

## Keele SPCR internship projects 2025

**Name & email supervisor(s):**

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**Length and dates of internship:**

4 weeks to start Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2025 to 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

**Host department:**

School of Medicine, Keele University

School of Allied Health Professions and Pharmacy.

**How will the internship be conducted:**

In person at the university

Virtual/ from home

Both are possible, depending on preference of student

**Title internship project:**

Scoping review to explore lifestyle interventions in Polymyalgia Rheumatica (PMR)

**Summary of the internship project:** *(max 250 words, can include hyperlinks to further information)***Background:**

Polymyalgia Rheumatica (PMR) is an inflammatory condition predominantly affecting those aged over 50 years, typically treated with glucocorticoids (GCs). Due to GC side effects, including weight gain, and persistent symptoms, patients are often keen to explore other potential treatment options.

Investigating the value of non-pharmacological therapies (e.g. diet and exercise) in PMR has been highlighted as a research priority in 2015 international guideline recommendations. This project will explore what type of lifestyle (e.g. exercise, physical activity, diet, weight) interventions are suggested to be valuable or are used by people living with PMR to inform the future development of a lifestyle intervention.

**Research question:**

What lifestyle advice is recommended/used by people living with Polymyalgia Rheumatica.

**Aim of project:**

To identify lifestyle interventions which are recommended for or used by people living with Polymyalgia Rheumatica.

**Objectives of project and internship:** The successful applicant will:-

- 1) Undertake scoping review training.
- 2) Complete a scoping review protocol addressing the research question.
- 3) Undertake the scoping review as per [JBI Evidence Synthesis](#) [JBI Evidence Synthesis](#) of published and grey literature relating to people with PMR.
- 4) Summarise findings in a report.
- 5) Present findings in a supportive research environment

- 6) Draft a journal article describing project findings and implications for practice.
- 7) Be supported throughout by experienced allied health professional educators.

The intern will have the opportunity to present at a Patient and Public Involvement meeting facilitated by the SPCR to discuss their project with public contributors.

**Learning objectives:**

To gain first-hand experience of:

- Literature reviewing education and training.
- Undertaking a scoping review with supervisory support.
- Presenting in a supported environment with experienced AHP educators.
- Presenting and discussing the research topic with public contributors at a Patient and Public Involvement meeting.
- Writing for publication.

**Any further information:**

Dr Watson and Dr O'Brien are early to mid-career researchers who have a depth and breadth of educational and research experience which includes teaching and research supervision. Dr Watson is a clinical academic Dietitian working as a research fellow in the School of Medicine at Keele University and a Primary Care Network Dietitian. Her recent NIHR SPCR post-doctoral fellowship was intervention development research to inform the development a lifestyle intervention for gout. Dr O'Brien is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Allied Health Professions & Pharmacy at Keele University who's doctoral research explored the role of physiotherapy in PMR. Both work in the internationally renowned Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at Keele University within a highly respected academic research team.

As Allied Health Professionals (Dietitian and Physiotherapist) registered with the Health and Care Professions Council, the supervisors represent an under-represented health professional group in research. Thus, this project will build research supervision capacity in AHP research. The topic of the research will appeal to undergraduate Allied Health Professionals, along with a wide range of other undergraduate students.

Training and resources from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences systematic review methods training will be made available to the student.

Both Dr Watson and Dr O'Brien are invested in lifestyle management for people living with long term conditions. Dr O'Brien was part of a Keele team that published on patient's priorities including non-pharmacological therapies for people living with PMR, a publication which illustrated how lifestyle issues are valued by patients (Muller et al., 2018). Most recently Dr O'Brien has co-produced a new exercise educational resource for people with PMR, which is now being accessed by international audiences. Dr Watson was invited to deliver a national seminar regarding diet and weight by PMR GCA charity as a result of people living with PMR requesting more information on the topic.

The findings from this project will inform the development of a lifestyle intervention for people living with PMR, whilst providing primary care research opportunities for undergraduate students.