UK Dementia Research
Challenges and solutions for the dementia research community

UK strengths
- The UK produces 12% of all dementia research publications, making us second in the world.
- Rising stars
- 20% of the most prolific researchers are still at post-doctoral and lecturer level.
- There are packets of excellence in dementia research.
- Doctoral training centres to support over 75 early career researchers.

Issues
- Too few researchers choose to work on dementia.
- Many researchers leave dementia.
- Dementia costs the UK economy £26 billion a year but the UK only invests £74 million a year in dementia research.
- People may think there isn’t much to be done for people with dementia.
- Attitudes act as a barrier to dementia research careers.
- Clinicians are stretched to the limit doing their daily job, so finding time for research is difficult.

Solutions
- To attract more researchers: Change negative perceptions by celebrating success.
- To retain more researchers: Raising stars programme, Professional development and leadership training, Bridge funding.
- To encourage clinicians to do research: More flexible clinical fellowships, More PhD opportunities for applied health and social care professionals.
- To support more care researchers: More training in dementia care and support, Junior research positions.

Findings of a report by RAND Europe, commissioned by Alzheimer’s Society (2015)

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Data Source

Invested £6.5m to support over 75 early career researchers.
Established 8 doctoral training centres to support 52 PhD students.
Developed a mentorship programme for early career researchers.
Developed webinars for skills and career development.
Supported ‘Join dementia research’ to boost participation in clinical trials.

Since Jan 2014 we’ve...

"Today, it’s really hard to combine NHS work and research as I could in the past.”
"Clinicians are stretched to the limit doing their daily job, so finding time for research is difficult.”
"It is difficult to develop research careers in the allied health professions.”
"Working with people with dementia is still not seen as a career path of choice.”
"I really love the research but the pressure of constantly having to apply for money is putting me off.”
"There are simply no lectureship to apply for.”
"People may think there isn’t much to be done for people with dementia.”
"Attitudes act as a barrier to dementia research careers.”
"Clinicians are undervalued by universities and research undervalued in clinical settings."