

Networked innovation in the health sector: comparative qualitative study of the role of Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care in translating research into practice

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Plain English summary

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Between 2008 and 2013, the NHS invested around £50M in funding nine Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRCs) in different areas of the UK. The aim of each CLAHRC was to help ensure that the new medical evidence and improvements emerging from clinical research were actually put into practice in hospital wards, surgeries and other areas of the health service.

This report is based on a study which was carried out to evaluate these CLAHRCs. This involved researching their activities, and the people involved, to see how they tried to break down the barriers that prevent new evidence and innovative treatments being applied to patients. Our study found that the way in which each CLAHRC went about doing this was highly influenced by the vision and beliefs of their leadership teams. These dominant views helped to shape the kinds of social networks that they developed, and had an influence on the way different groups worked together. By comparing these CLAHRCs with each other, and with similar organisations in Canada and the USA, we are able to show the impact of these differences in approach on each initiative's ability to meet the challenge of getting research into practice. Showing that there are different ways of doing this, and that it depends on specific attributes such as vision, leadership and social ties, is in contrast to some previous studies which have advocated a one-size-fits-all approach.

The different approaches to knowledge translation taken by the case organisations in our study led them to develop distinctive strengths and weaknesses. Analysis of these strengths and weaknesses can help us better understand what kind of initiatives are likely to be more successful in the future.

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