

Pelvic Floor Health Community Session: 22 August, 2023

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Background

The National Institute for Health and Social Care Research (NIHR) currently funds 20 Biomedical Research Centres (BRCs) across England. These are collaborations between world-leading universities and NHS organisations that bring together academics and clinicians to translate lab-based scientific breakthroughs into potential new treatments, diagnostics, and medical technologies. The Imperial BRC is a collaboration between Imperial College, London and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust (ICHT) and is currently funded until November 2027. It has 14 research themes, four of which are cross cutting.

The Imperial Patient Experience Research Centre (PERC) is a core facility of the Imperial BRC undertaking research on research and supporting Imperial BRC researchers to undertake public involvement and engagement in research.

PERC recognises that involving a diverse range of patients and members of the public in research is essential for ensuring that research is relevant, meaningful, and useful for improving healthcare experiences and outcomes for all. PERC is seeking to establish relationships with under-represented and under-served communities in North West London to engage a more diverse range of patients and members of the public in research. By working closely with these communities, PERC seeks to ensure that research is tailored to their specific needs and priorities, and that their voices are heard in healthcare decision-making.

Approach and purpose

EKTA Community is a mental health support group located in Harrow, catering to individuals aged 55 and above. Run entirely by a dedicated committee of volunteers, the group hosts bi-weekly social events featuring activities like yoga and painting. EKTA convenes monthly gatherings, complete with lunch, where members can enjoy informative sessions covering a wide range of topics, from health-related matters to finance and energy management. The group's mission is to offer assistance to South Indian mental health service users residing in Harrow. With a membership of 80 individuals, predominantly elderly residents of Harrow, EKTA plays a crucial role in providing a sense of community, facilitating knowledge exchange, and offering support to combat issues such as loneliness among its members.

In facilitating a previous session with EKTA, feedback forms were used to gather insights on the community's interests in healthcare topics. These forms aimed to understand their preferences and the areas of health research they wished to explore further. After collecting and collating the feedback, we engaged in discussions with community leaders to identify topics of interest. During this process, we decided to focus on pelvic floor health as the next session topic.

A speaker was identified from the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, Katie Webb, a senior physiotherapist with extensive experience in musculoskeletal outpatient care and a specialisation in pelvic health. Katie is deeply committed to enhancing the care of patients with pelvic floor issues, recognising the critical role of physiotherapy in this context.

In addition to her clinical practice, Katie is actively involved in research with the Imperial BRC. She is developing a screening tool for pelvic health problems in neurological diseases, which aims to enhance clinical evaluation and tailor responses to the needs of affected individuals.

Session overview

The session took place on Tuesday 22nd of August 2023, from 11 am to 2 pm at a community hub used by EKTA. The session covered a comprehensive range of topics related to pelvic health and urinary incontinence. Attendees gained insights into:

- the typical care pathways for managing urinary incontinence,
- the role of physiotherapy in assessment and examination
- the impact of lifestyle factors on pelvic health.

The session highlighted the importance of pelvic floor muscles and introduced attendees to pelvic floor muscle exercises as an effective treatment option. Additionally, non-surgical treatment alternatives were discussed, along with an overview of available local services. The session concluded with an exploration of surgical and medical treatment options for urinary incontinence, providing attendees with a thorough understanding of the various approaches to managing this common condition.

Attendees gained a better understanding of these issues and the available local support services. They learned simple exercises to improve pelvic health, with Katie demonstrating both schematics and physical techniques. The session was interactive, with numerous questions from attendees. Additionally, participants learned practical management tools for bladder control and incontinence and were informed about escalating concerns to their GP or seeking support from the specialist team at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust St. Mary's Hospital, serving the Harrow area.

Attendee recruitment

The session was advertised through internal communications within the EKTA group, primarily via email and Whatsapp. The email announcement detailed the upcoming session, which featured a Pelvic Floor Physiotherapist (Katie Webb) from St. Mary's Hospital as the guest speaker. Attendees were also informed about the topics to be covered during the session, including an understanding of pelvic floor muscles, effective management strategies for urinary incontinence, fostering healthy bladder habits, and accessing local services and resources related to pelvic health. The email emphasised the importance of addressing urinary incontinence without embarrassment, as it is a common issue.

Outcome of Session

Attendee numbers

45 members of the public, primarily from the Harrow area and belonging to the EKTA community group attended the session. For detailed demographic information about these attendees who also provided feedback, please refer to **Appendix 3**. Additionally, pictures of the event can be seen in **Appendix 4**.

Feedback on the session

Following the session, attendees were requested to provide feedback by completing a handwritten form (see **Appendix 1**). A total of 37 feedback forms were completed, the summarised contents of which are provided with further details available in **Appendix 2**.

Promoting the Imperial BRC and widening the reach of Imperial BRC community engagement

Those interested in staying informed about further public involvement and engagement opportunities associated with the Imperial BRC were encouraged to sign up to PERC's mailing list.

Katie, a BRC-funded researcher, has established a rapport with the community and was welcomed back for future discussions or research collaborations. This relationship is founded on reciprocity and trust, emphasizing mutual benefit and ongoing engagement.

Raising awareness of pelvic floor health

Attendees verbally described the session as 'informative and educational, providing valuable insights into pelvic floor health and urinary incontinence.' Additionally, feedback forms from some community members mentioned that they gained knowledge on self-care and prioritising their well-being. In the feedback forms, 68% of attendees rated the event as 'Excellent,' while 27% rated it as 'Good.'

The most common key highlights were as follows:

- **Pelvic Floor Health and Exercise:** The session emphasised the importance of pelvic floor health and various exercises to improve bladder control and manage urinary problems.
- **Bladder Control:** Attendees highlighted the significance of learning about bladder control, including exercises and lifestyle factors that affect bladder function.
- **Comprehensive Approach to Health:** Attendees appreciated the holistic approach to health discussed in the session, which included topics such as exercise, diet, bowel movements, and spine health in relation to pelvic health and bladder control.

The most popular healthcare topics for future sessions were:

- Arthritis
- Depression
- Prostate health

Please see **Appendix 2** for more detailed information.

Appendix 1: Feedback form

Imperial College London

**FEEDBACK FORM -
Pelvic Health session - 22nd
August 2023**

1. How would you rate your experience at this event? (please circle)



2. What was the key highlight from this session?

3. What other healthcare topics would you like to hear about at future sessions?

I am also happy to share my...

age...	No, thanks <input type="checkbox"/>	Sure, it's: <input type="text"/>
ethnicity...	No, thanks <input type="checkbox"/>	Sure, it's: <input type="text"/>
gender...	No, thanks <input type="checkbox"/>	Sure, it's: <input type="text"/>
postcode... (first section only)	No, thanks <input type="checkbox"/>	Sure, it's: <input type="text"/>

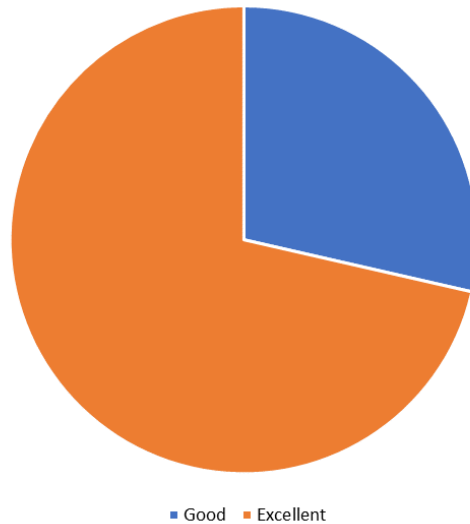
Interested in hearing about future opportunities to hear about healthcare topics? Ask us how!

Appendix 2: Attendee feedback

The session was attended by 45 members of the public of which 37 completed feedback forms (N=37).

How would you rate your experience at this event?

Out of the 37 feedback forms returned, 68% (n=25/37) rated the event as "Excellent," while 27% (n=10/37) rated it as "Good."



What was the key highlight from this session?

The key highlight from this session is the emphasis on pelvic health, covering a range of related topics:

- **Bladder control:** Strategies for maintaining bladder control.
- **Exercise:** Exercise was highlighted as a key component in managing urine control and overall pelvic health.
- **Drinks and bladder:** How certain drinks can impact bladder function.
- **Urine problems:** Various issues related to urine function and management.
- **Pelvic floor exercise and muscle health:** Participants were educated on pelvic floor exercises and muscle strengthening techniques.
- **Incontinence and pelvic problems:** Concerns regarding incontinence and other pelvic issues.
- **Medication options:** Potential medication options for managing pelvic health.
- **Diet, exercise, and spine health:** The relationship between diet, exercise, bowel movements, and spine health.
- **Self-care:** Importance of self-care and looking after one's health, particularly related to pelvic health.
- **Pelvic management:** Strategies for effectively managing pelvic health concerns.

- **Bladder exercises:** Specific exercises targeted at bladder health and control.

What other healthcare topics would you like to hear about at the future sessions?

Cardiovascular Health

- Heart
- Stroke
- Cholesterol
- High blood pressure

Diet and Lifestyle

- Constipation
- Intestine problems
- Food and nutrition
- Diet

Mental Health

- Memory
- Depression
- Anxiety

Respiratory Health

- Lungs
- Breathing problems
- Respiratory health

Prostate Health

- Prostate cancer

Arthritis and Related Conditions

- Arthritis
- Fibromyalgia
- Spine management

Sleep Management

- Insomnia
- Sleep management

Others

- Fatigue
- Sickle Cell Anaemia

Appendix 3: Attendee demographics

Table 1: Demographic characteristics provided in feedback forms (N=37)

Characteristics	n(%)
Age (in years)	
Mean (range)	
Age groups (in years)	72.5
50-55	0
55-65	4(11%)
66-74	6(16%)
75-84	5(14%)
Prefer not to say	22(59%)
Gender	
Female	13(35%)
Male	12(32%)
Prefer not to say	12(32%)
Ethnic group	
Indian	34(92%)
Prefer not to say	3(8%)
Postcode (first section only)	
HA1	2 (5%)
HA2	5(14%)
HA3	7(19%)
HA5	1(3%)
HA7	2(5%)
HA8	3(8%)
NW9	1(3%)
UB8	1(3%)

Appendix 4: Photos

This is a selection of photos taken at the Pelvic Health session on the 22nd of August 2023.



