

Strategies for translational research in the UK

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A commentary published in the journal, *Science Translational Medicine*, examines the structures of translational research investment in the UK.

The commentary has been written by researchers from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) comprehensive Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) at Guy's and St Thomas' and King's College London. The authors consider the results of substantial Government and charitable investment in translational research taking place within the NHS.

The commentary follows the progress of the research and development funding streams available through the NIHR. The NIHR was set up in 2006 to ensure that the highest quality research takes place within an NHS setting and that patients have the opportunity to take part.

The authors write that the NIHR Biomedical Research Centres and Biomedical Research Units, which bring together NHS hospitals and academic partners, "have created a tangible focus on translational research in the UK and an efficient interface" for scientists and clinicians to work together for the benefit of patients.

Professor Graham Lord, Deputy Director of the comprehensive BRC at Guy's and St Thomas' and King's College London, and the senior author of the paper, said: "The research centres provide a means of coordinating and producing a coherent research strategy that is focused on delivering more rapid benefits for patients."

The strategy at this centre has involved a strong focus on translational research training and career development, interdisciplinary working between clinicians and scientists working in different disease areas and disciplines, public and patient engagement, investment in leading-edge facilities and technologies, and engagement with industry. The centre underpins the work of King's Health Partners, one of only five Academic Health Sciences Centres.

The authors conclude that "in a relatively short time frame, much has been achieved in terms of establishing a cutting-edge UK translational research infrastructure" which has great potential for wealth generation. Furthermore, the UK has seen a substantial increase in the number of clinical studies taking place within the NHS over the last five years and the number of patients involved in the quest to find improved diagnostic tests and treatments for a wide range of medical conditions.

Provided by King's College London

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