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Media Release

RUH's Super Rehab research programme tackles heart disease

The Cardiovascular research team at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust is looking at how an innovative lifestyle intervention, called Super Rehab, could become an effective new treatment option, helping to save lives and reduce hospital procedures, while also cutting costs to the NHS.

Super Rehab is all about testing the impact of a high-level, well-resourced one-to-one support programme for patients with heart disease. It offers more than just advice, providing a tailored diet and exercise programme personalised to the individual with support to make sure the changes are practical and can become part of a daily routine.

Working in partnership with the University of Bath, and with support from RUHX, the hospital's charity, RUH experts have already seen that this approach can be life-changing.

Super Rehab is being offered to patients earlier in the evolution of their forms of heart disease than other rehab programmes, aiming to halt its progression, help patients feel better, and potentially even reverse the disease process and turn the clock back.

If a CT scan shows that a patient is at risk of developing cardiovascular disease, or at risk of a heart attack, they will be offered the chance to join the Super Rehab programme.

Patients are offered Super Rehab in addition to standard treatments, and the research team are collaborating with researchers at the University of Oxford to track the impact using the very latest heart imaging techniques and industry partners for heart rhythm monitoring, alongside blood tests and fitness tests.

The research is starting with two studies, one for coronary heart disease and one for atrial fibrillation, involving just under 100 patients across both studies.

Dr Ali Khavandi, Consultant Cardiologist, said: “There has been an evolution in technology over the last 10 years that allows us to treat more and more complex illness and make a difference to our patients.

“Now, we have the exciting opportunity to focus back a few steps and look at what we can do to prevent patients from getting to this stage in the first place, by looking at how dietary and lifestyle changes, such as getting more exercise, can improve, or even reverse, chronic illness.”

Andy, one of the patients taking part in the Super Rehab research, said: “The programme has been a change in culture – I’m now used to regular exercise and the change in my food intake has become the norm. It’s been life-changing for me.”

As well as Consultant Cardiologist Dr Ali Khavandi, the research team includes Dr Jonathan Rodrigues, Consultant Cardiothoracic Radiologist & Honorary Senior Lecturer at the University of Bath, Prof Dylan Thompson, Professor of Human Physiology at the University of Bath, Prof Fiona Gillison, Professor of Behavioural Psychology at the University of Bath, and Dr John Graby and Dr David Murphy, Cardiology Clinical Research Fellows.

Dr Dylan Thompson, Professor of Human Physiology at the University of Bath and Co-Director of the university’s Centre for Nutrition, Exercise and Metabolism, said: “We are delighted to be working with the team from the RUH in this new collaboration.

“The potential of Super Rehab to directly benefit patients and make a difference to current treatment and care pathways is very exciting.”

Rhyannon Boyd, Head of RUHX, said: “We are elated to be supporting this unique and leading research project at the RUH, knowing that our £300,000 funding has enabled the team to establish their relationship with other academic institutions including the Universities of Bath, Bristol and Oxford, so that they can work together on their first study which focuses on coronary heart disease. We hope it will be an extra extraordinary success.”

You can find out lots more information about the Super Rehab project on the RUH website: [Royal United Hospitals Bath | Further Info \(ruh.nhs.uk\)](https://www.royalunitedhospitals.com/bath/further-info) and [watch this video](#) which explains what Super Rehab is all about.

To support this project or further innovative research at the RUH, please visit ruh.org.uk

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Notes to Editor:

RUHX is the official NHS charity of the Royal United Hospitals Bath. We're here to make our place healthier, happier and stronger for the future. And we do that by supporting the extra extraordinary work that leads to exceptional care for everyone.

RUHX is dedicated to putting the 'extra' in extraordinary care for everyone who needs it – whether that means funding innovative new technologies or collaborating with groups tackling health inequalities. We're supporting our staff to do what they do best, taking care of the people who take care of you. We're helping more people to live healthier, happier lives, reducing the pressure on our hospitals by empowering positive change. And we're working closely with community partners to ensure the most positive future for Bath and beyond.

For more information about RUHX visit: www.ruhx.org.uk

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust provides acute treatment and care for a catchment population of around 500,000 people in Bath, and the surrounding towns and villages in North East Somerset and Western Wiltshire. The hospital provides healthcare to the population served by four Clinical Commissioning Groups: Bath & North East Somerset CCG, Wiltshire CCG, Somerset CCG and South Gloucestershire CCG.

The Trust provides 759 beds and a comprehensive range of acute services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

In 2015 The Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust acquired the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust. The RNHRD treats patients from across the country offering services in rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME, cancer related fatigue and fatigue linked to other long term conditions such as multiple sclerosis.

The RUH is changing - we have an exciting programme of redevelopment underway transforming our site and further improving the services we provide. The Trust has opened the purpose-built RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre and is now working towards the new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit_for_the_future

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk

Chair:
Alison Ryan

Chief Executive:
Cara Charles-Barks

