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South Tyneside NHS research team wins top award



South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust researchers have scooped another prestigious award for their work which is bringing major benefits to patients.

The Trust's successful entry in the Medilink Northern Powerhouse Healthcare Business Awards was for a North East-led research partnership between the NHS, industry, academic centres and patients which is delivering high quality, world-leading, gastrointestinal endoscopy research. As well as winning the *Partnership with the NHS: Acute Care* category, the entry was selected as the leading award across all categories and therefore goes forward to the UK-wide grand final of the business awards next month. The judges described it as "an exciting partnership that was commercialising product innovation".

The gastroenterology team at South Tyneside District Hospital, which was judged the best in the country for clinical research in the HSJ Awards 2016, piloted the innovative 'Endocuff Vision' device, developed by ARC Medical to improve detection

of colorectal cancer and pre cancerous polyps (growths on the bowel wall which can lead to cancer). Colorectal cancer is the UK's fourth most common cancer and second commonest cause of cancer death, with 40,000 new cases and 16,000 deaths annually. The device is used during colonoscopy - an investigation to detect and prevent colorectal cancer. It attaches to the colonoscope, holding back the lining of the colon and providing better images, thereby improving the detection rate and preventing cancer. Along with Newcastle University and N.WORTH (North Wales Clinical Trials Unit)), large research studies of Endocuff Vision involving 5,000 UK patients were developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the device in clinical practice and to measure benefit to patients. Results of the first of these trials have recently been published in GUT, a world-leading gastroenterology journal.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Director of Research and Development, Professor of Gastroenterology at Newcastle University and Consultant Gastroenterologist Professor Colin Rees, said: "I am honoured to work with such a fantastic collaborative team and grateful for their hard work on these studies. We are all also grateful to the patients who took part; without them we wouldn't be able to achieve better outcomes for future generations."

Ken Bremner, the Trust's Chief Executive, said: "I want to congratulate Colin and the team for this well-deserved award for groundbreaking research which has such exciting potential to save lives. I'm very proud that, through their efforts, the Trust is at the forefront of research, locally, nationally and internationally."

The Medilink Northern Powerhouse Healthcare Business Awards cover the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, as well as the North East, and recognise achievements in acute care, primary care, digital health, exports and innovation. At the awards ceremony, held at The Lowry Hotel in Salford, Kevin Kiely, Chief Executive of Medilink, said that the hard work and success of the finalists "has not only contributed to the economic wealth of the North but also has had a direct impact on lives of patients and their families".

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Photo caption: Members of the gastroenterology research team at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust, left to right, Research Nurse Ingrid Emmerson, Research Fellow Martin Walls, Research Lead Claire Livingstone, Research Nurse Gayle Clifford and Endoscopy Manager Zoe Clapham

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