

British Neurosurgical Trainee Research Collaborative

BNTRC 

Advancing Research through Collaboration

British Neurosurgical Trainee Research Collaborative:
a proposed framework for its development

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1. Introduction – some facts about trainee research networks

- Trainee collaborative networks have recently attracted considerable interest.
- Trainee networks have a number of advantages for trainees (excellent grounding in clinical research methodology, enhancement of CV), clinical research and ultimately our patients.
- Trainee networks can facilitate the participation of all trainees in worthwhile research projects regardless of whether one undertakes out of programme research or not.
- The general surgical trainees have shown that trainee networks can work
 - The West Midlands Research Collaborative <http://www.wmresearch.org.uk/> was set up by a group of surgical registrars with the support of Professor Dion Morton (Professor of Surgery, University of Birmingham) in 2008
 - The WMRC is now involved in three multi-centre randomised trials and three multi-centre cohort studies
 - Of these, the ROSSINI trial (comparison of a wound-edge protection device with standard care in patients undergoing elective and emergency laparotomy), which is run by registrars ‘from the ground’, is considered a success story as it managed to secure funding from the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit (NIHR RfPB) programme and completed recruitment 2 months ahead of schedule.
- The National General Surgical Research Collaborative has just rolled out its first UK-wide multi-centre prospective cohort study (multicentre audit of outcomes following appendicectomy).
- Trainee networks are the foundation of a new £2 million RCSEng initiative which aims to support surgical trials.

2. The case for a British Neurosurgical Trainee Research Collaborative (BNTRC)

- With a little planning and co-ordination, a group of motivated neurosurgical trainees can undertake the same research in multiple units nationally

- This will allow one person's research idea to become a credible piece of evidence to contribute to the literature.
- British neurosurgery represents a unique opportunity for the development of a similar nation-wide trainee research collaborative network
 - Long tradition of collaboration that has resulted in a number of high-quality randomised multi-centre randomised trials
 - There are a number of academic departments around the UK, whose research activities provide comprehensive coverage of the breadth and depth of neurosurgical subspecialties.
- This model will produce a sizeable cohort of registrars and consultants who will be actively engaged with collaborative multi-centre research studies, even though they will not necessarily be 'academic' neurosurgeons in the strict sense. In turn, this will help to ensure improved care and outcomes for our patients.

3. Key targets for success

- The trainee network will aim to be comprehensive with respect to representation of all neurosurgical subspecialties and representation of neurosurgical units in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.
- Open to all trainees who are committed to a neurosurgical career.
- It will aim to work closely with the SBNS research facilitation office and the Academic Committee of the SBNS.
- Clear authorship policies will have to be agreed for individual studies in advance, based on a common principle.

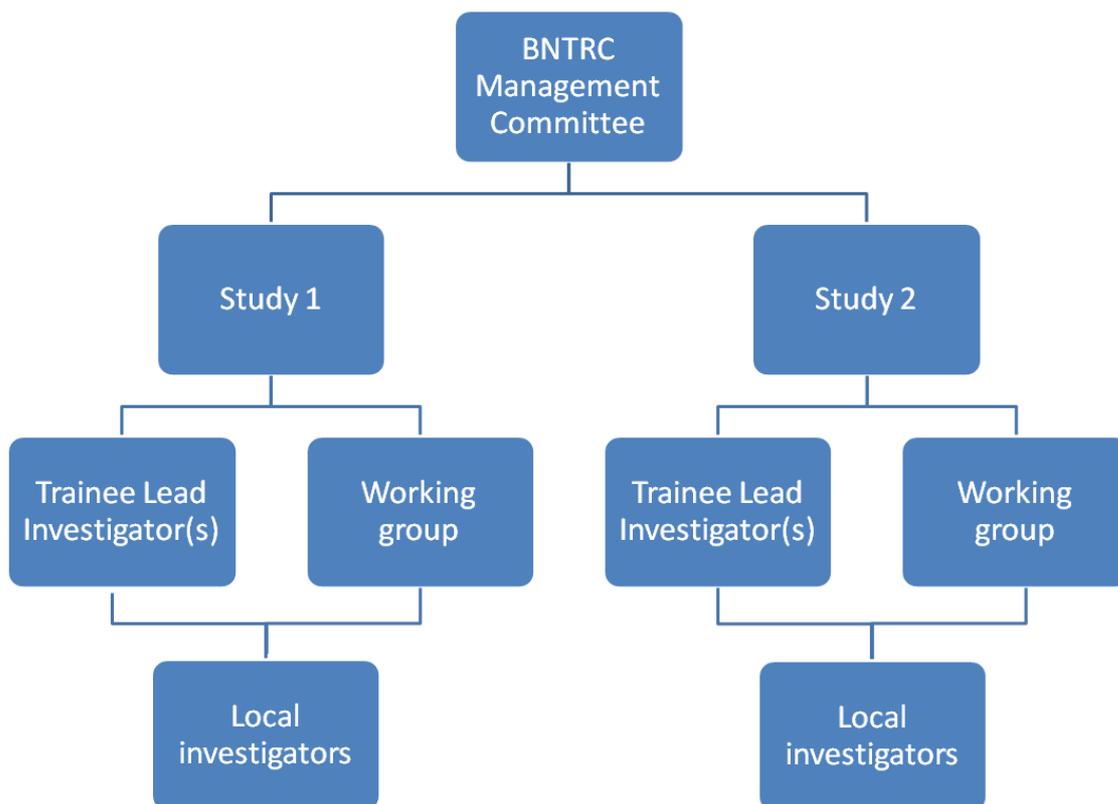
4. Where to go from here – some thoughts

- For our first study, we should choose a topic that trainees have significant clinical exposure to

- General surgical trainees opted for an appendicectomy audit for their first national study
 - This will make patient recruitment and data collection easier
 - A successful first study should aim to enthuse trainees, Consultants and funding bodies.
- **A call for ideas will stay open until 30 July**
 - Trainees should forward an abstract to the BNTA Academic Representative by the end of July
 - The abstracts should describe the proposal for a study using the ***attached template***
 - Trainees should specify whether they would be prepared to assume the role of Trainee Lead Investigator (see description below) for the study they propose
 - All proposals will be peer-reviewed by academic leaders in their respective fields in order to assess their feasibility.
- Feasible proposals will be presented/discussed at the first open meeting of the BNTRC
 - Proposals will be prioritised following open discussion at the meeting
 - The trainee(s) proposing the study(ies) deemed to have the highest priority will work together with the BNTRC Management Committee (see below) in order to start forming a study working group
 - The reason that other proposals are not of high priority/feasible will also be discussed, along with advice to improve them.
- ***An open first meeting of the BNTRC will be useful in order to***
 - Ensure that all feasible proposals are discussed in an open forum with input from invited Consultants experts in their respective fields
 - Identify individuals that will be interested to become Study Lead Investigators and Local Investigators/collaborators
 - Identify individuals that wish to be involved with the BNTRC Management Committee
 - Invite representatives from other trainee collaboratives who will share their experience with us
 - *Showcase our initiative to important stakeholders (RCSEng, NIHR)*
- Even though this is a national initiative, holding our first meeting in London has a number of advantages
 - It will make it easier for invited RCSEng and NIHR officers to attend
 - Holding this meeting (with the objectives described above) during the Leeds SBNS meeting is not feasible, as the programme is already packed with talks, meetings etc

5. BNTRC structure – a proposed model

This model is similar to that used by the WMRC and other trainee collaboratives. It will help maintain momentum and communication.



5.1. BNTRC Management Committee

The Management Committee has the overall responsibility for running the BNTRC and for the development and adoption of new studies.

The management committee consists of the following members:

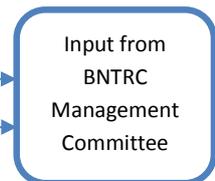
- BNTA Academic Representative: oversees collaborative; organises meetings; responsible for distribution of all communications; responsible for communication with SBNS Academic Committee and other stakeholders
- BNTA President and BNTA Secretary

- BNTA past President and Academic Representative
- Study 1 Trainee Lead Investigator(s)
- Study 2 Trainee Lead Investigator(s)

5.2. Individual Study Management Structure

- Trainee Lead Investigator(s):

- responsible for drafting study protocol, ethics and grant applications
- responsible for running the study, data analysis and writing-up
- coordinate the study working group and local investigators
- represent BNTRC in Study Steering Committee
- update the BNTRC management committee on the progress of the study and any problems encountered



- Study Working Group:

- holds regular meetings (virtual or physical) to discuss the development of study protocol, ethics and grant applications
- ideally 1 - 2 trainees nominated from each unit participating in study

- Local Trainee Investigator(s):

- participate in Study Working Group
- responsible for identifying a PI (Principal Investigator) at their unit – this is a Consultant who agrees to support the study
- responsible for gaining local regulatory approvals
- responsible for local patient recruitment and data collection
- aim to engage other trainees who can help with patient recruitment and data collection

- Local Trainee Collaborators

- all trainees can help with patient recruitment and data collection locally
- will be acknowledged as collaborators in publications

Appendix 1: New project proposal proforma

One A4 page (or 250 words)

Please use the following headings

1. Title
2. Introduction
3. Importance of the topic
4. Hypothesis/research question
5. Objectives
6. Design (type of study)
7. Population (inclusion/exclusion criteria)
8. Patient enrollment (and specify whether there will be need for consent)
9. Primary outcomes and how they will be measured
10. Secondary outcome(s) and how they will be measured
11. Plan for analysis
12. Future directions
13. Are you prepared to assume the role of Trainee Lead Investigator for this study?