

Developing Strategic Directions for Inclusive Research about Co-existing Dementia and Hearing Loss in Consultation with Key Stakeholders.

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1. Introduction

Hearing loss and dementia often co-exist, which can impair their assessment and management.¹

Hearing loss is one of the largest potentially modifiable risk factors for dementia from midlife onwards.²

However, further research is needed to understand the specific mechanisms underlying this association, as well as optimal interventions for patients and carers.¹⁻³



Therefore, the aims of this research were to:

- 1) Develop a strategic agenda for future dementia and hearing studies.
- 2) Co-design a toolkit of strategies and resources to improve the inclusion of under-served groups in dementia and hearing research.⁴

2. Methods

Funder: The NIHR via its Clinical Research Network, Research for Patient Benefit programme, and Nottingham Biomedical Research Centre.

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI): Embedded throughout the research, including the formation of a new PPI advisory group.

Participants: A range of stakeholders, including people living with dementia and/or hearing loss, carers, clinicians, researchers, and members of under-served groups (e.g. ethnic minorities).



Study 1: Focus groups with 24 stakeholders to develop strategic directions for future dementia and hearing research.

Study 2: Experienced-based co-design process⁵ with ~30 stakeholders to co-create a toolkit to widen participation in dementia and hearing research (see Figure 1).

Analysis: Reflexive thematic analysis and peer debriefing were used.^{6,7}

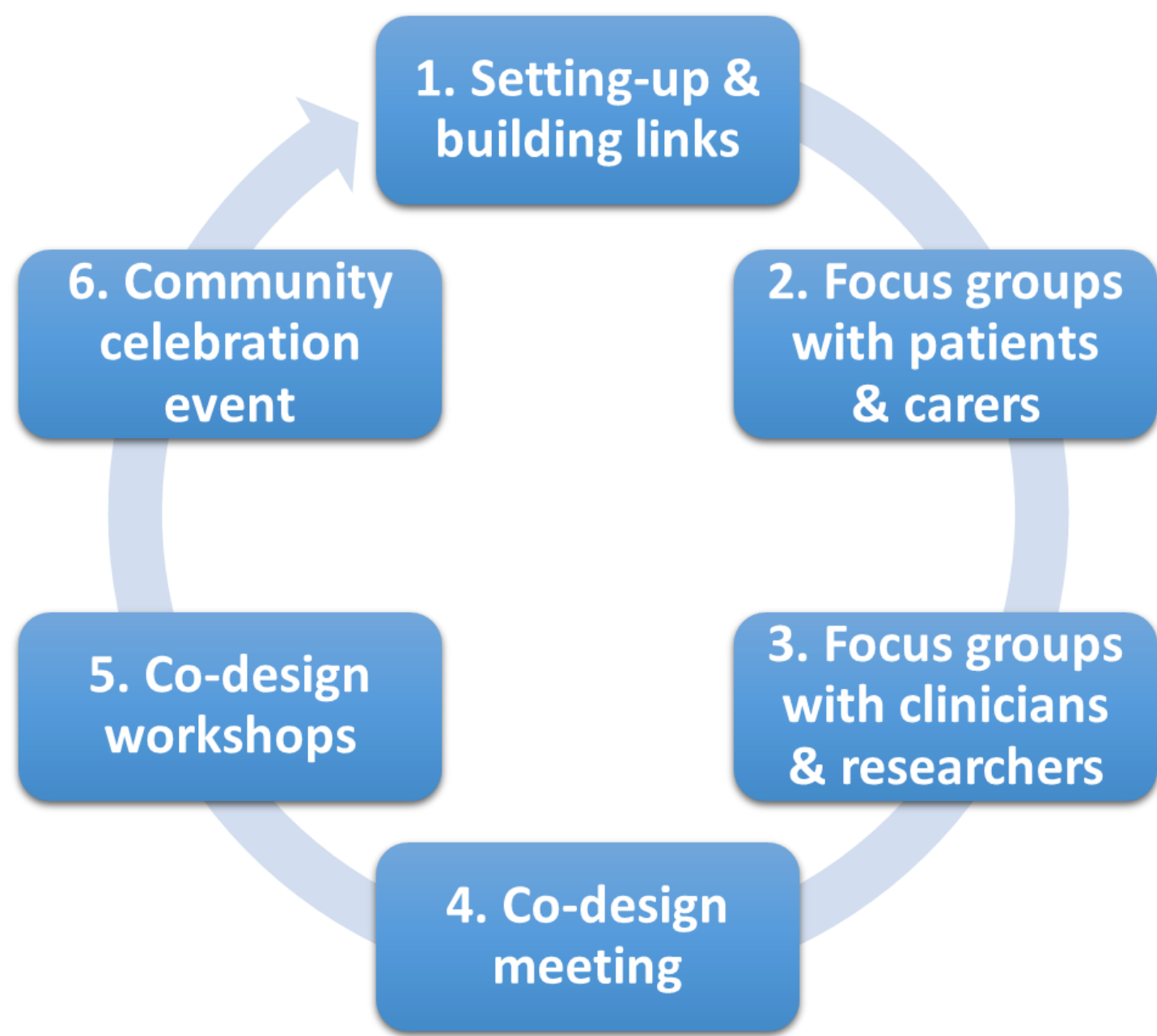


Figure 1. Experience-based Co-design Process

3. Results

Preliminary analysis of the Study 1 focus groups produced the following priority areas for future dementia and hearing research:

- Examine the prevalence, onset, and progression of various hearing conditions and auditory symptoms in people living with dementia.
- Identify appropriate means of screening and assessing hearing and cognition for people who may have both hearing loss and dementia.
- Improve post-diagnostic support for people with dementia and their families, including assessing their hearing and communication needs.
- Develop hearing and dementia training for health and social care professionals and facilitate interdisciplinary approaches to care.
- Develop and evaluate appropriate aural rehabilitation interventions and practices for people living with dementia and their families.
- Design and assess interventions to improve social participation and psychological wellbeing for people living with these conditions.
- Design hospitals, clinics, and care homes that are both dementia-friendly and hearing-friendly.

4. Discussion

This research will produce strategic priorities for future studies in the area of dementia and hearing research that are valued by key stakeholder groups.

This research will also produce a toolkit of strategies to improve the representation of under-served groups in dementia and hearing research, such as appropriate recruitment, data collection, and dissemination practices.



Consequently, this research will provide a foundation for high-quality, inclusive research and practice in this field in the future.

5. References

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