

## **The role of participant governed networks in implementing healthcare innovations into practice. Evidence from the UK NHS**

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### **Abstract**

Due to the increasing level of underfunding and the aging population, the United Kingdom National Health Service (NHS) is under pressure to find innovative ways to improving patient care and service quality. Different research has emerged that suggest the importance of 'evidence into practice' within healthcare networks, as one of the means of promoting efficient and effective healthcare. However, a review of extant literature reveals that limited research has examined the value of participant-governed networks on the implementation of new evidence into practice within the UK NHS. This study therefore draws on the theories of the network and network governance to present an empirical evidence of how participant-governed networks influence the implementation of new evidence into practice. The study is one component of a large-scale, collaborative, longitudinal project examining the value of the West of England Academic Health Science Network (WEAHSN). Underpinned by a multiple case study methodology, semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used to obtain data from five maternity units, the WEAHSN's team members, industry partners' and general practices across the WEAHSN's region. While the first case dealt with the use of Magnesium Sulphate to decrease the incidence of Cerebral Palsy in preterm labour, the second case examined the optimisation of anticoagulation use in the reduction of Atrial Fibrillation related stroke. Preliminary results revealed that informal communication, flexible implementation strategy and incentives are the key factors that influenced the implementation of new evidence into practice in complex healthcare networks such as the UK NHS.

### **Keywords:**

Networks; Governance; English NHS.