

Internship case study

Jennifer Shannon

Background

I currently work as a Senior Crisis Practitioner, within my profession as a Mental Health Nurse at South London and Maudsley NHS Trust.

Why did I apply for this award?

Before completing the award, I had a keen interest in mental health research and some experience of audit and service development work within my clinical team. I applied for the internship award to develop my knowledge of research methods and build my research experience in order to progress to further study and develop a career as a nurse researcher. I also saw the internship as a fantastic opportunity to work alongside researchers in my field and understand what a career in research entails.

How did the award benefit my clinical practice?

The award has strengthened my understanding of the application of research into clinical practice. I have a better knowledge of how evidence is generated, how to critically appraise research and the challenges of implementing evidence into practice.

I completed my research intern placement within a multidisciplinary research team which aims to address the physical health needs of people with serious mental illness. I undertook varied and interesting work on a randomized control trial and a quality improvement project which the team was completing. Attending lectures and seminars at university, alongside the placement, served to consolidate my learning and the two complimented each other well. I now have a sound understanding of research methods and applied research.

How did the award benefit patients?

The award will help me to improve patient care in the future. Firstly I will be completing my own research project investigating mental health nurses' attitudes in relation to type 2 diabetes in people with severe mental illness. This is the research proposal I have been developing during my internship. Additionally, my increased understanding of the appraisal and application of research will serve to inform my clinical decision making and patient care.



How did the award benefit my organisation?

The internship has given me the opportunity to work alongside clinical academics and has helped me network and meet other researchers. I will continue to maintain the relationships that I have made in order to continue sharing knowledge within my field. As well as this, I hope to be able to strengthen the link between clinical and research nurses by championing research at service level to my colleagues to increase their interest in engaging with research.

What has it allowed me to achieve in my research or clinical career?

As well as enabling me to forge new professional relationships and increase my knowledge of research, I have been inspired by the clinical academics I have been working alongside. The internship allowed me to further develop my research proposal and with the support of the lecturers and my peers during seminars, as well as the expertise of my mentor during our meetings, I produced a research proposal which provided the basis of my application to complete my MRes at City University. I am delighted to be able to pursue this project and continue my journey towards becoming a nurse researcher.