

I-PREHAB NEWSLETTER

Issue 3



Farewell to our I-Prehab Chief Investigator Professor Jane Hopkinson

Professor Jane Hopkinson retired from the School of Healthcare Sciences, Cardiff University, at the end of September 2024. Jane trained as a nurse in London and worked for 20 years as a cancer, palliative and end of life care nurse in hospitals and hospice before becoming an academic researcher.

In her 20-year career in research, Jane has gained international recognition as a nurse, and researcher with an expertise in supportive care in people with cancer. Jane has authored 111 peer-reviewed publications and sat on many influential national and international committees and funding bodies.

Jane led the I-Prehab Project from the initial idea, through to successful application for NIHR funding, and has been Chief Investigator during completion of the first two stages of I-Prehab research.

We are grateful for Jane's kindness, professionalism, and inspiration. She will be greatly missed!

We wish Jane a well-deserved and happy retirement, enjoying time with her family, friends, and her garden.



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Investigating prehab service across Wales - Data collection completed for I-Prehab Case Study (Phase 2) research

The purpose of Phase 2 of the I-Prehab project was to investigate, current prehabilitation (prehab) practices in all NHS organisations treating cancer patients in Wales. The I-Prehab research team have been working hard over the past year to recruit patients and health professionals from seven NHS cancer services providing prehab across Wales, from Cardiff to Wrexham to Pembrokeshire. Patients receiving prehab prior to treatment for upper gastrointestinal, bowel, lung or prostate cancer participated in the research.

Our researchers observed and gathered data from 120 patient appointments for cancer prehab from six NHS services across Wales and recorded 36 in-depth research interviews with patients. We spoke with patients from different backgrounds, including those living in the poorest areas of Wales and people from minority ethnic groups. A group discussion with cancer care workers was also carried out at each of the seven NHS sites.

A large amount of data has been collected and good progress is being made with the analysis. Findings will show what and how cancer prehab is offered, and to whom. The analysis of case study data will also help us to understand what helps cancer patients to participate in and benefit from prehab, as well as barriers that hinder or prevent this.

From this research, we have identified ways to make it easier for people to access and participate in cancer prehab. In the next phase of the project, these ideas will be discussed with cancer patients and healthcare providers to create the I-Prehab educational package. This educational package will help cancer workers to raise awareness and encourage participation in prehab services. It will be designed to reduce barriers and provide support, especially for people from poorer areas and minority ethnic groups.

We are very grateful for the help and support of the healthcare professionals involved in the I-Prehab Project. We also thank patients, their family members and carers who contributed to our research to help future cancer patients.



Welcome to our new I-Prehab Chief Investigator Professor Shea Palmer

Shea is a Professor of Physiotherapy and has expertise in many different areas of research. He has experience of developing and evaluating complex interventions, including prehabilitation packages for people awaiting knee and hip replacements. One of his PhD students has explored the experiences of cancer patients undergoing radiotherapy, specifically the discomfort associated with lying still for long periods and what we can do to improve that. Shea is very excited about working with the team to deliver the final two stages of the I-Prehab project.



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Meet the I-Prehab project team:

Meet Dr Nichola Gale, Senior Lecturer Physiotherapy, Cardiff University and I-Prehab project Patient and Public Involvement lead.

Nichola moved to Cardiff in 2006 to start her PhD and became a Physiotherapy lecturer in 2014. Her role involves teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students, supervising PhD students, and undertaking research. Nichola works with patient and community groups to involve them in the I-Prehab Project. With the help of the I-Prehab team, Nichola has set up a Public Advisory Group and the I-Prehab Community group to work with the research team. These are diverse groups of people, interested in improving access to cancer prehabilitation services, who provide insight and knowledge gained from their lived experience, to inform I-Prehab research design and analysis.

What makes I-Prehab a great project to work on?

"It is fantastic to work with people from diverse personal and professional backgrounds to improve the lives of people affected by cancer."

How do you look after your wellbeing?

Nichola enjoys being active. She walks with a rambling group and tries to grow vegetables (with mixed success!). Nichola also likes travelling (cycling and walking where possible), music festivals, and spending time with friends and family.



Coming soon ...

Phase 3 Co-production of Inclusive Prehabilitation

We are getting ready for the next stage of creating I-Prehab with people who have been affected by cancer. We will do this through Co-production, which means working in partnership with people who use health and care services, carers, and communities.

We have gained ethical approval for this activity, planned the co-production workshops, and found community groups interested in participating. We have also planned facilitator training for people involved in leading these workshops, to ensure we capture everyone's views on how to deliver prehabilitation.

We will hold 10 workshops with people affected by cancer across Wales. These will mostly be in person, with some online to ensure we include everyone who wants to take part. During the workshop, we will share our case study findings and ask how prehab can be made more available and more acceptable to people from different backgrounds. We will also ask people how we can support individuals to continue to engage with prehabilitation.

We welcome further contributions to the newsletter, so if you have something to share, please email I-Prehab@cardiff.ac.uk

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