University of York, York, UK

\*Corresponding author [r.foy@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:r.foy@leeds.ac.uk)

**Declared competing interests of authors:** As chief investigator, Robbie Foy was responsible for commissioning and funding Prescribing Support Services Ltd (PSS) (Shipley, UK) to conduct the educational outreach visits as part of the implementation package. PSS (which is Duncan Petty's practice pharmacy company) was paid to provide pharmacists to run the educational outreach visits. The commissioning of PSS followed established NHS commissioning guidelines. Robbie Foy also reports that he is a member of the Dissemination Centre Advisory Group (2015–present). David Meads reports that he was a member of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Health Technology Assessment (HTA) European Economic and Social Committee EESC Methods Group (2014–17) and NIHR HTA EESC Panel (2013–17). Amanda Farrin reports that she was a member of the HTA Antimicrobial Resistance Themed Call Board (2013–14), HTA Clinical Trials Board (2014–18), HTA Efficient Study Designs Board (2014), HTA Flu Themed Call Board (2009–11), HTA Funding Board Policy Group (formerly Commissioning Strategy Group) (2014–18), HTA Obesity Themed Call Board (2010–10), HTA Pandemic Influenza Board (2011–11), HTA Primary Care Themed Call Board (2013–14), HTA Surgery Themed Call Board (2012–13), HTA Trauma Themed Call Board (2007–8) and Rapid Trials and Add on Studies Board (2012). Claire Hulme was a member of the NIHR HTA Commissioning Board (2013–17). Bruno Rushforth was in receipt of NIHR In-Practice Fellowship Funding during the conduct of the programme. Robert West reports membership of the Health Services and Delivery Research Researcher Led Panel (2017–20) and the Public Health Research Funding Board (2011–17). Michelle Collinson reports that since September 2018 she has been a member of the Research for Patient Benefit regional funding panel for Yorkshire and the North East.

Published March 2020

DOI: [10.3310/pgfar08040](https://doi.org/10.3310/pgfar08040)

## Plain English summary

The ASPIRE research programme, including two cluster RCTs

Programme Grants for Applied Research 2020; Vol. 8: No. 4

DOI: [10.3310/pgfar08040](https://doi.org/10.3310/pgfar08040)

NIHR Journals Library [www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk)

## Plain English summary

Clinical research identifies ways to improve patient care that can help people live longer and better. However, recommendations from research do not always become part of everyday patient care. Providing health-care staff and services with recommendations from clinical guidelines to inform clinical decision-making is often not enough by itself to change how care is delivered. Furthermore, general practice, where 9 out of 10 NHS patient contacts occur, struggles to apply many different guidelines within limited time and resources.

We developed and tested an improvement package to help general practices adapt their care according to one of four guideline recommendations.

We identified recommendations that were most likely to make a real difference to patient care. We measured how closely practices followed these recommendations and found that practices varied a lot. We adapted the package for use in one of four topics: diabetes control, blood pressure control, stroke prevention and 'risky prescribing' (to reduce particular combinations of medicines that may cause harm). We used the play of chance to assign general practices to one package for each topic. We found that only the risky prescribing package improved patient care and provided good value for money. We also found that the improvement packages were often not delivered or used as we had intended, and that professionals found it easier to change some types of clinical practice (e.g. prescribing) than others.

Our findings will inform practical guidance to help general practices improve patient care.



# Programme Grants for Applied Research

ISSN 2050-4322 (Print)

ISSN 2050-4330 (Online)

This journal is a member of and subscribes to the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) ([www.publicationethics.org/](http://www.publicationethics.org/)).

Editorial contact: [journals.library@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:journals.library@nihr.ac.uk)

The full PGfAR archive is freely available to view online at [www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/pgfar](http://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/pgfar). Print-on-demand copies can be purchased from the report pages of the NIHR Journals Library website: [www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk)

## Criteria for inclusion in the *Programme Grants for Applied Research* journal

Reports are published in *Programme Grants for Applied Research* (PGfAR) if (1) they have resulted from work for the PGfAR programme, and (2) they are of a sufficiently high scientific quality as assessed by the reviewers and editors.

## Programme Grants for Applied Research programme

The Programme Grants for Applied Research (PGfAR) programme, part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), was established in 2006 to fund collaborative, multidisciplinary programmes of applied research to solve health and social care challenges. Findings are expected to provide evidence that lead to clear and identifiable patient benefits, in the relatively near future.

PGfAR is researcher led and does not specify topics for research; however, the research must be in an area of priority or need for the NHS and the social care sector of the Department of Health and Social Care, with particular emphasis on health and social care areas that cause significant burden, where other research funders may not be focused, or where insufficient funding is available.

The programme is managed by the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility (CCF) with strategic input from the Programme Director. For more information about the PGfAR programme please visit the website: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/funding-programmes/programme-grants-for-applied-research.htm>

## This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by PGfAR as project number RP-PG-1209-10040. The contractual start date was in December 2014. The final report began editorial review in February 2018 and was accepted for publication in November 2019. As the funder, the PGfAR programme agreed the research questions and study designs in advance with the investigators. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The PGfAR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

This report presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The views and opinions expressed by authors in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NHS, the NIHR, CCF, NETSCC, PGfAR or the Department of Health and Social Care. If there are verbatim quotations included in this publication the views and opinions expressed by the interviewees are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect those of the authors, those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the PGfAR programme or the Department of Health and Social Care.

© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2020. This work was produced by Foy *et al.* under the terms of a commissioning contract issued by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. This issue may be freely reproduced for the purposes of private research and study and extracts (or indeed, the full report) may be included in professional journals provided that suitable acknowledgement is made and the reproduction is not associated with any form of advertising. Applications for commercial reproduction should be addressed to: NIHR Journals Library, National Institute for Health Research, Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre, Alpha House, University of Southampton Science Park, Southampton SO16 7NS, UK.

Published by the NIHR Journals Library ([www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk)), produced by Prepress Projects Ltd, Perth, Scotland ([www.prepress-projects.co.uk](http://www.prepress-projects.co.uk)).

## Editor-in-Chief of *Programme Grants for Applied Research* and NIHR Journals Library

---

**Professor Ken Stein** Professor of Public Health, University of Exeter Medical School, UK

### NIHR Journals Library Editors

---

**Professor John Powell** Chair of HTA and EME Editorial Board and Editor-in-Chief of HTA and EME journals. Consultant Clinical Adviser, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), UK, and Senior Clinical Researcher, Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, University of Oxford, UK

**Professor Andrée Le May** Chair of NIHR Journals Library Editorial Group (HS&DR, PGfAR, PHR journals) and Editor-in-Chief of HS&DR, PGfAR, PHR journals

**Professor Matthias Beck** Professor of Management, Cork University Business School, Department of Management and Marketing, University College Cork, Ireland

**Dr Tessa Crilly** Director, Crystal Blue Consulting Ltd, UK

**Dr Eugenia Cronin** Senior Scientific Advisor, Wessex Institute, UK

**Dr Peter Davidson** Consultant Advisor, Wessex Institute, University of Southampton, UK

**Ms Tara Lamont** Director, NIHR Dissemination Centre, UK

**Dr Catriona McDaid** Senior Research Fellow, York Trials Unit, Department of Health Sciences, University of York, UK

**Professor William McGuire** Professor of Child Health, Hull York Medical School, University of York, UK

**Professor Geoffrey Meads** Professor of Wellbeing Research, University of Winchester, UK

**Professor John Norrie** Chair in Medical Statistics, University of Edinburgh, UK

**Professor James Raftery** Professor of Health Technology Assessment, Wessex Institute, Faculty of Medicine, University of Southampton, UK

**Dr Rob Riemsma** Reviews Manager, Kleijnen Systematic Reviews Ltd, UK

**Professor Helen Roberts** Professor of Child Health Research, UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, UK

**Professor Jonathan Ross** Professor of Sexual Health and HIV, University Hospital Birmingham, UK

**Professor Helen Snooks** Professor of Health Services Research, Institute of Life Science, College of Medicine, Swansea University, UK

**Professor Ken Stein** Professor of Public Health, University of Exeter Medical School, UK

**Professor Jim Thornton** Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Nottingham, UK

**Professor Martin Underwood** Warwick Clinical Trials Unit, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, UK

Please visit the website for a list of editors: [www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/about/editors](http://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/about/editors)

**Editorial contact:** [journals.library@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:journals.library@nihr.ac.uk)