

Identifying barriers to the undertaking research by junior doctors; an Observational study

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This study aims to identify barriers experienced by junior doctors (JDs) to undertaking research within University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust (UHP-NHST).

Methods:

582 JDs within UHP-NHST received a survey on past and future research; focusing on demographic data and barriers and enablers to research.

Findings:

33% of UHP-NHST (190) JDs responded. Registrars (ST3+) were the largest group of respondents.

58% of respondents were involved in research during medical school, 76% of these continued during training. The desire to participate in future research was high: 72%; 62% would prefer to 'create...own study'. Radiology trainees, Foundation doctors and Surgical trainees had the highest desire to undertake research (75%, 74% and 74%) whereas Paediatric and GP trainees had lowest desire (50%, 58%). 11/190 were O&G trainees; 55% had research experience and 73% expressed a desire for future research. In assessing drivers, 'portfolio requirement' and/or 'tick box exercise' were primary drivers: 46%. Genuine interest was secondary: 39%.

64% reported experiencing barriers to research, most commonly lack of time (45%), lack of knowledge of research methodology (34%) and resource scarcity (31%). These themes showed no significant correlation to the medical school, career stage, and specialty. 'More time for research' and 'support from supervisors and R&D department' were the most significant enablers (39%; 27%).

Conclusion:

This study demonstrates a desire to undertake research, but barriers preventing research were faced in 64%. Permitting JDs time for research, providing engaged supervisors and education on research methodology is recommended to optimise research opportunities for doctors.