Patient Information Sheet

Study Title: Safer and more efficient vital signs monitoring to identify the deteriorating patient

# What is the research about?

This research is part of a larger study which aims to develop a safe, easy to use, evidenced-based instruction manual for measuring patients’ vital signs on general hospital wards.

Measuring vital signs is often referred to as "taking observations". It includes recording measurements like blood pressure, pulse and temperature.

Our part of the study wants to estimate the amount of time nurses spend measuring vital signs and to understand why the amount of time it takes to measure blood pressure, pulse, temperature and other vital signs may differ.

# Why is an evidence-based instruction manual for measuring patients’ vital signs needed?

Taking blood pressure, pulse, temperature and other vital signs is an important part of nursing care for patients in hospital. Any changes help healthcare staff to understand if the people in their care are getting better or more unwell. When changes are spotted early healthcare staff can act quickly if necessary to prevent the person from becoming more unwell.

However, it can be tiring for patients to have lots of blood pressure, pulse, temperature and other vital signs checked over and over again especially when they need to rest. It is also a job that takes up a lot of nursing work time.

At the moment we don’t know how often nurses should be measuring vital signs and how much time it really takes in their working day.

# Overall study

We are hoping to solve this problem by making an instruction manual outlining how often vital signs should be measured. We will find this out by looking at 6 million vital signs measurements from over 200,000 hospital admissions from two hospitals where observations are recorded electronically.

At the first hospital we will look at the vital signs records to find patterns of patients becoming more unwell. We will look to see what changes in vital signs lead to poor outcomes such as going to intensive care or having a heart attack.

The results will inform the instruction manual, which will then be tested on the electronic vital signs measurements at the second hospital.

The overall study will work out how often nurses should take vital signs to keep their patients safe.

Our part of the study measures the amount of time it takes nurses to measure vital signs so together with the overall study we will work out how many nurses are needed to deliver this. All of which will be explained in the instruction manual.

**How will the research make a difference?**

We hope the research makes better guidance for nurses about when and how often to measure pulse, blood pressure, temperature and other vital signs in a way that is safer for patients and easier for nursing workload.

# What will happen to me?

If you are a patient on the ward when observations are happening the observer will introduce themselves to you and briefly explain why they are there and what they will be doing. The observer will observe the nursing staff and record when they start and finish taking vital signs, what they do next and other factors.

There are no risks involved and you do not need to do anything.

In the very unlikely event that the observer witnesses unsafe practice, the observation will be halted and the event reported to hospital management.

# For more information, please contact

Study email: fobs@soton.ac.uk

# What happens if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions. If you remain unhappy about any aspect of this study, please contact the [project](mailto:project)'s chief Investigator: Prof Jim Briggs via email at [fobs-contact-group@port.ac.uk](mailto:fobs-contact-group@port.ac.uk) or by telephone at 023 9284 6438.

Our sponsor: University of Portsmouth

If you have any concerns relating to Research Integrity at the University of Portsmouth, please contact Professor Bob Nichol, Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation by email at [bob.nicol@port.ac.uk](mailto:bob.nichol@port.ac.uk) or by telephone at 023 9284 4472.

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If required, NHS complaints procedures include PALS or Patient Information Service. Find your local service at: <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/nhs-services-and-treatments/what-is-pals-patient-advice-and-liaison-service/>

# Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering taking part in the research.