



## **ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

As you are aware from the NWCR Conditions of Award, all grant holders are required to submit an annual progress report of their research. This is an opportunity for you to share details of the progress of your current study. The collection of data to display the impact of our funding is vital to NWCR. Without these data, we cannot provide evidence of the work and outcomes in cancer made by the charity from our generous donations. Being able to show the impact of the funding helps NWCR to sustainably continue to fund vital cancer research.

The NWCR annual progress report must be submitted within four weeks of the report request. Thank you for completing this form and demonstrating the impact of NWCR funding.

<b>NWCR Award Number</b>	CR1201
<b>Title of Research Project</b>	Living well during and beyond treatment for gynaecological cancer: Exploring the lived experiences of patients undergoing treatment for gynaecological cancer
<b>Principal Investigator/Grant Holder</b>	Dr Lisa Ashmore
<b>Funded Student (<i>where appropriate</i>)</b>	
<b>Institution</b>	Lancaster University
<b>Funding Type (<i>project &amp; call/fellowship/lectureship</i>)</b>	Project
<b>Awarded Budget</b>	£118,787 (+ £18,173.94 costed extension)

<b>Date of Award</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2019
<b>Year of Award eg. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> etc.</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Date Award Commenced (<i>If the award was not activated within six months of the approval date, please specify why there was a delay and detail when approvals for an extension were requested and awarded</i>)</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> May 2019

**Please summarise your project and detail the primary and secondary objectives in your original proposal. Please provide this in lay terms (Approx 250 words).**

Women undergoing radiotherapy for gynaecological cancer can experience psychosocial and physical symptoms that impact, in particular, on their sexuality and mental health. Over half of women treated with radiotherapy for gynaecological cancer still experience decreased sexual function 14 weeks after the completion of their treatment. Many worry about the status of their sex life and, whilst the literature acknowledges that support is necessary for all women following treatment, the focus is frequently on developing technological treatment techniques, rather than on information and support.

This project explores how patients experience radiotherapy for gynaecological cancer using interviews and diaries from initial consent for treatment to six months after treatment has finished. Specifically, this will focus on:

- coping with radiotherapy
- expectations of radiotherapy
- levels of support needed

The narratives will be shared via a website and, at the end of the project, a book will be published on the accounts of patients which will be shared with other patients with gynaecological cancer.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- a) Collect narrative accounts of patient experiences of gynae-radiotherapy from consent to six months post-treatment using written, visual or voice recording methods.
- b) Better understand the practical demands placed upon patients receiving radiotherapy.
- c) Develop an understanding of how interrelated identities shape experiences of gynae-radiotherapy e.g. sexuality, disability or age.
- d) Explore how individuals mobilise resources to cope with demands of gynae-radiotherapy.
- e) Develop a range of resources for use by patients and practitioners, including a searchable website and a patient support tool containing an anthology of narratives.

**Please summarise your work to date and indicate to what extent you have achieved your primary and secondary objectives. Please clarify any delays or difficulties experienced and give reasons and responses taken. Please provide this in lay terms (Approx 500 words).**

The coronavirus outbreak in the UK led to the suspension of research studies at Clatterbridge Cancer Centre. At this time, this project was due to commence recruitment. Participant recruitment materials had been sent to be printed and we anticipated the first patient could have been recruited w/c 16<sup>th</sup> March. As soon as research studies resume at Clatterbridge Cancer Centre, we will begin patient recruitment.

Consequently, in discussions with the NWCR team, a proposal was submitted for a five-month costed extension for the project. The research team proposed an adjusted, virtual methodology to supplement the original research aim of understanding how radiotherapy impacts on social, personal and sexual lives. For this 'sister' project, the eligibility criteria was widened to not only

include patients but also their carers, friends and family. Unlike the main project, all recruitment, consent and data collection procedures will be remote and not involve face to face processes or NHS resources.

At the time of writing, the approvals for this project have been granted and we are waiting to contact networks to begin recruitment.

Whilst the arrangements were put in place for the extension, Lancaster University agreed to support the PDRA, Dr Hilary Stewart, for a period of furlough for two months. The virtual project will therefore recommence on 1<sup>st</sup> July when Dr Stewart returns from furlough.

Summary of work to date:

- Recruitment of PDRA (and recruitment of maternity cover, commencing 13/3/2020)
- Development of contracts between Lancaster University and Clatterbridge Cancer Centre
- Co-design workshop where project methods and materials were developed
- Design and evaluation of project materials by research team
- Monthly meetings of whole research team and fortnightly meetings of LU Team
- LU research Team familiarisation with key hospital sites
- Steering group established and meeting held (project materials and methods were approved)
- Approval from NHS Ethics Committee
- Approval from Health Research Authority
- Adoption of study by National Institute for Health Research
- Capacity and Capability review by Clatterbridge Cancer Centre
- Acceptance of preliminary research paper at CHRONIC Living Conference in Copenhagen (due April 2020)
- Development of preliminary research paper for publication in high status medical sociology journal
- Development of project website, including 4 regular blog posts
- Regular reading group meetings, including colleagues across research Departments, networking and developing literature review
- Development of virtual project including all participant information materials and data collection processes
- Approval for virtual project from Lancaster University Faculty of Health and Medicine (FHM) Research Ethics Committee

**Please detail any new knowledge generated from your work. Please list any presentations or publications.**

- Acceptance of preliminary research paper at CHRONIC Living Conference in Copenhagen (conference cancelled April 2020 due to Coronavirus)
- Development of preliminary research paper for publication in high status medical sociology journal
- Development of project website, including 4 regular blog posts

**Please detail any products or services developed from your work. Where there is a registered patent, please provide details and confirm NWCR has been acknowledged as the funder of the work leading to the patent or IP.**

n/a

**Please detail any evidence generated from your work that has or is likely to influence cancer policy or practice. If this is likely to lead to further research, please specify.**

Due to coronavirus pandemic and consequent suspension of project, participant recruitment has not been possible and hence, as yet, there has not been significant new knowledge generated.

**Please list any further funding stimulated from your work. Provide details of the project grants, awards received and the funder or partnerships made.**

**Please highlight the three most important outcomes of this research up to now.**

- Interdisciplinary Co-design workshop (with patients, patient representatives, health practitioners and academics) where project methods and materials were developed
- Development of project website, including regular blog posts (4 up to now) written by a range of contributors
- Regulatory approvals (Both NHS REC and Lancaster University REC, HRA approvals and adoption of study by NIHR)

**Please provide details of how the funding has resulted in either career progression of the funded researcher, awards or recognitions given to funded researchers i.e. PhD awards completed, poster/presentation prizes, and the capacity to provide service or facilities by the funded researchers i.e. supervision of MRes or MDs.**

The funding has supported a Band 7 radiographer employed at Clatterbridge Cancer Centre to develop research and patient involvement skills. Working with the clinical research and academic team, this funding is enabling the development of research capacity within the Radiotherapy workforce. The conference paper acceptance also recognises the interdisciplinary work of the project.

**Please detail any engagement activities you have been involved with that acknowledge the funding received from NWCR or promote cancer research/scientific engagement with the community.**

- Co-design workshop where project methods and materials were developed
- Development of project website, including 4 regular blog posts
- Steering group established with membership including patient, care professionals and academics and meeting held (project materials and methods were approved)

**We would be pleased to receive any additional comments you would like to make regarding this NWCR award.**

We were really disappointed that progress on the project had to be suspended due to coronavirus pandemic. We were on the pivot of starting data collection and would have been well on the way with that had recruitment not been suspended. We would like to thank NWCR for supporting us to work on the sister, virtual project and hope to have some results to share by the time of the 2-year report.

We would welcome the opportunity to present our work within your networks once meetings are allowed to begin again.

Please attach evidence in the form of pictures (posters/awards) and publications where necessary. We would like to share your successes with our supporters.

Thank you for completing the form.  
Please return it by e-mail to