

Helen Eftekhari - Advanced Nurse Practitioner



As an arrhythmia advanced nurse practitioner one of the four pillars of practice is research. My area of interest is in syncope (fainting) and POTS (Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome). POTS generally affects young women, has a significant impact on quality life, and it takes on average 7 years in the UK to get a diagnosis. After my Advanced Nurse Practitioner masters, we received funding for a nurse-led syncope clinic. This was piloted and audited, resulting in the service being short-listed for the British Medical Journal awards in 2014.

At the time there was the fantastic opportunity to undertake the INCA Bronze offered through UHCW NHS Trust and Coventry University. Following this, I successfully applied for a place on the NIHR Masters by Research programme offered at Coventry University. The highlight was undertaking a pilot POTS focus group, capturing patient's experience and seeing how we can better support people with POTS. Following on from this, we now set up a POTS support clinic.

The research journey has inspired a number of projects collecting data on the syncope clinic and work with POTS. We are proud that this work has been presented at national events (orally and with poster presentations) contributing to the care and management of patients on a wider scale. We are now looking towards publishing our data from the syncope clinic and the MRes work. A highlight this year has been being part of a team, awarded British Heart Foundation grant for a feasibility study in POTS and exercise.

I have been fortunate to be supported by the nursing team in cardiology, clinicians and our R&D team. Through the good, collaborative, working relationships, the ideas which come from reading research, clinical practice and talking with patients about their care, are acted upon. I'm hoping to continue this research, to shape patient experience and care not just here at UHCW, but nationally as well. Nursing is the biggest workforce in the NHS, we all have invaluable experience and ideas, and I would encourage anyone who is thinking about a clinical academic career to be part of the pathways research offer.

