

Update from ConDuCT-II

January 2015

MRC

Hubs for Trials
Methodology Research

ConDuCT-II Hub

Introducing ConDuCT-II (Collaboration and innovation for Difficult and Complex randomised controlled Trials In Invasive procedures)

Led by Professor Jane Blazeby and based within the School of Social and Community Medicine at the University of Bristol, ConDuCT-II was launched on 1st April 2014. Building on the achievements of the original ConDuCT Hub (2009-2014), the aim is to develop the new Hub into a world class centre of excellence for high-quality, cutting-edge methodological research of relevance to pragmatic randomised controlled trials (RCTs) in general, but with a particular focus on the needs of RCTs in surgery. There are four interlinked research themes:

- (1) Prioritisation and trial design for cost-effectiveness analysis.
- (2) Integrative and dynamic research methods to optimise recruitment to RCTs.
- (3) Improving feasibility study designs and trial conduct to enhance trials.
- (4) Outcomes in RCTs: assessment, reporting and integration in decision-making.

Workshops

Nicky Welton (Theme 1 co-lead) organised a hub network funded workshop on “Efficient methods for calculating the Value of Information (VOI)”. VOI analyses provide an objective method for informing the decision of which studies to fund and how best to design those studies, however, they can be very computationally demanding. This workshop explored meta-modelling techniques to improve computation time, with presentations from Mark Strong (Sheffield), Gianluca Baio (UCL), Chris Jackson (Cambridge), Fasihul Alum (South Wales), Malcolm Price (Birmingham), Jason Madan (Warwick) and Nicky Welton (Bristol).

Jane Blazeby (Themes 3 and 4 co-lead) co-ran an invited workshop on “Methodology in surgical trials” at the Society for Clinical Trials conference in Philadelphia in May 2014.



Selected Grants and Awards

Joanna Thorn received an MRC Network of Hubs for Trial Methodology Research grant to investigate the identification of items for inclusion in a standardised resource-use measure.

Nicky Welton and colleagues were awarded an MRC Methodology Research Panel grant in collaboration with Pfizer to develop Model Based Network Meta-Analysis for Pharmacometrics and Drug-Development.

Elsa Marques and colleagues were awarded an NIHR Research for Patient Benefit grant to investigate the choice between hip prosthetic bearing surfaces in total hip replacement in terms of effectiveness and cost-effectiveness from an NHS perspective.

Jane Blazeby was an invited keynote speaker at the Swedish Surgical Week in Karlstad, August 2014.

Angus McNair's poster on the development of a core outcome set for trials in colorectal cancer surgery won best research poster at the Tripartite colorectal conference in Birmingham, 2014.



PhD Student News

Congratulations to Natalie Blencowe who was awarded her PhD (NIHR funded) on complexity of surgical intervention in RCTs, supervised by Nicola Mills and Jane Blazeby.

Lucy Beasant began her PhD (Hub network funded) on treatment preference in paediatric randomised controlled trials, supervised by Nicola Mills and Esther Crawley.

Rhiannon Macefield began a PhD (University of Bristol funded) on methods to assess surgical site infection, supervised by Jane Blazeby and Kerry Avery.



Selected Publications

The intellectual challenges and emotional consequences of equipoise contributed to the fragility of recruitment in six randomized controlled trials. Donovan JL, de Salis I, Toerien M, Paramasiva S, Hamdy FC, Blazeby JM. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 2014. 67(8):912-20

Training recruiters to randomized trials to facilitate recruitment and informed consent by exploring patients' treatment preferences. Mills N, Blazeby JM, Hamdy FC, Neal DE, Campbell B, Wilson C, Paramasivan S, Donovan JL. *Trials* 2014. 15:323

Keep it simple? Predicting primary health care costs with clinical morbidity measures. Brilleman SL, Gravelle H, Hollinghurst S, Purdy S, Salisbury C, Windmeijer F. *Journal of Health Economics* 2014. 35:109-22

Expected Value of Sample Information for Multi-arm Cluster Randomised Trials with Binary Outcomes. Welton NJ, Madan JJ, Caldwell DM, Peters TJ, Ades AE. *Medical Decision Making* 2014. 34(3):352-65