Abstracts

19 CHALLENGES AND FACILITATORS OF OCCUPATIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGY RESEARCH IN THE UK: A SURVEY OF Stakeholders’ PERCEPTIONS
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10.1136/oemed-2013-101717.19

Introduction This study is part of a larger programme exploring current challenges to and facilitators of occupational epidemiology (OE) research in the UK. The programme was motivated by the current UK-based regulatory and ethical frameworks, which have impeded research of clear public value, despite being designed to provide public protection. In a previous phase, key UK-based OE researchers were interviewed to explore their experiences/perceptions of these issues. This study aimed to explore whether the broader OE stakeholders’ views/experiences are similar to those of the key-researchers, and whether they report experiencing other challenges/facilitators.

Methods A questionnaire was developed based on themes identified in the interview phase, and the literature. A convenience sample of stakeholders, comprising mostly researchers, was identified from the delegate list of “International Conference on Epidemiology in Occupational Health” (Oxford-UK, 2011) followed by snowball sampling.

Results The response rate was 37.5% (54/144). The top challenges identified were: low response rate (86.8%); inaccessibility (79.7%); inaccuracy and incompleteness (68.0%) of workers’ records; lack of funding (73.1%); and difficulties accessing data/patients due to ethical and governance regulations (67.3%). Top facilitators were: government interest and support (87.0%); pre-study negotiations, with relevant stakeholders, for approval (85.1%). These findings support key-researchers’ views although the emphasis varied slightly.

Conclusions Practical challenges were highly ranked by the respondents, whereas key-researchers had placed greater emphasis on the lack of resources. This is, perhaps, because key-researchers deal mostly with setting-up and funding aspects of studies; other members are mainly involved in the operational aspects of studies. Especially noteworthy is that OE community is currently small and scattered in the UK; key-researchers are retiring and junior ones are difficult to recruit. There is a need for a national professional body/society in this field to promote communication, offer opportunities for networking and research and lobby for its interests.

21 TRENDS IN UK-BASED OCCUPATIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGY AND PUBLIC HEALTH EPIDEMIOLOGY RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS
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10.1136/oemed-2013-101717.21

Background The study is part of a larger programme exploring the challenges to and facilitators of occupational epidemiology (OE) research in the UK. The OE field is currently facing many challenges. Based on findings from a previous phase of this study, lack of human and financial resources is of utmost concern for key-researchers in this area. The challenges are perceived to have increased over time resulting in a smaller and more scattered OE community, and subsequently less influential. These challenges are perceived to have negatively affected its members’ ability to conduct high quality research projects compared to those within similar fields, yet perceived more successful, such as public health epidemiology (PHE). This phase aims to explore how time trends in research publications in OE compare with those in PHE, in the cancer field. Cancer is a well-established topic in both fields; thus, rich data is anticipated for analysis.

Methods A systematic search, using EBSCO/Medline database (1960–2011), will be conducted using a strategy combining descriptors listed in the EBSCO Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) Thesaurus primarily; epidemiology, neoplasms, and UK. Cancer epidemiology studies, published in English and conducted in the UK, will be selected. Data will be extracted and analysed using bibliometric methods including; counts of papers,