

# Research as part of a clinical career

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# Firstly...

This has been a really hard talk to write!

- Why would you want to pursue an academic career within the NHS?
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of this approach?
- Tips (from the top) for success
- Thanks to Peter Hoskin, Chris Nutting, Chris Parker, Charlotte Coles, Nick van As, Fiona McDonald, Anna Kirby, Katharine Aitken, Corinne Faivre-Finn



## My (current) perspective

MD(Res) at the ICR, on SBRT 2011-2014

Consultant at the Royal Marsden 2014- present

Expectation but no dedicated time for research

Wrote grants, papers, started up projects

1 PA of my time funded via a PCUK clinical trial grant

2 PAs of my time funded via a Rosetrees grant, supporting MR Linac research



# What are we talking about ?

Those who are research active but are employed by the NHS

May have an honorary affiliation with a university too

May or may not have 'official' time to do research

Only really relevant to non-laboratory research i.e. clinical research with patients



# What you need to make it as a clinical “academic”

A strong constitution



A dislike for sleep



The ability to work harder than you thought possible



# What is the hardest work I have ever done?

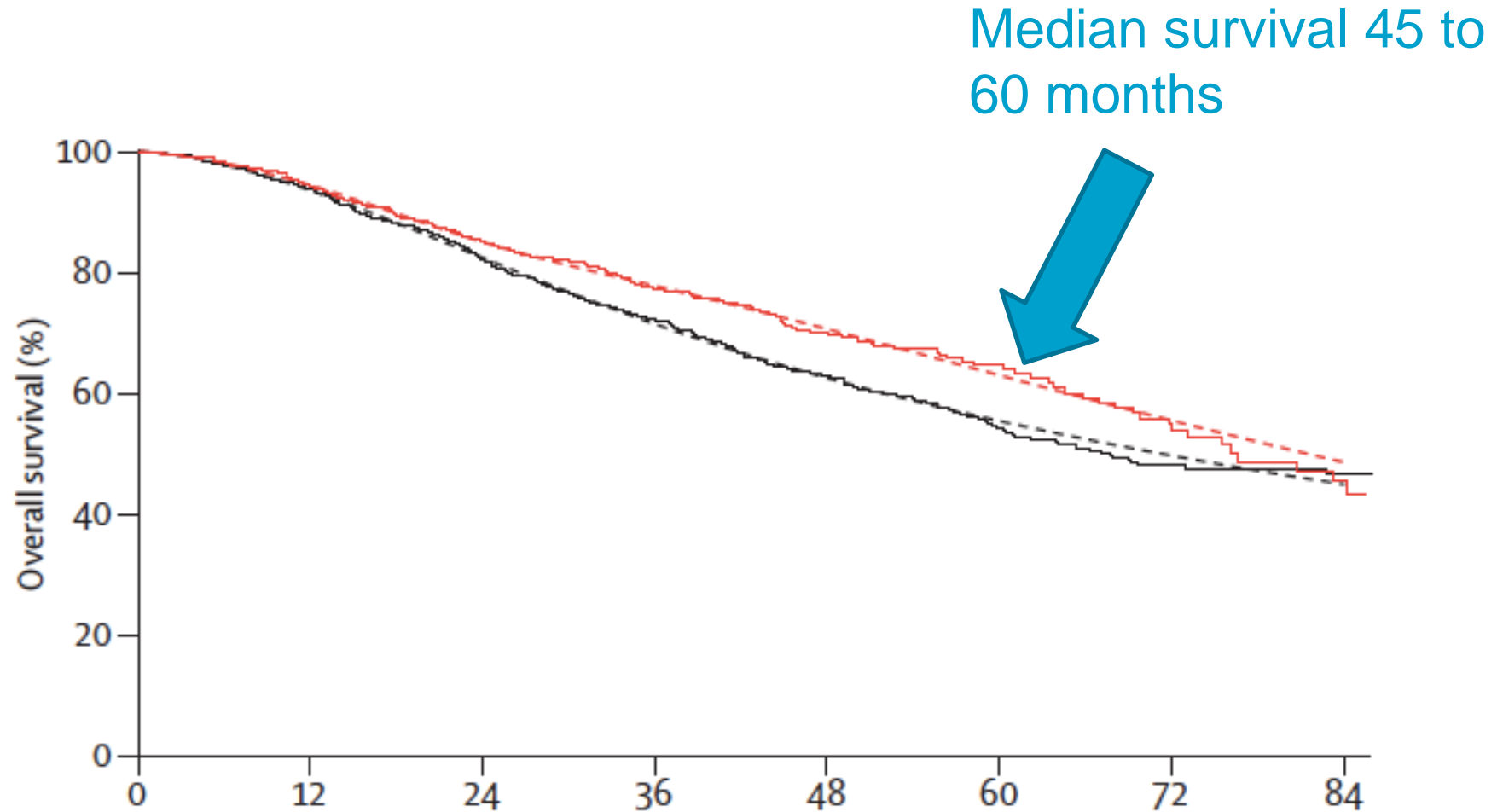
Junior doctor? Nope (56 hours on call)

Having 3 babies in just over 5 years?  
Nope

Trying to pursue an academic career whilst an NHS consultant?



# Why do it at all then ?!??



# The Pro's of staying within the NHS

Job security

No shortage of patients to recruit to clinical trials

Able to determine your own research priorities (nobody telling you what to research)

Academic clinical oncology jobs are like hen's teeth





# The Con's of staying within the NHS as a consultant

Hard/Impossible to get protected research time (patients come first) = not enough sleep/time with family

Lack of infrastructure and support for research eg admin support, finance support

Some grants (eg MRC) mandate a University lead

No road map to progression



Credit: Calvin and Hobbs



# Vast majority of radiotherapy research is done within a clinical setting

This requires

Machines

Radiographers

Hospital infrastructure support

Those within the NHS are somewhat better placed to influence the research infrastructure within the Hospitals where the research is done.



# 16 tips from others – how to pursue an academic clinical oncology career within the NHS

1. Start as a trainee – publish something (anything!) to get started
2. Get a research degree – MD/PhD ([alison.tree@icr.ac.uk](mailto:alison.tree@icr.ac.uk)), usually years 4-5
3. “The main thing is to make the main thing the main thing” Stephen Covey – say no to other things (even good things)
4. Find a department with supportive colleagues who will cover for you and be prepared to cover them



# 16 tips from others – how to pursue an academic clinical oncology career within the NHS

5. Have some research momentum to take into your consultant job. Helpful to have some research under your belt and ideas that you want to pursue
6. Be collegiate – recruit to other people's trials. It's a small world.
7. Come up with a trial idea and take it to CTRad – supportive peer input, get to know other research-active clin oncs in the UK



## CTRad Aims:



To proactively identify, nurture and advise young investigators in radiotherapy research

To support trial design, methodology, protocol development, and quality assurance

To ensure that all trials involving radiotherapy are efficient and technologically up-to-date

To provide specialist review of radiotherapy trial proposals for CRUK



# Some tips from others – how to pursue an academic clinical oncology career within the NHS

8. Get involved with patient groups – go and give a talk, ask them to review your patient information sheet. Listen to what they say.
9. Find a good clinical trials and statistics unit and find every excuse to hang around them. Listen – this stuff sounds tedious at first but is **CRITICAL** to the success of your future studies.
10. Think about the biology - imaging and laboratory endpoints: Add the extra value – translation!
11. Look ahead for deadlines: Conference abstracts / funding applications to ensure local timelines for co-investigators realistic with everyone under pressure.



# Some tips from others – how to pursue an academic clinical oncology career within the NHS

12. Solve service pressures yourself – business cases

13. Get a grant and put 1-2 PAs of your time on it

14. Or negotiate a feasible job plan from the start

**15. Work in a research active institution  
(hard to do in a vacuum)**

**16. Find a mentor (or two), or a buddy, and ask for help**



# The supportive UK academic community



**Gerry Hanna**  
@GerryHanna

Tweets	Following	Followers	Likes	Lists
5,648	640	1,034	9,499	1

Following

Tweets Tweets & replies Media



**Carolyn Chan**  
@CarolynChan

98 Following

Tweets	Following	Followers	Likes
152	98	109	4

Following

Tweets Tweets & replies Media



**Corinne Faivre-Finn**  
@finn\_corinne

Tweets	Following	Followers	Likes
1,479	193	1,185	2,346

Following

Tweets Tweets & replies Media

Corinne Faivre-Finn @finn\_corinne · Jun 21



**Dr Ananya**  
@DrAnanya

Tweets	Following	Followers	Likes
862	135	235	430

Following

Tweets Tweets & replies Media



**Prof David Sebag**  
@MontefioreD

Tweets	Following	Followers	Likes
1,106	451	1,033	1,109

Following

Tweets Tweets & replies Media

Pinned Tweet



**Anthony Chalmers**  
@ProfA.Chalmers

Tweets	Following	Followers	Likes
1,410	146	1,050	2,757

Following

Tweets Tweets & replies Media

Anthony Chalmers Retweeted



## Most importantly

Find a problem that needs solving

Don't "try to pursue an academic career" find a problem your patients are facing and try to find the answer"

"We need less research, better research, and research done for the right reasons." Doug Altman (1948-1918)



# The wisdom of Twitter

 **Shankar Siva**  
@\_ShankarSiva Following

Replying to @finn\_corinne @CRUKresearch

Totally agree... but the UK has a knack of completing the studies that nobody else can do! @nickva1 @alison\_tree @fifimcdrmh @gerryhanna

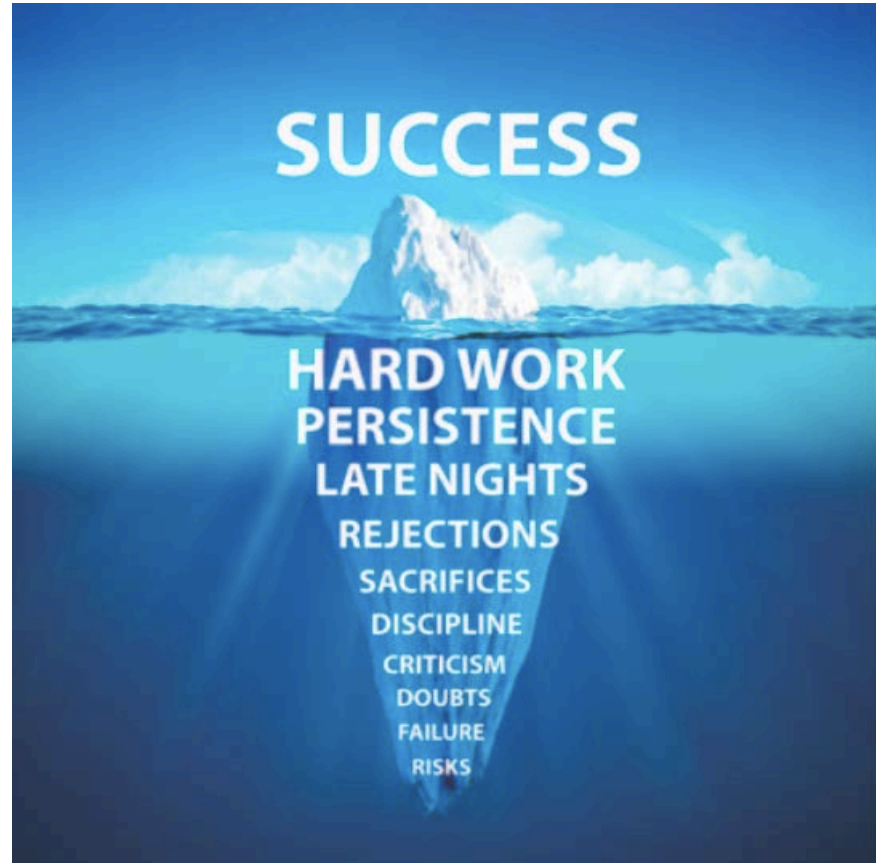
9:27 AM - 26 Sep 2017

2 Retweets 10 Likes



1 2 10





# Where to go for more information

Academy of Medical Sciences <https://acmedsci.ac.uk/grants-and-schemes/grant-schemes/csf>

MRC

NIHR

CRUK

Site specific charities – PCUK, Breast Cancer Now

