

AWAHRD

A Work and Health Research Data Platform

The AWAHRD (A Work And Health Research Data) project aimed to assess and improve how work and health data can be collected and linked to health and administrative records and to test the feasibility of building a platform for work and health research to improve data accessibility.

Using occupational data in public health research A public perception

We asked 10 public contributors who were members of the **Public Involvement Programme** of **UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration** (ukllc.ac.uk) to participate in an online survey aimed at gathering a public perspective of the understanding, acceptability and use of occupational data in research.

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What did we learn?

100% responses indicated there is great value in using and linking occupational data to health and non-health data; if it is anonymised, consented to and **for the public good**.

Benefits & Challenges of using occupational data for research?

Benefits

Understanding links between occupation and diseases, including new diseases

Model predicted retirement ages for certain professions

Provide evidence for reclassification of certain diseases as 'occupational diseases'

Challenges

Using consistent terminologies for jobs and workplaces

Employees not declaring health issues to employer

Need to consider unpaid work (e.g. carers) and being off work (e.g. sick leave)

Acceptability of employers sharing anonymised data for research purposes (e.g., sickness absence rates by job type)?

100% replied positively

50% of the positive responses, stipulated conditions to be met, including:



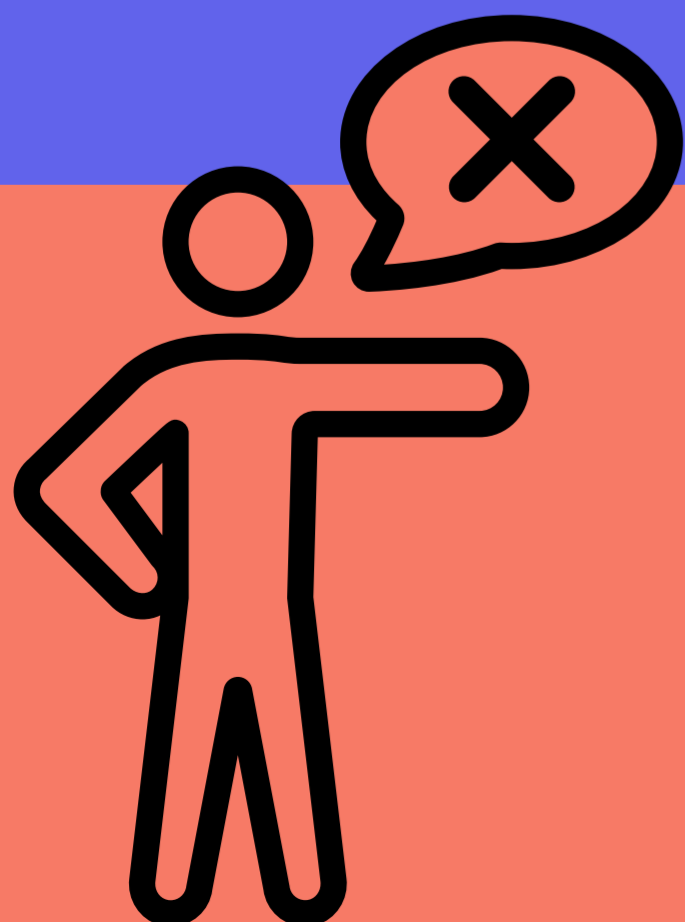
Anonymity
guaranteed



Trust and transparency
as to the type of
data shared and for
what purpose



Appropriate **security**
and safeguards
are implemented



However...

Opt-out options for workers should be made available and consideration should be given as to how to ensure the self-employed are not excluded from research.

What type of occupational data do workers deem acceptable for employers to share?



Hours worked



Shift times/overtime



Pay



Sickness



Absence reason



Training level



Employer support
overtime



Risks at work
(e.g., hazards, bullying)



Harassment
at work



However...

Participants highlighted issues around accuracy of records (e.g., in cases of informal work, employees not declaring real reason of absence) and the need for the use of broad occupational categories to protect identification.

Collaborators



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



Thomas
Ashton
Institute



Bespoke research and consultancy from:



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Health and Care Research

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Further documents

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Linking Occupational Data to Health and Administrative Records

The opinions of public contributors from the NHS CHECK (nhscheck.org) study, a study on the health and wellbeing of healthcare workers, as well as ex-serving personnel from the UK Armed Forces (kcl.ac.uk/research/kcmhr), were sought through two online workshops and/or written feedback.

The aim of the workshops was to hear the views of members of the public, with specific occupational histories, on the benefits and risks of data linkage and to find out what could be done to ease any concerns.

All workshop participants acknowledged that linking occupational data to administrative data sets as well as health data would benefit research on the health of the working age population, provided that data are anonymised, consent is obtained and that the research is carried out for public benefit.



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Collaborators



Bespoke research and consultancy from



A Work and Health Research Data Platform and the next steps

A consortium led by University of Manchester and University of Glasgow, in collaboration with the Universities of Bristol, Edinburgh, King's College London and UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration was awarded an NIHR Work and Health Development Award. The main aim of this project was to explore whether it would be possible to develop a comprehensive data platform, bringing together information on data sets that could be used and linked to investigate relationships between work and health.



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