Research and Surveillance Centre
Supporting research through high quality data

The RCGP RSC is a network of over 500 GP practices that allow sharing information from their electronic medical record for research, disease surveillance and GP workload. Extracts are performed on a weekly basis, meaning that the RCGP RSC has near real-time information from practices. Research teams can access this dataset from feasibility questions, to entire recruitment strategies.

History of the RSC
The RCGP RSC has been at the cutting edge of GP data for over 50 years. It is a bottom up network, led by GPs for Primary Care. Initially it was responsible for monitoring flu pandemics and consisted of less than 100 practices. The RCGP RSC now incorporates over 500 GP practices and is growing rapidly. The RCGP RSC holds over five million patient records, two billion consultation records, and one billion prescription records.

“ I have found the RCGP RSC dataset to be an incredibly rich source of healthcare data. With it we have published in top journals including the BMJ. ”
Dr Andrew McGovern (Momentum Data)

What about GDPR
Due to the sensitive nature of the information we extract, being GDPR compliant is of critical importance. Our IG structure is NHS Digital compliant and has been externally verified. If you require more in-depth information, get in touch.
FAQs

**Q.** I have a research idea, but I am unsure of prevalence rates and therefore how this might impact on my study design. Can you help with this?

**Yes.** We have successfully worked with several research groups with feasibility questions, providing rapid answers to their questions. Our practices are statistically representative of the national population and therefore conclusions drawn using our group can be reliably interpreted in the context of study design.

**Q.** We are now at a stage to recruit into our research programme. Can you help with recruitment?

**Yes.** Our offer to support recruitment can vary so please get in touch with your details for a personalised response. Recruitment support can be in the form of data queries to inform practices of potential recruits, using the RCGP RSC network to target recruitment at areas of highest prevalence and incidence and recruiting in a more active way on behalf of practices. We can share examples of where our work has significantly helped research teams and would be delighted to hear directly from you.

**Q.** Do you have communications materials to support practices taking part in research?

**Yes.** We have practice level resources detailing what we do, why and how we ensure the data is kept safe. We also have a website that echoes this message.

**Q.** Is all the research compulsory for all practices in the network?

**No.** Practices opt in to take part in research. Any new research opportunities are advertised via our monthly newsletter.

**Q.** Does a practice get paid?

**Yes.** Practices receive payments associated with the study activities. The payments are usually aligned with the NIHR CRN costing templates. Practices are generally keen to undertake research.

**Q.** Data quality in Primary care can be variable. How do you deal with this?

Data quality is a national challenge, which is why we offer data quality assessment and eLearning as part to all practices in the network. We only “allow” practices with proven data quality levels in to the final data set, and we offer advice on how to improve this. The RCGP RSC Practice Dashboards provide feedback about data quality to practices – we call this initiative Primary Care Data Quality (PCDQ).

**Areas that are key are:**

- All consultations and encounters should have one or more coded problems. The problem wherever possible should be a disease – e.g. hypertension.
- Ensuring the right “episode type” is important so we know if this is a new (incident) or a follow up (prevalent) case. Infections like influenza are new/incident with each new infection whereas conditions like asthma or COPD are only incident once.
- Details about vaccines are entered in full. There are many types of vaccines, so it is important that the brand and batch of vaccines is recorded.

For more information please get in contact
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