A Life Course approach to Women’s Health Research

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Hywel Dda University Health Board
Research Time Award
1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026
Introduction

• 20 years as a doctor
• Consultant in Community Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare, Lead Menopause Service, FSRH VP, Quality
• MSc in Public Health, LSHTM 2008-2009
• 2022 0.1WTE Research Role, HDUHB
• Supported to apply for Research Time Award
Achievements – NIHR PRU

- NIHR Reproductive Health PRU. (£3million, 01/01/24- 31/12/2026)
- Set-up as part of the Women’s Health Strategy
- Co-applicant role (5%) to co-lead the ‘Menstrual Health and Menopause’ theme of work.
- [https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news/nihr-awards-over-100-million-to-new-policy-research-units/34031](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news/nihr-awards-over-100-million-to-new-policy-research-units/34031)
Achievements - Reproductive Health PRU

- To provide high-quality research to help policymakers make evidence-informed decisions about reproductive health.
- Support the DHSC requests for evidence summaries and new research.
- Co-production of outputs with experts by experience.
- Opportunities to share and support ongoing research in Women’s Health in Wales because of my involvement in this PRU with significant cross-over between the women’s health policy in England and Wales.
Achievements- CONNECT

• CONNECT Study NIHR (£1 million, 24 months) The CONNECT study - University of Birmingham

• This research project aims to understand the impact of remote consultations in sexual and reproductive health services on health inequalities

• Co-develop recommendations for the provision of inclusive and patient led consultations.

• Co-applicant (5%) leading on data collection from Wales
Achievements- ESTEEM

• Joint lead applicant (15%) with Prof. Mike Robling on ESTEEM: Evaluating the clinical and cost-effectiveness of Testosterone to improve Menopause-related quality of life

• NIHR Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Programme, 22/170

• 51 month multi-centre, double-blind RCT (£2.6 million)

• Stage 2 application reached
Achievements- HPV Self-Sampling

• Bevan Exemplar Cohort 8
• Project: to develop and pilot a shared decision making tool to support HPV self-sampling
• July 2023 HDUHB patient survey 4,624 respondents
  • 81% heard of HPV
  • 43% NOT aware HPV was part of cervical screening
  • 64% would choose HPV self-sample at home
HPV self sampling: survey results

- Key barriers to accessing cervical smear test currently
  - Embarrassment
  - Uncomfortable, painful
  - Disability prevents access
  - Work/life/family prevent attending
- Creating a SDM tool to help
  - Understand the purpose of the test
  - Build confidence in the test accuracy
  - Improve communication about screening
  - Offer choice
- Qualitative piece or work on responses
- Create a series of short videos to field test

“Would prefer a doctor doing a comprehensive test”

“Worried incase I did it incorrectly”

“Prefer to know that sample has been taken by a professional”

“I would like to do it every year if the self-test was available”

“I’d do both- you can’t be too safe”
Next Steps- HPV self-sampling

• NIHR 23/106: The use of HPV self-sampling within the cervical screening programme
• UK wide application; England, Wales and Scotland
• PI for Wales bringing a team together to design a study, implement within current screening programme
Next Steps - Other Projects

- Working with Swansea University and SAIL databank
- The peri-menopause and menopause and cardiovascular risk
- Patient survey initially

- Working with Aberystwyth University Department of Life Science
- Longitudinal Study looking at impact of Hormone Replacement Therapy and Physical Activity during the peri-menopause and menopause
Future Plans

• Building resilience: Health and Care Research Wale Research for Patient and Public Benefit (RfPPB) Wales Application; “Understanding the experiences of those having a contraceptive intra-uterine device (IUD) fitted to co-produce effective decision support tools to reduce pain”. Plan to re-submit in 2024

• Continue to build networks across Wales to support Women’s Health Research
Questions

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