



Research Support Services Newsletter

Edition 4 – Spring 2022

Healthcare can progress when developments resulting in improved patient care are uncovered. Improving patient outcomes and staff wellbeing are important to EEAST, hence why EEAST value research. The Research Support Services team work alongside other Ambulance Services, Universities and Health and Social Care agencies to provide high quality, ethical and clear research.

Our newsletter will keep you up to date on what we are working on and how you can become involved in research.

The Research Team:

If you wish to discuss any aspect of research, please don't hesitate to contact us via research@eastamb.nhs.uk or directly:

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! Do you know how to find us on EAST 24?

<https://www.eastamb.nhs.uk/about-us/research-support-services.htm>

! Do you know we are on Twitter? @EEAST_Research

! We regularly have NeedtoKnow articles, sharing research news and opportunities.

Current Research:

KARMA2  

KARMA2

The KARMA2 feasibility study in Cambridgeshire is looking at improving pre-hospital hyperglycaemia care. The study incorporates the introduction of ketone meters to front-line assessment capability and adjustment of existing intra-vascular fluid therapy for diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) in line with inpatient evidence-based guidelines.

KARMA2 is currently in the control phase of data collection until end of March 2022. The research team successfully applied for an amendment to extend both phases of recruitment by one month from four to five months in duration. This has been necessary due to the unprecedented demand on EEAST and associated effects of COVID-19 reducing our predicted recruitment rate. The study team are therefore doing everything they can to promote study recruitment before we transition to the intervention phase of the study.

We are aiming to deliver the intervention phase training sessions, both in person and on MS Teams, throughout March ready to begin recruiting to the intervention phase and finally utilising the ketone meters from April 1st 2022 (...and no, there's no April fools here!).

CESSATION

 CESSATI  N

The CESSATION study on menopause awareness is currently underway, with all 13 ambulance services in the UK taking part. The study aims to identify current menopause guidance, policies and support offered by UK ambulance services; understand work and personal impacts of the menopause on female ambulance staff and their managers; and identify service

developments that may best support female ambulance staff during this life phase.

This study consists of three phases: 1. analysis of UK ambulance services Health, Wellbeing and Sickness policies and guidance that refer to menopause transition; 2. a national online anonymous menopause survey for female ambulance staff and a single service online anonymous survey to explore manager experiences; 3. interviews involving female ambulance staff from across the UK. Phases one and two are nearing completion. Recruitment for the phase three interviews has just begun, and findings will be available shortly.

This study has proved to be of interest across the whole of the UK, showing how menopausal symptoms can have a significant impact on health and wellbeing. It is hoped the findings will support potential menopause service developments and interventions, and an increase in menopause transition awareness across all UK ambulance services.

PARAMEDIC 3



Each year over 30,000 people sustain an out of hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA). Current clinical guidelines recommend that cardiac arrest drugs are administered through the IV route, wherever possible. However, as we know, peripheral IV cannulation is very challenging during OHCA due to patient and environmental issues. In cases where IV access cannot be rapidly achieved, clinical guidelines support the use of IO access. Previous research and data show that IO access is faster and more likely to be successful.

The PARAMEDIC 3 study aims to find out if IO access first strategy compared with an IV access first strategy, is clinically and cost effective. Trial paramedics will identify patients in OHCA and gain either IV or IO access via a system of randomisation. Data will be collected from clinical records, hospital data and follow-up questionnaires at 3 and 6 months. The study is sponsored by Warwick University, and 9 Ambulance Trusts, including EEAST are working with the Trial team. EEAST will be collaborating with selected hospitals across Essex and Suffolk.

We are currently still in the set-up phase of the study but hope to begin identifying ambulance stations within the selected hospital catchment areas for Trial Paramedics to be trained to take part. It is anticipated we will begin recruiting patients in April 2022. Further updates will be shared via Need to Know.

Further information can be found here: [PARAMEDIC-3 Trial \(warwick.ac.uk\)](https://www.warwick.ac.uk/paramedic-3)

Maternity Research Study

The University of Bath are looking for paramedics who have attended at least 3 maternity patients to discuss their experiences of providing pre-hospital maternity care.

Individual interviews will be held over Microsoft Teams at a time which suits you. They will last up to one hour.

The study aims to understand the challenges paramedics face so changes in practice can be made to make caring for maternity patients easier.

Can you help?
Are you a paramedic who's attended at least 3 maternity patients?
If so we'd like to hear from you

We're looking for participants to discuss their experiences of providing pre-hospital maternity care

Individual interviews will be held over Microsoft Teams at a time which suits you. They will last up to one hour

The study aims to understand the challenges paramedics face so changes in practice can be made to make caring for maternity patients easier

For more information or to express your interest in partaking, please email Melissa on man57@bath.ac.uk

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Recently Reported:

Supporting Wellbeing in Ambulance Personnel (SWAP) – Summary of results

This project, funded by Health Education England, employed a mixed methods design which aimed to identify characteristics of

successful wellbeing support in UK ambulance services and identify how existing services can be improved. The study team highlighted the high prevalence of burnout and PTSD reported amongst ambulance clinicians and the heightened sickness rate seen in Ambulance trusts compared to the rest of the NHS (5.62% to 4.25% respectively).

Twenty-five clinician interviewees cited four main themes in discussing perceptions of wellbeing support:

Notably, most interviewees reported they felt it was their own responsibility to manage their own health and wellbeing and take advantage of the resources offered by their employer. However, outcome findings for accessing these services were mixed.



Other issues highlighted included a lack of empathy from managers when trying to access support, inconsistent application of sickness policies and lack of flexibility in managing personal circumstances. In general, clinicians felt their role was associated with mental decline despite the application of a variety of coping strategies which included exercise, sleep, detachment, black humour, and both formal and informal peer support.

There was a total of 3067 responses to the SWAP survey which incorporated the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, and findings indicated poorer wellbeing compared to the national pre-COVID average. This survey also found that the pandemic had compromised respondents' abilities to support their wellbeing via their normal strategies which included socialising and physical activities.

When analysing sickness data, the study team acknowledged that their findings may need updating because of the pandemic effect on sickness. They identified highest sickness rates in January and February with two smaller peaks in October and November, however,

this varied significantly between trusts. The team believe they have a model to predict sickness rates going forward but this is likely to be of limited value for some years due to fluctuations in isolation advice throughout the pandemic, changes in PPE effectiveness, effect of vaccination and variant trait on degree of sickness. They acknowledge up-to-date data is needed to confirm their predictability findings.

The SWAP study provided six relevant recommendations to improve ambulance personnel health and wellbeing:

- 1. Increase accessibility, consistency, and timeliness of wellbeing interventions**
- 2. Increase wellbeing offer coverage**
- 3. Support and train line managers to care for their staff**
- 4. Incorporate staff suicide prevention and postvention within trust wellbeing offer**
- 5. Provide psychological support by specifically trained support staff**
- 6. Promote a social model of disability and emphasise universal/inclusive design in the work environment**

Synopsis by Tom Strudwick, Research Paramedic

For the full summary report, please contact the EEAST Research team via Research@eastamb.nhs.uk

Future Studies:

VITALS

The Vitamin D Ambulance Wellbeing Study (VITALS) is a feasibility study to evidence the incidence and impact of vitamin D deficiency in shift and indoor-workers across the EEAST workforce and to suggest possible vitamin D-related interventions to enhance wellbeing.

The VITALS study consists of three phases: 1: Finger-prick blood testing involving 400 consenting EEAST staff to identify those with or at risk of vitamin D deficiency; 2: Interviews involving 20 Phase 1 participants with or at risk of vitamin D deficiency. 3: A stakeholder panel involving patient, public, Wellbeing Lead, and ambulance staff to review the VITALS findings, suggest interventions to enhance wellbeing, and advise direction of future national research.

This study will determine the incidence of vitamin D deficiency amongst ambulance staff, and subsequently provide suggestions for interventions and resources to tackle any deficiency. It is hoped VITALS will raise awareness of occupational vitamin D deficiency, particularly for the ambulance setting but also for other healthcare shift and indoor-workers, both in the UK and more widely. **VITALS will be launching soon – watch this space!**

RAPID2

EEAST will be taking part in the RAPID2 study which aims to test the safety, clinical and cost-effectiveness of paramedics providing fascia iliaca compartment block (FICB) as pain relief to patients with suspected hip fractures in the prehospital environment. Working with James Paget University Hospital, comparisons will be made from patients' pain levels, length of stay in hospital, time on scene, quality of life, mobility and costs of healthcare at the time of injury and up to four months - between those allocated FICB (intervention group) and those allocated usual care (control).

EEAST aim to start recruiting and training Paramedics in **Summer 2022** so keep your eyes peeled!

GoodSAM Staff Wellbeing Study

It is known that prompt pre-hospital medical treatment following a traumatic incident can prevent death and improve patient outcome, thus timely and effective dispatch of appropriate emergency medical resources is critical. Dispatch prioritisation currently relies mostly on verbal phone information from incidents. It is estimated that up to half of air, and a quarter of road ambulance deployments, are inappropriate and use of live video has been recommended to

improve appropriateness of triage and dispatch. GoodSAM is a freely available software that supports streaming of live footage to dispatchers using callers' smartphone cameras, without the need for a pre-loaded app.

One EOC in EEAST will be taking part in this study to measure the wellbeing of staff involved in trauma dispatch where GoodSAM video streaming system is not currently used and compare this to staff wellbeing where GoodSAM will be used for trauma calls.

Staff involved in trauma dispatch within EOCs will be invited to complete a short online wellbeing survey to assess risk of psychological harm at two time points during the year. This will include all HEMS dispatchers/paramedics, critical care paramedics and dispatch managers in both EOCs. **The study is due to start in March/April 2022.**

More Ways to Get Involved with Research:

Research Involvement Group (RIG)



Our EEAST RIG meetings are up and running and is a great opportunity for members to learn how they could become involved in ambulance research and discuss a variety of current research opportunities. Alongside hearing about research within EEAST, guest speakers are also invited to discuss research and other opportunities available!

The public members of RIG are keen to open membership to Trust staff. If you are interested in joining this group, or know someone who might be, please complete our Expression of Interest form: [EEAST Research Involvement Group: Expression of Interest \(office.com\)](https://www.eeastamb.nhs.uk/research-involvement-group-expression-of-interest)

Needing help with research articles?

The LKS ASE library service (<https://ambulance.libguides.com/home1>) provides free access to articles, journals and databases for all EEAST staff. Here you can:

- Request articles by completing an online form
- Request a literature search by completing an online form
- Sign up for monthly Current Awareness updates
- Access a variety of Guides and help on topics related to searching, research and paramedic practice.



Other Research News:

2022 999 EMS Research Forum Conference

The annual 999 EMS Research Forum conference will be taking place online on 29th March 2022. The focus of this year's conference is 'All in this together: collaboration in emergency prehospital care research'. This conference is a great opportunity for those who hold an interest in research to explore further and hear about current and ongoing pre-hospital research being done around the world!



Head of Research, Theresa Foster, has been successful in submitting an abstract for an online poster presentation titled "Line manager knowledge and concerns when managing female staff during the menopause transition in one UK ambulance service". Following the conference, the abstract will be published online in the Emergency Medical Journal.

If you would like to see the poster once the conference has taken place, or read the abstract, please email theresa.foster@eastamb.nhs.uk who would be happy to send you a copy!

To sign up for information about the conference, please visit:
<http://999emsresearch.co.uk/annual-conference>.

Other Publications

The findings from our recent vitamin D survey have been accepted for publication in the British Paramedic Journal. The paper is titled "A survey-based evaluation of ambulance staff awareness of vitamin D and risk of deficiency in a UK ambulance service."

The paper has been published in the September 2021 edition!



We have also had the findings of our menopause survey published in the British Paramedic Journal. The paper is titled "Menopause affects us all...:menopause transition experiences of female ambulance staff from a UK ambulance service."

The paper has been published in the December 2021 edition!

**Next edition of the research newsletter will be in Summer 2022.
Do let us know if there is anything you would like us to include in
future newsletters.**