

# ReSurgEnT Final Report

Title: Developing a medical work force to design and conduct trials to improve evidence-based practice: a case study of surgical Trainee Research Collaboratives (TRC) and a stakeholder workshop [N86]

Short Title: Research on Surgeon Engagement in Trials (ReSurgEnT)

## Applicants

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## Aims and Objectives

The **aims** were:

- 1) To identify and understand the key strategies leading to successful trial conduct by surgical TRCs
- 2) To synthesise these findings to develop strategies to:
  - a) Enhance clinician engagement in trials across other clinical specialties
  - b) Inform clinician post-graduate research methods training

To address these aims the **objectives** were to:

- 1) Investigate trainees and trialists experiences of participating in surgical trials, including barriers and facilitators, using observation of trial and TRC meetings and semi-structured interviews.
- 2) Synthesise the research findings for co-applicants to review and tailor for objective 3).
- 3) Utilise a one-day stakeholder workshop of a broad group of trialists and clinicians to discuss the results and develop strategies to address aims 2 a) and b).

## Achievements of the project

We fully met the aims and objectives by:

- 1) Observing four TRC meetings and one National TRC meeting. We conducted 32 interviews across 12 TRCs including: 17 trainee surgeons at different stages (2 at CT2, 1 at ST4, 3 at ST5, 4 at ST6, 4 at ST7 and 3 at ST8). We also interviewed 5 consultant surgeons, 3 research nurses, and 7 Clinical Trial Unit methodologists with experience of TRC research. Observation notes and interview transcripts were analysed using Thematic Analysis. Four main themes were derived: motivations

for trainees to engage with trials, the perceived benefits of TRCs, challenges to TRCs and trainee engagement, and overcoming these challenges.

We collaborated with Mr Nick Heywood and the North West TRC to conduct the ReSurEnT online survey of attitudes to surgical Trainee-Led Research Collaboratives. There were 73 respondents across 11 Deaneries including trainees who had or had not engaged with TRCs. The key findings were that the collaboratives are valued but there is uncertainty around issues such as corporate authorship that potentially hinder engagement.

2) Firstly reviewing research findings (study co-applicants and researcher Clare Clement). These results were used to produce a guidance document with strategies which could potentially enhance trainee engagement in research. Strategies were grouped under four headings; TRC organisation and conduct of research, wider facilitation of TRCs and trainee-led research, TRC publications and authorship, and trainee research skills development.

3) Holding a one-day stakeholder workshop on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the Royal College of Surgeons in London which included consultant and trainee surgeons, CTU methodologists, research nurses and a Clinical Research Network Director (CRN) with interests and expertise in TRC research. Research findings and the strategies guidance document were presented by the team, including the ReSurEnT survey by Nick Heywood, and discussed by the group. The five most important TRC engagement strategies were identified by the stakeholder group.

## Outputs and implementation

### Existing outputs:

- 1) Oral presentation at Society for Clinical Trials conference in Portland, USA in May 2018 by Athene Lane.
- 2) Abstract in *Clinical Trials* 2018, 15 (2) A62: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1740774518790846>.

### Future outputs and implementation:

- 1) Publication of TRC strategies guidance document by the co-applicants, researchers and stakeholder meeting group members. Planned submission to BMJ.
- 2) Publication of qualitative findings and wider implications of trainee engagement in trials, including the ReSurEnT survey. Planned submission to *Trials*.
- 3) Presentation of the ReSurEnT survey results at the National Research Collaborative Meeting by Nick Heywood in Manchester on December 7<sup>th</sup> 2018. These results informed the topic of the NCRM debate on whether all collaborative research should be published under corporate authorship.
- 4) Submissions for oral presentation to the International Clinical Trials Methodology Conference, Brighton, October 2019 and the Society of Clinical Trials, New Orleans, May 2019.
- 5) HTMR Trial Conduct Working Group Webinar on ReSurEnT study and results by Clare Clement, spring 2019 (agreed at Trial Conduct Working Group meeting 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018).
- 6) Presentation and discussion of the role of CTUs in TRCs and trainee engagement at the UKCRC Registered CTU Directors meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019 (to be discussed with Professor Julia Brown).
- 7) Discussions with West of England CRN Co-Director about the TRC facilitator role recently started by West Midlands CRN and if that could be taken forward in West of England CRN.