

Improving mental health awareness and support for patients with persistent pain

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People who live with persistent pain, caused by conditions like osteoarthritis, are twice as likely to experience a mental health condition compared to the general population.

Now, a research team from Keele University's School of Primary,

Community and Social Care have been awarded £100,000 to develop interventions that support the mental health needs of people with persistent neck and back pain.

Previous research conducted at Keele found that 49% of patients accessing musculoskeletal and back pain services in North Staffordshire experienced anxiety and 37% of patients experienced depression. New interventions that seek to raise the profile of mental health in the context of [persistent pain](#) are therefore crucial to support effective management of mental health and pain.

The research team at Keele, including Kay Stevenson, Dr. Tom Kingstone, and Professors Carolyn Chew-Graham and Professor Krysia Dziedzic, has received funding from the Health Foundation, an independent charity committed to bringing about [better health](#) and health care for people in the UK. The funding will continue to build on a successful pilot project developed with the team at the Haywood Hospital in Stoke-on-Trent, part of the Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, and will support the refinement and scaling-up of their work.

This new funding will support the refinement of three interventions to improve mental health awareness among NHS staff and their patients, encourage patients to seek help to address their mental health problems, and provide useful information resources to support signposting to local services.

The team worked with the [Q Improvement Lab](#), the mental health charity Mind, and stakeholders including clinicians, academics, and people with persistent pain and/or [mental health problems](#) to develop three [intervention](#) prototypes:

1. a mental health training workshop with training resources

- suitable for face-to-face delivery to clinical and non-clinical staff
2. an information repository of services to support a broad range of needs among people with mental and physical health problems, and
 3. a video animation providing key messages about the link between mental and physical health with recommendations for improving quality of life.

Kay Stevenson, Consultant Physiotherapist and Senior Knowledge Mobilisation Fellow, said: "Our ambition is to refine the three prototypes and then scale up the delivery and take-up of these interventions beyond the test-site, the Haywood Hospital, to other NHS settings regionally and nationally.

"These small scale interventions have the potential to affect real change in everyday clinical practice to support the mental health needs of people living with persistent neck and back [pain](#)."

Provided by Keele University

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