

Dear <name of potential interviewee>,

We are a team of international researchers currently undertaking a project looking into publication and related bias in health services and delivery research (HSDR). The project is funded by the UK National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Health Services & Delivery Research Programme:

<https://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/programmes/hsdr/157106/#/>

For the purpose of this project, publication and related bias refers to any potential issues that might exist between the generation of evidence in research studies and the accessibility and use of the evidence by key decision makers and stakeholders. These include those who fund, carry out and publish HSDR as well as those who use or who might be affected by findings from HSDR. Publication and related bias has received substantial attention in clinical research, and measures such as clinical trial registration have been put in place to prevent its occurrence and minimise its impact. Nevertheless this issue appears to be much less studied in HSDR, which is used to inform the organisation and delivery of health services for the whole population. It is therefore important to investigate the issue to improve our understanding of its potential occurrence and its impacts if it exists.

We would like to carry out interviews with key stakeholders of HSDR. Given your role as a <insert appropriate role description for the potential interviewee>, I am contacting you to see if you would kindly agree to take part in one of the interviews. As our main aim is to explore individual stakeholder's perception and experience (including non-experience) of publication and related bias, you do not need to be an expert or to have specific knowledge about this topic to take part.

For your information, I attach with this e-mail a participant information leaflet which includes further details concerning the interview. The interview can be carried out through telephone/ internet or face-to-face at a date/time that is convenient for you, and will last about 30 – 45 minutes. Your participation in the interview is completely voluntary; but if you can assist with this, it will greatly help us to understand practical issues surrounding this topic and to shape recommendations for future HSDR practice to ensure decisions related to the organisation and delivery of health services are based on unbiased evidence.

Please let me know whether you will be able to take part in the interview by replying to this e-mail at your earliest convenient time. If you can participate, I will contact you to arrange a suitable date/time and to obtain an informed consent from you. In case you will not be able to participate, please kindly provide the reason(s). As your reply is very important for us, I will send you a reminder e-mail if I do not hear from you within two weeks.

Thank you in anticipation of your help and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Iestyn Williams