

GIRASOL: Development of guidelines for the communication of research results to patients, members of the public and other stakeholder groups

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Summary:

Dissemination of research results is now recognised as an integral part of the research process. The UK funding agencies, in particular, require that researchers have a clear plan about how study findings are reported back to patients and the general public. It is no longer sufficient to communicate results solely through journal publication. Wider dissemination using a range of mechanisms, specifically targeting the lay community, enables the work to have impact outside of its academic base. The research councils place high importance on having a well thought out dissemination plan when considering funding applications. In addition, given the high importance of impact in REF, dissemination is a core activity to realising the full impact potential of a project. Research Council UK's vision for public engagement with research strategy notes that "It is vital that the public have both access to the knowledge research generates and the opportunity to influence the questions that research is seeking to address".

Aims:

The aim of the study is to determine guidelines which will ensure that the way researchers communicate meets the other interested parties' expectations. These include patients, carers, other study participants and members of the public who might want to learn about health research findings.

Study objectives:

1. What are the communication strategies and activities planned by researchers as listed in published peer-reviewed protocol papers? (Literature review)
2. What are the members of the public information needs and preferences around communication of study findings? (Survey 1)
3. What researchers consider are the key elements of a good communications strategy for health research findings? (Survey 2)
4. What are present (and past) study participants' information needs and preferences around communication of study findings? (Survey 3)
5. Identify the key principles/recommendation of good communication practice common across the three perspectives (Consensus exercise)

Progress:

Objectives 1 to 4 are completed; participant numbers for survey 1 = 112, survey 2 = 105, survey 3 = 166. Due to COVID, the consensus meeting was put on hold and will now be done via questionnaire in February 2021.

Sponsor: Cardiff University

Ethics Approval: Cardiff University Ethical Approval – Ref No: 18/43

Research networks: Health Wise Wales; INVOLVE; Cwm Taf Public Service Board; Health Services Research Unit, Aberdeen University; Centre for Trial Research, Cardiff University.