



Imperial College
Academic Health
Science Centre
Improving Patient Care

Physiotherapist

Research
Careers
Case Study



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RESEARCH: UNDERSTANDING AND DELIVERING SAFE AND EFFECTIVE PHYSIOTHERAPY REHABILITATION TREATMENTS FOR PATIENTS WITH CRITICAL ILLNESS

How did you get into research?

As a clinician, it was through involvement with things such as audit and service improvement that I found I got the most job satisfaction. I found it really exciting to work on a project with the overall aim of making a difference to patient care in some way. This led me to apply for the HEE/NIHR MRes studentship which I then completed. During this time I learnt a huge amount about the research process and was able to complete my own research project, all of which drew me into the research world.

What do you enjoy about research?

For me it's about stepping back, looking at the bigger picture and knowing that the overall purpose of your research is to try to improve things for patients step by step. It's important and exciting to explore how we can develop the interventions we provide for patients.

What was the most difficult aspect of doing your PhD?

It was very challenging when your progress seems slow and solving one problem seems to bring up several more. It is difficult to be resilient in these times, but the key is taking a longer-term view and working with your supervisors to address these issues.

What difference has your research training and experience made to your career?

It has completely transformed the direction that my career is taking. I am convinced of the importance of clinicians being informed by evidence-based practice and also of front-line clinicians being key in delivering research projects that directly impact practice and improve patient outcomes. Additionally, I have also gained many transferable skills, including, problem-solving and project management. The training I completed with my MRes and PhD meant that I could also broaden the scope of career possibilities available to me.

How has research changed your clinical practice?

Research has transformed my practice by helping me to focus on the clinical problems that matter most to patients. It has also helped me to focus on evidence-based strategies that have the most impact in addressing these problems.

What has made a difference to progressing your research career?

Research is always a team effort and I think it is only possible to progress if you get good support, supervision and mentorship around you from the start. It's also really useful to make contact with other experts in your field to get their feedback on your ideas. A good support group also helped me to be resilient when there were inevitably set-backs and delays.

Where do you see your clinical academic career going over the next five years?

Having recently completed my PhD, I hope to continue to progress along the clinical academic pathway. It would be great to carry out more research that builds on my PhD, which is relevant to and has a direct impact upon clinical practice. I would also like to be able to encourage and assist others to develop their research capacity and ideas.

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