Building a Career in Primary Care Research

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Introduction

- PCU training lead
- NIHR School for Primary Care Research Cambridge training lead
- CRUK CanTest programme annual residential school
Career paths

Maybe a maze…?  
A straight line…?  
Or a long and winding path…?
The straight line version

- 10 years learning medicine & general practice
- 10 years GP partner
- 10 years learning research
- Set up Primary Care Cancer Research group
The straight line version

The integrated academic training pathway
The long & winding path

- Enjoy the journey
- Take chances
Building a career in primary care research

TEN TOP TIPS on how to enjoy the journey and take (good) chances
1. Clinical skills matter - don’t ignore them

- Be curious
- Listen to your patients...
- … and your wider healthcare team
- Use your observations to drive new research questions
2. Teaching skills matter too - enjoy developing them

Take every opportunity
- Clinical students
- Masters & PhD students
- Allied health professionals
- Patient groups
- School students
3. Aim to become a topic expert

- an area e.g. cancer
- a topic e.g. early detection
- a (range of) skill/s e.g. mixed methods, using routinely collected data

Does it excite you?
Is it an increasing problem?

‘Enjoy what you do and do what you enjoy’
4. Look out for role model/s and mentor/s

What are you impressed by?

- academic excellence
- support for juniors
- work-life balance
5. Be bold - reach out to possible collaborators

Across academic networks
- Same discipline
- Multidisciplinary
- In own institution, UK, international

Across social networks
- Peer group
- Workshops, conferences
- Twitter, blogs
6. Be brave - learn to say ‘no’

- if deadlines loom
- if task isn’t directly relevant
- If it conflicts with other demands

‘Be clear on your priorities: don’t be afraid to ask and don’t be afraid to refuse (politely)’ Jenni Burt
7. Write as much as you can

- Daily, if possible
- Take every opportunity: blogs, tweets
- Try different styles
- Aim for timely write-up of every project
- Publications are important: quality vs number
8. Family and friends matter...

‘Life is about much more than a career, but work you enjoy is a huge privilege’
9. …and work with people you like
10. Be prepared to take risks

- Apply for personal fellowships
- Develop project applications
- Leadership roles
- Funding bodies
- Editorial boards
- Travel e.g. Harkness
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6. Be brave - learn to say ‘no’
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8. Family and friends matter…
9. …and work with people you like
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The long & winding path

- Enjoy the journey
- Take chances
THANK YOU

Happy to take questions

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