

Integrated Training posts for the coalface GP doing primary care research

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Background

There is no career pathway for the busy clinically active General Practitioner (GP) interested in research delivery. In addition, academic GPs represent only 8% of the UK clinical academic workforce¹, which also needs to increase. The Government's vision² is to increase and embed research in the NHS and the General Medical Council's objective is to normalise research and promote all doctors to be research-aware and research-active³.

CRN Wessex designed and piloted six general practice research fellowship posts. The evaluation of four of these is described below. These were the Portfolio GP Research posts for qualified GPs. The remaining two research fellowship posts were set within GP vocational training. Together these posts form a career pathway and programme for the clinically active GP.

Approach

The four "Portfolio GP Research posts" were advertised to fully qualified GPs and offered three to five sessions a week. The job plan was dovetailed to each GP's work pattern and included:

Wessex Research Hubs Two consecutive sessions

Two sessions on one day to contribute to research delivery from the Hub most convenient to the Fellow's location.

Sessional supervision was provided by the Hub staff

Primary Care Research GP Remainder of sessions (1-3)

Learning from and contributing to research delivery at an established research active GP practice.

Sessional supervision as well as regular monthly meeting(s) with the named Research GP Supervisor from the practice

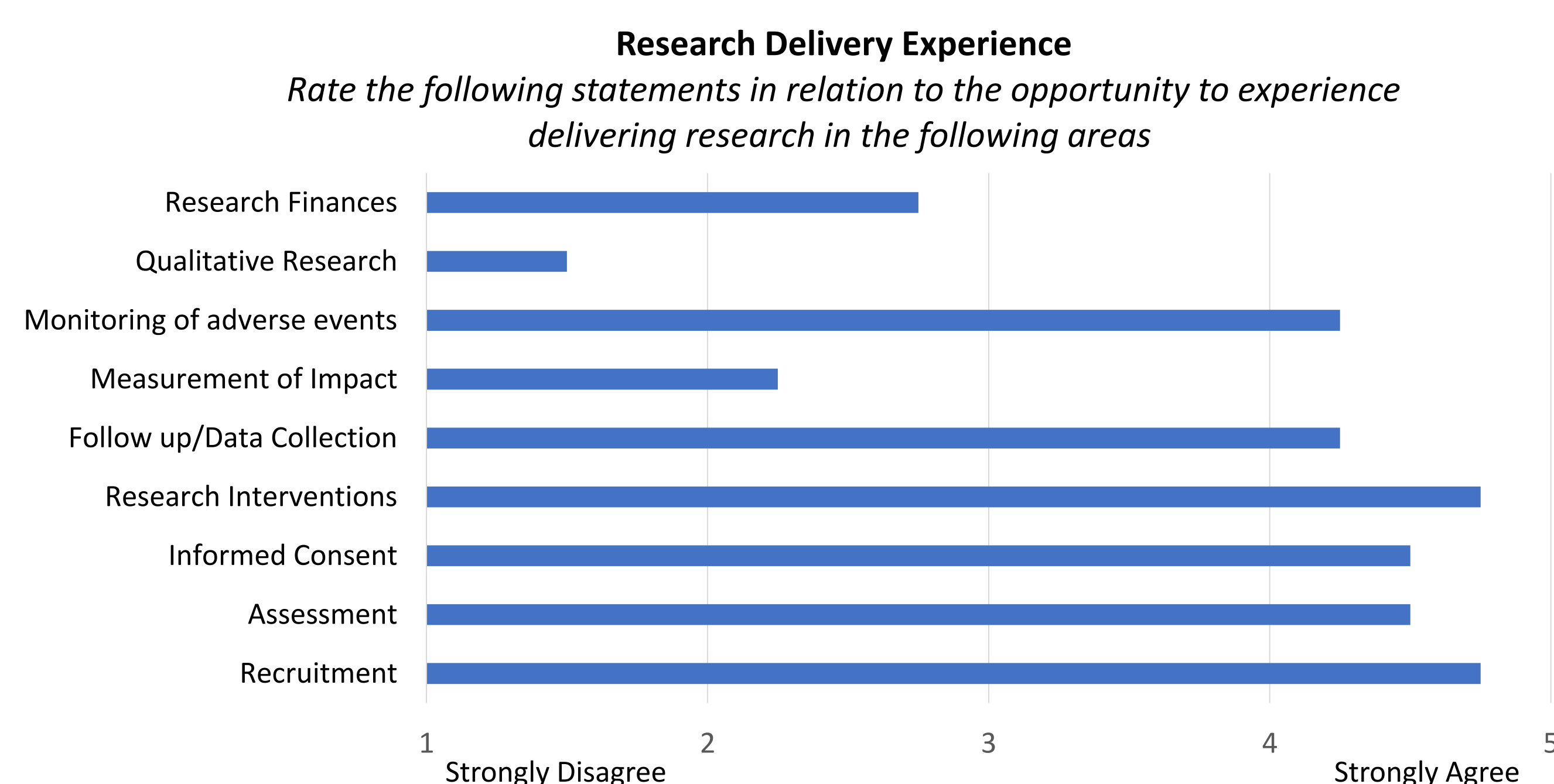
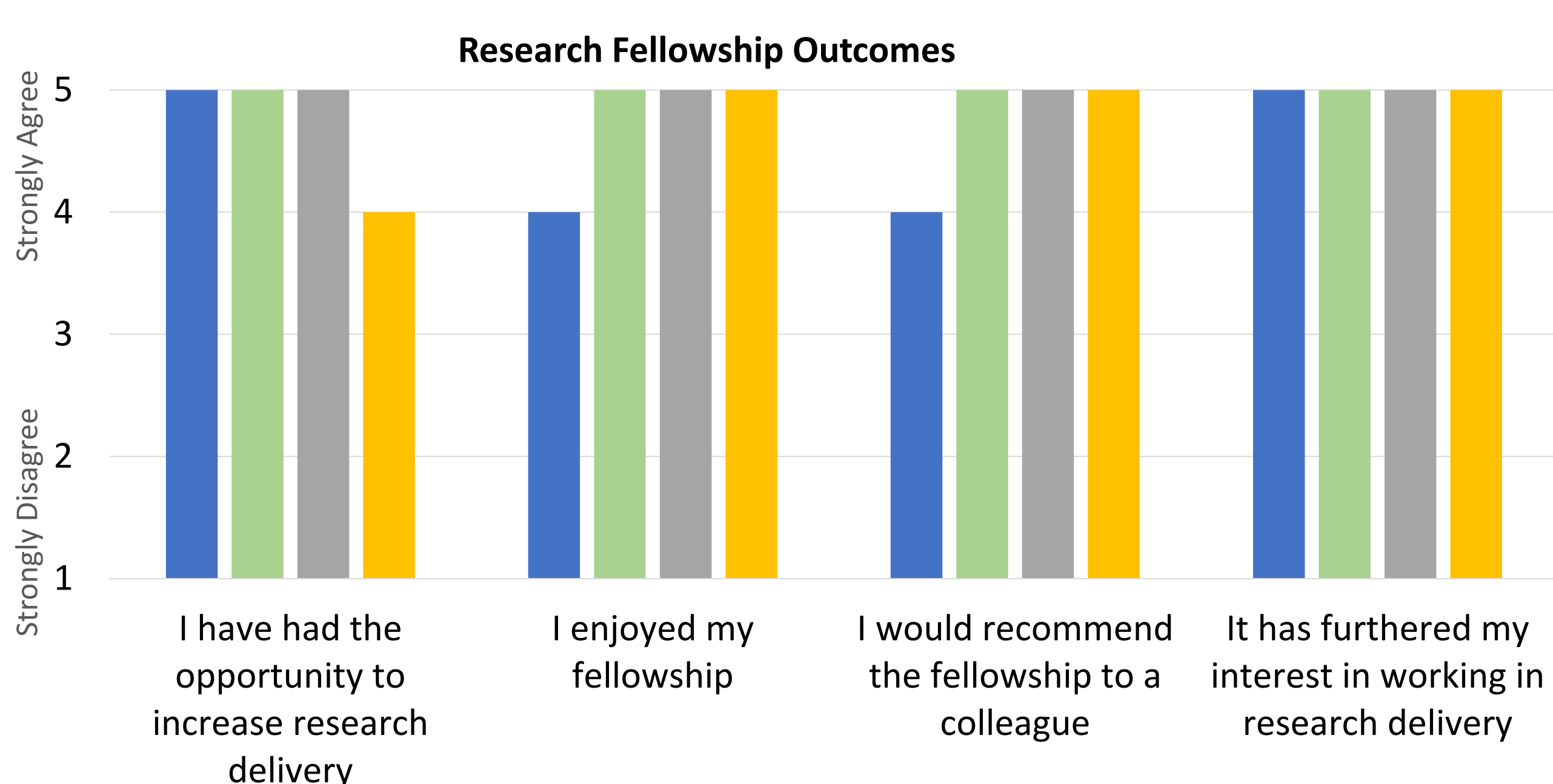
Academic Education & Mentoring

Monthly academic programme to increase awareness and provide an overview of different aspects of primary care research (time in lieu of GP research sessions)

Lead Academic supervisor with individual mentors for each fellow to meet monthly

Outcomes

- The four Portfolio GP Research fellows have been in post since April 2023, each choosing three sessions
- All fellows have completed GCP training, with academic and GP supervision, academic education and participation in research activity
- A survey was undertaken, the responses were positive.
- All fellows agreed they had enjoyed the fellowship, gained research experience, would recommend the fellowship and that it had furthered their interest in working in research delivery.
- Linked to new Innovative GP Vocational Training Posts for research in CRN Wessex they create a career pathway for the clinically active GP.



Examples of positive experiences

- "having dedicated time to focus on improving your knowledge"
- "increasing the number of studies within the GP practice"
- "mentorship from my academic mentor"

Areas for improvement

- "Increase understanding of governance, such as adverse events"
- "Would like to understand the finances in more detail"
- "Hands on experience of qualitative research"

Implications

The GP Research fellow posts provide research delivery, as well as research education and experience for the busy GP in primary care. Replicated nationally these posts can help embed research into usual NHS care and increase research delivery in the primary care setting.

References

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Summary

These innovative research fellowships cut across sectors by bringing together primary care research experience from academic centres, general practice and research hubs. Linked with vocational training placements they form a research career pathway for the clinically active GP.