



Dr Enrique Castro-Sánchez

Lecturer, Honorary Consultant Nurse in Communication and Patient Engagement

RESEARCH: HEALTH LITERACY, GLOBAL NURSING, INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL, APPROPRIATE USE OF ANTIBIOTICS

How did you get into research?

I have always been curious and interested in research. In clinical practice, for example, I did some studies about new medications against HIV and side effects, as well as the benefits of new ways of working for nurses. In 2011 I started my PhD, and then in 2012 I came to Imperial with the sole remit of leading and supporting research about infection prevention and control and appropriate use of antibiotics. As newly appointed lecturer at City, University of London I will increase research capability for undergraduate and postgraduate students.

What do you enjoy about research?

I really enjoy the creativity of finding answers and solutions, and the opportunity to look at any problem or situation from many different angles and scales, from the microbiological to the international policymaking, from the clinical to the behavioural or economic. I also really enjoy being part of a team of people with so many different skills, interests, and backgrounds, etc. The opportunity to work with patients and citizens, facilitating their engagement and involvement in research, and ensuring that our research findings are understandable and meaningful to society, is also an area that I very much enjoy.

What was the most difficult aspect of doing your PhD?

I suppose that the most demanding thing was completing my PhD whilst working. The support from my colleagues at the HPRU, especially Prof Alison Holmes, and my PhD supervisor, Prof Miguel Richart, was absolutely fantastic and made such a difference. Sometimes it was also a bit difficult to keep up with the literature for both the PhD and my area of work!

What difference has your research training and experience made to your career?

My career has expanded thanks to the training and experience that I have gained during my PhD and working at Imperial College. In addition to the technical skills, I have had the opportunity to present at national and international conferences, be invited to working

groups, expert committees and attend meetings where policy is discussed and made. All this has given me a much wider and richer perspective about health and social care and public health, the policy process, and the challenges of implementing interventions on the frontline.

How has research changed your clinical practice?

Research has given me the confidence to appraise the evidence underpinning recommendations about clinical practice, for example. I have also realised how important it is for researchers to generate such evidence and do it at the highest possible quality, so it can then be included in the guidelines and protocols. Further, my skills in quantitative and qualitative methods have really allowed me to improve and evaluate individual and team practice.

What has made a difference to progressing your research career?

The really supportive environment at the HPRU and Imperial really facilitate the growth of ideas, projects and collaborations. It is simply fantastic to be surrounded by many multidisciplinary colleagues with various backgrounds. Additionally, the College is excellent at promoting findings from researchers, also allowing input on policy.

Where do you see your clinical academic career going over the next five years?

I would like to increase my clinical involvement, on the one hand, as well as my participation in policy influence and development nationally and internationally. I also would like to be developing training and education resources so researchers and in particular nurses gain increased skills around political and policy competencies



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