

# Research in mental health in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Clinical Research Network (NICRN) undertakes research in mental health throughout Northern Ireland. The NICRN is part of a UK-wide initiative to provide opportunities for patients and clinicians to participate in high-quality clinical research.

The NICRN aims to:

- promote research in mental health within Northern Ireland;
- attract clinical trials in mental health to Northern Ireland;
- conduct clinical trials across Northern Ireland to the highest standards of quality and safety;
- provide infrastructure to facilitate the start-up of new trials in medications and social and psychological interventions for patients with mental health issues;
- improve access for patients suffering from mental health issues to new cutting-edge treatments.

## What can the NICRN offer me?

As a patient or carer:

- Information on current and planned research within the arena of mental health across Northern Ireland.
- Access to the highest standards of clinical care within well-controlled trials of new developments in the diagnosis, treatment and management of mental health conditions.
- Opportunities to help define the direction of mental health research in Northern Ireland.

As a clinical researcher:

- A regionally inclusive approach to clinical trials and other high-quality research in mental health.
- Support from a regional coordinating centre.
- Access to skilled, multidisciplinary research staff dedicated specifically to NICRN activity.
- Provision of HSC service support costs from HSC Research and Development division funds.
- Access to national training and education programmes.
- Collaboration opportunities with researchers across 11 NICRN clinical interest groups and national networks.
- Liaison with pharmaceutical or biotech industry partners.

The NICRN comprises 11 regional interest groups, all headed by prominent specialist clinicians with a proven track record in clinical research.

## NICRN (Mental Health)

The NICRN (Mental Health) exists to improve the health and wellbeing of service users and their families.

We will support clinical trials and other studies in:

- child and adolescent mental health;
- intellectual disability;
- adult and old age psychiatry.

Areas of interest include trials of new treatments and complex interventions.

## The NICRN

High-quality clinical research is vital if we are to improve the evidence base that underpins the delivery of Health and Social Care. Well-managed and controlled clinical trials make an important contribution to that evidence base and improve the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management of illness and disease.

Successful clinical research depends on the willingness of patients to participate in clinical trials. Patients participating in clinical research can be assured they will receive the best possible standard of clinical care and their safety and wellbeing will be protected at all times.

Clinical trials may be instigated by industry, such as pharmaceutical companies or manufacturers of medical devices. Similarly, trials may be developed and led by hospital or university-based health professionals. In all cases, the aim is to find ways to deliver better treatments for patients. In line with this, the NICRN portfolio consists of both industry-led and investigator-led trials.

## Contact us

Patients or clinical researchers wishing to find out more about the work of the NICRN should contact the NICRN coordinating centre (CC). We will try to respond to any enquiries quickly and efficiently and, if appropriate, refer you on to other network staff.

### **Please feel free to contact us by any of the following means:**

Dr Paul Biagioni, NICRN CC manager  
[paul.biagioni@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:paul.biagioni@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

Prof Gerry Leavey  
[g.leavey@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:g.leavey@ulster.ac.uk)

Dr Ciaran Mulholland  
[c.c.mulholland@qub.ac.uk](mailto:c.c.mulholland@qub.ac.uk)

Barbara McArthur, NICRN Mental Health administrative officer  
[ba.mcarthur@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:ba.mcarthur@ulster.ac.uk)

### **Interest group coordinators**

For further information or to contact us, please email:  
[info.nicrn@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:info.nicrn@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

Alternatively you can visit:  
[www.nicrn.hscni.net](http://www.nicrn.hscni.net)



**Public Health Agency**  
4th Floor, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.  
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate) [www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)



Clinical research in

Mental  
Health

How to be involved