



BOPA Position Statement

BOPA's contribution to supporting pharmacy professionals in joint clinical and research (clinical academic) roles

On 29th February 2024, NHS England published a report of a UK survey of pharmacy professionals' involvement in research. The report provides results of two surveys conducted in May 2022. The first survey was sent to individual pharmacy staff and the second to organisations.

The report emphasises the need for clinical academics in pharmacy to lead on research and train future generations of pharmacy researchers. A clinical academic is a pharmacy researcher who combines clinical work with research. A number of actions were recommended. Protected time, managerial / research specific support were highlighted as enablers to pharmacy staff undertaking research. Barriers included funding, capacity building and ongoing posts.

The full report can be found [here](#).

BOPA fully supports all the recommendations and is committed to developing, supporting and embedding clinical academic posts into clinical practice.

Many pharmacy professionals take on research delivery roles such as principle investigators.¹ As an organisation, we strive to support our members to develop their research ideas and lead on delivering their own research to improve the care of people with cancer.

What is BOPA doing to develop and support the role of clinical academics in pharmacy?

BOPA believes that we are trailblazing in our offering to our members. Through our research strategy, we are increasing awareness and capability of those pursuing the clinical academic pathway, preparing the next generation of clinical academic pharmacy workforce.

This position statement describes BOPA's proactive approach and commitment to supporting members to develop their research skills and build capacity for oncology pharmacy research. In recognition of the unmet research skills needs of members, BOPA has actively been progressing its offerings, leading to significant practice change and policy impact, both nationally and globally. For example, a national review of paclitaxel premedication regimens has resulted in the removal of histamine-2 (H₂) antagonists from UK standard practice.²



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The research offering has come a long way since the research subcommittee (previously known as the Audit and Research Committee) was first established in 2014. The key purpose of the BOPA research subcommittee is to develop the research capacity and capability of members with a vision to grow the next generation of clinical academics in oncology and haemato-oncology pharmacy practice.

The BOPA webpage hosts a research hub providing a huge range of resources to get members started on their research journey, regardless of previous research experience. Here is a summary of what is available to members:

1. [Support for starting your first research project](#)
2. [Promoting members' research initiatives](#)
3. [Funding opportunities for you to develop your research skills or complete your project](#)
4. [Opportunities to join experienced research teams or multicentre projects](#)
5. [Opportunity to get involved with the BOPA Research subcommittee](#)

1. Support for starting your first research project:

BOPA facilitates mentorship through a **Research support/Mentor list** where you can look for mentors with specific skills and interests who can guide you during your research journey. Mentors are oncology or haemato-oncology pharmacists with extensive clinical and/or research experience, and many are practicing at advanced or consultant level. Mentors can support you to identify and refine your research ideas or questions, review drafts of your research proposals and signpost you to collaborators and funding opportunities, via the [BOPA National Collaborative Healthcare Research Project Proposal](#) initiative. Support with research methodology and writing conference abstracts or project proposals is also available here:

- [My research webinars](#) – several recorded webinars are available to paid members to describe different research methods or designs e.g., conducting interviews and statistical approaches, and how to submit a successful BOPA abstract.
- [Research Hub](#) – Abstracts from past BOPA conferences are published in the Journal of Oncology Pharmacy Practice and are also available on the BOPA website. These could help with generating ideas for your abstracts/project proposals or initiate collaborative research ideas.



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2. Promoting members' research initiatives:

- All accepted abstracts to the annual BOPA conference, are published in the Journal of Oncology Pharmacy Practice.
- Members are encouraged to present their work at the monthly [My research webinars](#) . Webinars are recorded so you can access them at any time. More recently, external speakers have been invited to talk about topics relevant to members, e.g., UK Early Career Researchers Cancer Group. Each year at the BOPA conference there are dedicated research streams showcasing members' outstanding research, and opportunities to learn about research methodology and current funding opportunities.

3. Funding opportunities to give you time to develop your research skills or complete your project:

- There are three grants available. Two of these are in collaboration with other funders. The first is the [PRUK/BOPA grant application](#) for small grants of around £10,000, the second is a partnership with the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) for an [NIHR ICA programme pre- doctoral fellowship](#). The final grant is a [BOPA training and development grant](#).
- See [My research webinars](#) for recordings of experiences of BOPA members awarded grants.

4. Opportunities to join experienced research teams or multicentre projects:

- The [BOPA National Collaborative Healthcare Research Project Proposal](#) initiative facilitates collaboration among BOPA members from multiple NHS Trusts/other organisations across the UK. This allows access to a larger number of participants/real world data and support from senior specialists/researchers. Members can express interest in joining a collaborative project or submit a proposal to link up with other members.
- The **BOPA Research subcommittee** reviews all collaborative project proposals to offer guidance with setting up and delivering the project and can link different researchers with similar interests looking to expand their studies.



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5. Opportunity to get involved with the BOPA Research subcommittee:

- Contact the BOPA research subcommittee (research@bopa.org.uk) to get involved in supporting your research activities. The subcommittee meets monthly and leads on multiple work streams including the organisation of the My Research webinars and the marking and selection of the submitted abstracts for the annual conference.
- We rotate the subcommittee chair every 3 years allowing members to gain invaluable research leadership experience.

Reference List

1. Chambers P, Forster MD, Patel A, Duncan N, Kipps E, Wong ICK, Jani Y, Wei L. Development and validation of a risk score (Delay-7) to predict the occurrence of a treatment delay following cycle 1 chemotherapy. European Society for Medical Oncology Open 2023;8(1)1-8. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esmoop.2022.100743>.
2. Foreman E, Polwart C, Walker A, Chambers P. Histamine-2 (H2) antagonists can be safely removed from standard paclitaxel premedication regimens. BrJ Clin Pharmacol. 2022;88(9):4191-4198. doi:10.1111/bcp.153634198FOREMANET AL.

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