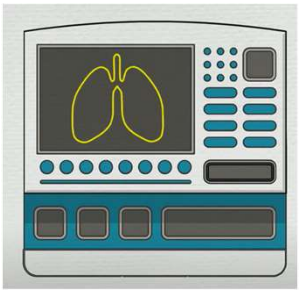
Research in this Critical Care Unit

This Critical Care Unit is involved in research and has a team of Research Nurses. Research Nurses are trained nurses who also help to run clinical research studies in the Unit.

Clinical research is how the NHS improves treatments for patients and increases knowledge about health and care. Most NHS Trusts participate in clinical research. It's an every-day part of what we do.

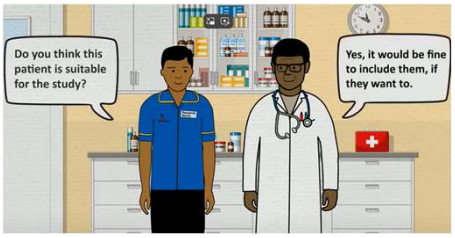
GPs, hospital doctors, nurses, pharmacists and physios all wants to improve the care they provide to patients, including in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and High Dependency Unit (HDU).



Clinical research has changed the way we look after Critical Care patients. For example, although life support machines (ventilators) are life-saving, we now know that traditional ways of ventilation were damaging the lungs.

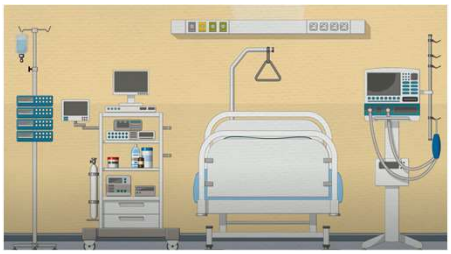
As a result of the ARDSnet Study, we now use less volume and pressure for each breath, to prevent damaging the lungs. Using this way of ventilating people has improved both short-term survival, and long-term quality of life.

We support many different types of studies in the ICU/HDU. All these have to be approved by an independent Ethics Committee, which reviews the risks and benefits to patients.

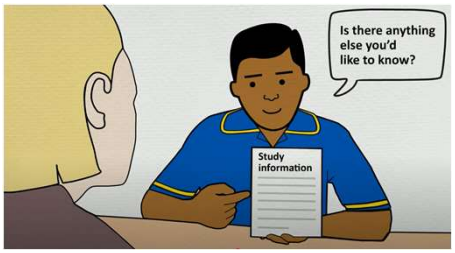


We'll only ask patients to join a study if their doctor thinks it's okay for them to be in it. Usually, a patient needs to agree to take part in a research study. This is called, "giving consent". Before asking for this, doctors will take into consideration the patient's condition, and the time-line of the study. If that's all okay, then a member of the study team, will discuss the research with the patient.

Typically, we'll give the patient an information sheet, and answer any questions they may have. A patient can say "yes", or "no". Either way, it won't affect their quality of care. If they agree, they will be asked to sign a consent form. If they consent, but decide later that they don't want to take part, they can leave the study at any time.



Asking for consent in an ICU, can be more challenging than in other places. That's because patients can be seriously unwell, and may not be able to speak for themselves. For example, they could be sedated, or too unwell to understand what's being asked of them.



With these patients, a research nurse or research doctor, may speak to a family member. We'll give them an information sheet about the study, and ask if they think the patient would like to take part. If the relative or friend believes the patient would say yes, we'll ask them to sign a Consent Form.

Later on, if the patient is feeling better, a member of the study team will talk to the patient, to see if they want to stay in the study.

Some studies have narrow windows of time to include patients. So, a doctor or research nurse might have to talk to family members about the research very soon after the patient's admission.

If a relative or friend is unavailable, we can sometimes ask a doctor (one who's involved in care, but not the study) to give consent. Later on, a member of the study team will talk to the family and/or the patient, if they are feeling better, to see if they want to stay in the study.

When you're giving consent for someone else, it's important to remember that the research study won't necessarily lead to a better health outcome for the patient. But crucially, it will increase our knowledge, which may improve treatments and care for critically ill patients in the future.

If you have any questions about research studies, don't hesitate to speak to the research nurses. We will be very happy to talk with you about what we do. You can telephone them on 0131-242-6396.

For more information about Clinical Research visit: www.nihr.ac.uk or scan the QR code

SUPPORTED BY NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research