

NEWSLETTER

Vol.1

Dear valued reader,

We are excited to launch our new quarterly Oxford-RCGP Research & Surveillance Centre (**RSC**) PPIE newsletter. In each newsletter we'll be exploring topics about surveillance and news from our research.

We work closely with UK Health Security Agency (**UKHSA**), formerly known as Public Health England.

Our work tries to understand how diseases spread in the population. This ultimately aims to help improve public health.

Opportunities to get involved

Current Opportunities: Join Our Research Community

We are looking for voices like yours to help shape our upcoming projects. Your "lived experience" is the most valuable tool we have to ensure our research makes a real-world difference.

- **Diabetes Care Research:** We are developing a new study focused on diabetes care and are eager to speak with patients or carers who have experience with **diabetes, kidney disease, or foot disease**. If you would like to help us shape this project, please get in touch.
- **Share Your IID3 Experience:** Did you participate in the **IID3 study**? We want to hear from you! We are holding informal feedback groups and interviews in **May and June** to learn what the experience was like for you. If you're interested, please email us with your age group (e.g., 50–60) and your general location (e.g., North of England).

Spaces are limited, if you take part you'll be reimbursed at **£27.50 for 1 hour**.



Later in the year there will be opportunities coming up to take part in discussion groups and informal interviews.

We will explore topics which we hope you'll find interesting! These include:

- Where is swabbing best carried out for patients? E.g., at the surgery or using a self-swab?
- What are the symptoms and signs of a respiratory infection? How are these assessed by your GP?
- Our weekly surveillance reports & dashboards

What is surveillance and why is it important?

Surveillance involves collecting information from patients to better understand how diseases spread in the community. The research and surveillance centre in Oxford does this by collecting biological samples from volunteer patients who consent to taking part. The information gathered can help governments to better promote public health. For example, it may help to understand which types of flu are circulating and how effective vaccines are. They can also be helpful for highlighting unexpected changes in the population, for example a rise in the rate of a particular infection.

How is surveillance carried out?

We mainly collect samples for surveillance when patients visit their surgery. For example, when a patient visits their surgery with an infection or flu, the GP or nurse will ask if a swab can be taken for surveillance. These are collected from the nose and throat - much like the covid swabs we all got to know well during the pandemic. Blood samples may also be taken for surveillance.

Any samples taken are voluntary and are only ever taken with consent from the patient. We try to make sure these samples are not disruptive to patients or the surgery.

To help with analysing the data for surveillance, the results from the swabs and blood tests are combined with the patient's medical records. This data is de-identified to protect patient confidentiality. This information can then be used to understand patterns of diseases in England.

We urge all patients to present to their registered GP whenever they are experiencing symptoms of a respiratory virus.

RSC Patient & Public Involvement & Engagement Group

A review of our October PPIE meeting

A huge thank you to everyone who attended our first Surveillance PPIE meeting in October 2025. We had a fantastic session reviewing the RSC's annual report on infectious disease patterns.

Your feedback on how to make these reports easier to navigate was very helpful. We are taking these suggestions forward to help make sure our future reports are accessible to everyone.

We'd also like to recruit members of a patient/public panel who will meet regularly to discuss these topics. No experience is necessary, as all topics will be fully explained before we ask for your feedback.

If you are interested in any of the opportunities you have read about in this newsletter, please contact us by email: rscppie@phc.ox.ac.uk.

Invite us to talk at your surgery's Patient Participation Group

We'd love to come and talk at your surgery to explain more about the surveillance work that we do and about any upcoming opportunities. Please do bring this up at your next surgery's meeting. You can express your interest by emailing us (practiceenquiries@phc.ox.ac.uk).

Lastly, we'd like to say a big thank you for your support and interest, the work we do would not be possible without the contributions made by the patients and the public.

**Best wishes,
RSC PPIE Team**

