

WMER

The West Midlands Evidence Repository (WMER) : a consortium project to connect NHS staff and the public with NHS research (poster)

Item Type	Conference Output
Authors	Toft, Suzanne;Moore, Gavin
Citation	Toft, S. & Moore, G. (2024). The West Midlands Evidence Repository (WMER): A Consortium Project to Connect NHS Staff and the Public with NHS Research. Health Libraries Group Conference 20-21 June 2024.
Publisher	Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust;South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust;George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust
Rights	Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International
Download date	2026-03-10 03:29:29
Item License	http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14200/6647

The West Midlands Evidence Repository (WMER): A Consortium Project to Connect NHS Staff and the Public with NHS Research

Suzanne Toft, Knowledge & Evidence Specialist – Lead, Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, suzanne.toft@nhs.net
 Gavin Moore, Knowledge and Library Service Manager, South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust and George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust, Gavin.Moore@swft.nhs.uk

Background

The NHS is an organisation that not only utilises research in its day-to-day activities, but also produces a great deal of research itself. Unlike research produced within higher education (HE) institutions however, the ability of people to connect with research created within the NHS is not always as easy.

This project is about the development and implementation of a system, an institutional repository, to support people to connect with our research. These systems are commonplace in HE, but relatively less common in the NHS. The implementation of this system and this project however has a distinctly NHS approach, which looks not only to develop connections between research and its audience, but also other connections as well.

The Consortium: connecting NHS Trusts

The West Midlands Evidence Repository (WMER) initially represents a project which has connected a group of NHS libraries in a consortium. Some members were new to institutional repositories, while others had taken part in pilots or had previously had their own. WMER, however, was to be a new co-operative to share expertise and learning, as well as resources across the region. Unlike HE, where organisations generally, with occasional exceptions, work alone, this project was to contain eight organisations at its start with an aim to add more once WMER became established. The group now contains nine organisations.

But what is an institutional repository?

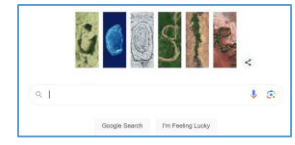
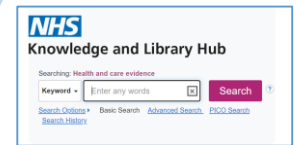
An institutional repository serves as a digital archive for an organisation's research output, and is a place to collate and store metadata, as well as potentially full text of research outputs. It is a centralised platform for storing, preserving, and disseminating research materials. If the full text is archived, for example, it can often also be made publicly accessible, ensuring wider accessibility. This is facilitated through Creative Commons licenses.



Image 1: WMER Homepage



Image 2: Item record with full text. Image 3: NHS Knowledge and Library Hub. Image 4: Google search



Connecting with research

WMER primarily acts as a tool to connect people to research outputs. Within our organisations, it enables the mobilisation of knowledge and helps to raise the awareness for staff of research within their own Trusts. However, the repository also connects the wider research community and public to research produced by the member Trusts.

It is important for our research to be visible as it raises the research profile of the member organisations. This visibility increases the impact of the research and enables global shared learning. It also provides public accountability, as public money is spent on our research through our staff time. Making the research available in full text amplifies these advantages, by making it even more accessible to everyone.

WMER also connects people to research that is both formally published content in journals and books etc. as well as grey literature. The collating of grey literature is particularly desired in the NHS setting as it is commonplace to undertake improvement projects and other similar activities and create content that is often otherwise lost. This can include reports, poster presentations, improvement projects, conference papers, and potentially theses and dissertations.

To enable ease of access and discoverability the repository is integrated into the NHS Knowledge and Library Hub, so NHS staff can access it easily using our national discovery service. It is also mined by Google, so the content can be accessed globally by researchers and members of the public.

Connecting researchers

While the repository connects people with research it also serves to connect people to researchers as well. Within NHS organisations there are often pockets of researchers. Some can act in a coordinated manner through a research department, such as with clinical trials, but there are also a host of other researchers who often act independently, such as those doing improvement projects or critically appraised topics.

On a basic level WMER gives our staff the opportunity to see who is undertaking research in their department or the wider organisation, as WMER is structured by, and can be searched by, organisation.

In addition, WMER also allows the collaboration between researchers across the consortium and beyond. A feature that can help facilitate this is the researcher profile, which can contain details about an individual and their research interests alongside their publications.



Image 5: Researcher profiles list WMER

WMER is now approximately 18 months old and is still growing. Six more Trusts are interested in joining the consortium and new material is constantly being added. We hope that the repository will help to further develop local and regional research cultures, raise the impact of the member organisations and facilitate collaborative research across the region.

Visit WMER at: <https://westmid.openrepository.com/>