**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH NETWORK TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HEALTHCARE POLICY**

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**Background:**

Practice-based research networks (PBRNs) are useful tools for conducting studies in busy primary care settings and improving the quality of patient care. In partnership with the Ireland East Hospital Group, UCD School of Medicine has established a PBRN to carry out a programme of research to enhance integration between primary and secondary care, which we aim to describe in this paper.

**Methodology:**

Stage 1 involved a cross-sectional survey of general practitioners (GPs) in the Ireland East region to identify priority areas for research. A 34-item online questionnaire was sent to 430 GPs in the Ireland East region examining priority areas of research and enhancing integration at the GP–Hospital interface.

Stage 2 involved the recruitment of practices to be involved in the UCD / Ireland East PBRN. Sixty-five practices were invited to submit an expression of interest to participate in four demonstration projects.

**Results:**

One hundred and sixteen GPs participated in the cross-sectional survey. GPs identified four priority research areas: GP hospital links, COVID-19, cardiovascular disease and direct access to diagnostic imaging. GPs thought that an intervention to improve communication would most enhance integration between primary and secondary care. Twenty-two practices indicated an interest in being involved in the PRBN, with 10-14 practices currently participating in four initial demonstration projects.

**Conclusions:**

The UCD / Ireland East PBRN allows a strong focus on developing and evaluating new approaches to integrated care to consistently and sustainably impact on policy and patient care.

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