

Colleague Recognition Awards



Category	Research and Innovation
Nominee (s)	Prof Nicola Ring, Dr Ness McHugh, Rachel Davidson-Welch
Individual or Team	A team
School / Service	School of Health and Social Care;
Nomination	
<p>Innovative and important project inspired by Witches of Scotland legal campaign launched in 2020 to secure posthumous pardon for those accused under Scotland's witchcraft Act 1563-1736 as many experienced criminal injustice. 85% were women. Funded by RCN Foundation 2020 in support of International Year of the Nurse and Midwife. N&M separate professions but share very early history in that it's recognised that some early midwives, nurses and healers were accused of being witches under this Act for their work with the sick and women having babies. Project initiated and conducted during covid restrictions - team were only able to collaborate in person post-restrictions. Project unusual inter-disciplinary combination nursing, midwifery and law.</p> <p>Public Impact: This project captured public imagination very early on after it started in January 2021 e.g. project lead Prof. NR interviewed for a feature on STV news – Feb. 2021.</p> <p>Announcement of the project funding appeared in multiple newspapers including Herald, Scotsman, Scottish Sun, Mail, Edinburgh Evening News, Metro as well as in professional journals Nursing Standard, Nursing Times and RCN Magazine. (Research team members never had this level of media interest for their conventional health research!). Team asked to present at multiple community groups e.g., West Calder Accused Witch commemorative event and Stirling Trefoil Guild. Research project featured on podcasts including Witches of Scotland, East Lothian Book Week and Radio 4/BBC Sounds podcast series. Team members were invited to go to London to take part in a forthcoming documentary film. Also approached by publisher to write a book. Project has captured the public's imagination in a way that none of their other research has e.g., team member was asked to judge a children's Halloween competition run by a local business as a member of its staff was aware of the research from seeing it on TV! Team asked to deliver the RCN Annual public lecture (2021) – presenting their results. 1500 people registered to attend the webinar – this was the highest number of registrations the RCN ever had for any of their events beating their previous record for highest number of registrations held by David Harewood, actor and mental health ambassador.</p> <p>International interest includes present research findings in online webinars for nurses and midwives in Australia and America. Most recently, team lead shared stories of how the accused witch trials tell us about the early history of the care of sick children at an online public event for the RCN. This work also features in the RCN national exhibition on children's nursing - exhibition currently in London but heads up to Edinburgh in May to the RCN Scottish Headquarters.</p>	



Project led to interprofessional working e.g. podcast with Wendy Kelly, herbalist and interest from other disciplines e.g., Burness Paul Legal Firm (March 2021) - online newsletter featured story on the witches' study and the Scottish Legal Campaign to pardon Scotland's accused witches as victims of miscarriages of justice as an International Women's Day example of Inspirational Women.

Recently worked with Sana Bilgrami in SACI and joint SHSC/SACI public engagement fund application to deliver event helping members of the public research the nurses and midwives in their family history (event in partnership with RCN and National Library Scotland). The research to be presented at international network of the History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland at conference in St. Andrews.

The project has continued far beyond its timeline, team applying for funding to investigate a four-women healing and midwifery group who are internationally significant in the early history of nursing and midwifery and who appear to be victims of a monastic (convent) land-grab after the Reformation.

The team are passionate beyond measure and have a wonderful project that is extremely deserving of recognition at this level.

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Nominee (s)	Professor Nicola Ring, Nessa McHugh, Rachel Davidson-Welch, Leslie Dodd (external member)
Individual or Team	A team
School / Service	School of Health and Social Care;
Nomination	
<p>The team involved in the Scottish Witches research project began an 8-month research innovative research in 2021 into the accusations of 'healers' (nurses and midwives of today) being deemed as witches. The team are still producing innovative work and public engagement in 2024, raising the profile of an important topic which has historical, cultural, national and international significance for ENU and Scotland as a country.</p> <p>The public interest in the accused witch-healer/midwife study has been phenomenal! In comparison to most health research projects there has been a flurry of activity over the last 4 years, which shows no sign of reducing. The project has resulted in national TV presentations, podcast on BBC Radio 4, podcast for East Lothian Witches of Scotland book festival, invites to local community Witches of Scotland workshops, and further 'spin-offs' as detailed below. This initial small scale research project has connected with the public in more ways than the team could have imagined, as the topic is close to many people's hearts. Collaborating with an external 'champion' from the Law profession who is in direct contact with Scottish Government, further raises the profile of this very important topic – the wrongful 'naming and shaming' of women and men who were the forerunners of today's midwives and nurses – and offers the opportunity of further investment and research.</p> <p>The outputs from the project – which are still ongoing – have provided benefits for the university's profile and a number of 'spin-offs' including the following significant outputs: production of newspaper articles; STV news appearance; participation in TV documentary film which is soon to be aired; RCN annual lecture public event presenting results of the initial study (1500 national and international candidates registered for the event, the largest number ever recorded in the history of the annual lectures); sell out RCN webinar on the history of sick children's nurses with Professor Ring speaking about healers accused as witches caring for sick children (people had to be turned away from the event due to overcapacity); . NT live webinar from quality improvement to witches – a career in nursing research</p> <p>Spin-offs from the original research: request to be involved in book publications; requests for involvement in local community engagement competitions helping children develop imagination in arts and crafts; working with a local arts school to create and run an event for the public, helping them to research the presence of nurses in their family trees.</p> <p>The local and national public interest in this topic remains high and coupled with the national profile at Scottish Government level, has the potential to draw in opportunities for further</p>	

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research and innovation both nationally and internationally giving Edinburgh Napier University the opportunity to become the leading University on this specific and important culturally historical topic.

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Category	Research and Innovation
Nominee (s)	Dr Giacomo Russo
Individual or Team	An individual
School / Service	School of Applied Sciences;
Nomination	
<p>I work very closely with Dr Giacomo Russo and I am very lucky to do so. This individual embodies what it means to be in academia; innovation & collaboration, inclusion, ambitiousness and above all an individual who is committed to research and innovation. Dr Russo has worked to form interdisciplinary collaborations within the School including work with animal & plant, biomedical science and organic chemistry. Using his network he has created links with Helsinki University yielding multiple manuscripts (current work), University of Naples generating a published journal article this year (DOI: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2024.170461), among others (https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules27134263). He has sought out and organised visiting PhD students who have enriched the research culture in the Drug Discovery & Pharmaceutical Science area. These students have supported our own research students sharing knowledge and expertise.</p> <p>Most importantly, Dr Russo embeds his research into his teaching, leading multiple modules across the Biomedical MSc Suite, and is an avid learner pushing the scope of his knowledge to support research, and teaching and learning.</p> <p>His research into biomimetic liquid chromatography mimicking biological membranes aims to find innovative in vitro methods to circumvent or minimise the usage of animal models. These methods are also greener and more sustainable in their solvent usage, high throughput nature and speed of analysis. Immobilised artificial membranes are a recent development and Dr Russo has been testing their possibilities to transform the nature of drug evaluation, and their limitations.</p> <p>Dr Russo has recently been involved in upwards of three recent grant applications with ChromSoc & RSE. In the last year, he has been awarded a ChromSoc studentship, and an internal grant. Dr Russo has always been keen to involve early career researchers to foster their development and ensure that they receive recognition for the work that they have done. This collegiate attitude makes this individual a role model for any person working in research at the University.</p> <p>This individual goes above and beyond in terms of research and collaboration, often investing his personal time to support the overall research goals of the team.</p>	

Trigger Warning: The content that follows contains details relating to suicide. We appreciate that this content may be distressing for some readers. Support in relation to this topic as well as other mental health concerns can be accessed [here](#).

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Category	Research and Innovation
Nominee (s)	Mr Jan Savinc
Individual or Team	An individual
School / Service	School of Health and Social Care;
Nomination	
<p>I am nominating our outstanding Research Fellow Jan Savinc for his exceptional innovative approach in researching why young people die by suicide. Jan has brought his own ideas and novel approaches to research projects, optimising methods and producing findings that have had significant impact on policy and practice in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jan made a novel discovery with far-reaching implications. He discovered that children and young people who are admitted to general hospitals for violence and maltreatment as well as mental health problems are 9 times more likely to die by suicide as young adults. 2. Jan's research findings have informed Scottish Government's national suicide prevention strategy 'Creating Hope Together'. 3. Jan's findings have led to invitations to present keynote UK seminars. 4. Jan's findings have been presented to mental health practice leaders with significant plans in progress to develop findings as educational modules for NHS staff. 5. Jan's input has been so significant that he is first author on the main publications from the research. 6. Suicide is the leading cause of death in young people. However, it is a challenging area to work in. Jan has continued to demonstrate the utmost professionalism in pioneering and delivering this impactful research. 7. Public Health Scotland withdrew their support in 2023 to interpret National Records of Scotland's national suicide reporting statistics. Edinburgh Napier University was asked if they could provide the interpretation instead and Jan Savinc stepped up provided this detailed report, leading to ENU colleagues being recognised as Scottish Government's independent academics on suicide statistics. This led to a BBC interview and recognition of Jan's talents with the Chair of the Academic Advisory Group to Scottish Government's national suicide prevention group. 8. Jan has delivered everything in a way that epitomises ENU's commitment to being innovative, to working inclusively highly collaboratively internally and in external partnerships with others. He has freely given of his knowledge, energy and significant skills for significant contributions to society and we are very grateful for his exceptional work. Thank you Jan for all your valued contributions! 	

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Nominee (s)	Jan Savinc
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School / Service	School of Health and Social Care;
Nomination	
<p>Jan has been a pivotal member of Edinburgh Napier University's team that is driving forward data innovation across Scotland. He is a research fellow with responsibility towards health and social care. His work has and is making valuable contributions substantively to key policy making areas, developing capacity, and to internationalisation.</p> <p>Let me provide some examples. His early analysis of death data provided the first indication that home deaths had increased markedly across Scotland in the Covid-19 pandemic's early stages. He has since driven forward innovative work that is shedding light on who is dying at home, patterns of hospitalisation, and indication as to standards of care being received. This is vital work given that the increase in home deaths continues through to the current day with implications for not only those approaching the end of life but also their loved ones who provide much of the care.</p> <p>This work is challenging from a technical perspective. It involves liaising widely with stakeholders including service providers and data controllers. Once data agreements have been achieved then there is the analysis. These are large and complex longitudinal datasets that require a high degree of knowledge and expertise. Jan has handled all these processes with a high degree of organisation and calmness. The clarity of this work has drawn comments from colleagues in external organisations. His work acts as an exemplar to others.</p> <p>Jan has presented findings at several international conferences including the 2022 International Geographers Symposium and 2023 Administrative Data Research UK Conference. These conferences bring together world leading experts in the fields of health and data. The level of engagement enabled through his presenting demonstrates a notable contribution to Edinburgh Napier University's internationalisation agenda.</p> <p>As indicated, his endeavours are also contributing to capacity building. He has contributed to several iterations of a course on the analysis of administrative data run by the Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research (SCADR). Jan provides support to people new to academic data as they negotiate exercises designed to give experience of handling these challenging datasets, both organising them and then running analysis. His knowledge and ability to explain clearly are an asset to the SCADR team and is contributing to the development of much needed capacity in this key area of research.</p> <p>He is also making a notable contribution to dissemination through papers and blogs. He has taken a leading role in the development and submission of publications to peer reviewed journals. His blogs have provided timely evidence as to what has been happening with home</p>	

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deaths and we are given to understand that they have been read at the highest levels of Scottish Government.

There is much more I might write. Let me finish by underlining what a pleasure he is to work with. That's not only my view but also drawn from insights of others from partner universities across Scotland and the UK.

In short, Jan would be a worthy recipient of this award.

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