

Patient Research Stories – Raising Awareness about Research

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The Clinical Research Network West Midlands (CRN WM) embarked on its Patient Stories initiative as it is one of the Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement in research (PPIE) objectives for the Network. The aim of the initiative is to raise awareness of research by allowing the patients themselves to have an opportunity to voice their experience of research and to share how research has made a real difference to their lives. It has enabled NHS Research & Development (R&D) Departments and the CRN WM, working together with patients, to raise awareness of research opportunities amongst all patients.

Initial stages of the project involved creating a Patient Stories Pack for use by research teams. This includes:

- Information about the initiative
- An example of a patient story
- Consent/assent forms for participation
- Photography, filming and audio recording consent/assent forms
- Example questions for collating the stories

Consequently, the CRN WM has produced patient stories in the format of posters, postcards, pull up banners, short films and audio recordings, and both the Network and R&D Departments have been disseminating these stories.

Finally, a training session about patient stories has been incorporated into the CRN WM PPIE Training (Building Research Partnerships) that is delivered to research professionals. Consequently, many research professionals have pledged to work with the team to produce patient stories.

This initiative is an excellent example of how R&D Departments can engage patients in research, with a view to not only raising the profile of research through dissemination of patient stories, but also offering past and present participants of research the opportunity to give something back.

Mohini



'I've had some amazing experiences being involved in contributing to research and I hope to pursue a career that allows me to continue shaping the future of healthcare.'

For more on Mohini's story and other patient experiences of research, go to: www.nihr.ac.uk/wmidlands

Dietmar



'Health research means so much to me, it shows how much the NHS is trying to help by making us aware of the importance of keeping healthy and fit and by giving us good advice.'

For more on Dietmar's story and other patient experiences of research, go to: www.nihr.ac.uk/wmidlands

Sheena



'I just love being part of research, knowing that I am helping someone else.'

For more on Sheena's story and other patient experiences of research, go to: www.nihr.ac.uk/wmidlands

Andrew



'I would encourage others to ask about taking part in relevant research – it was part of my treatment anyway and some parts are really fun and interesting, which stops you from dwelling on your condition'. 'Sometimes it can be hard to stay positive after such a life changing event, but knowing you are helping to improve treatments for future patients gives you a whole new perspective.'

For more on Andrew's story and other patient experiences of research, go to: www.nihr.ac.uk/wmidlands