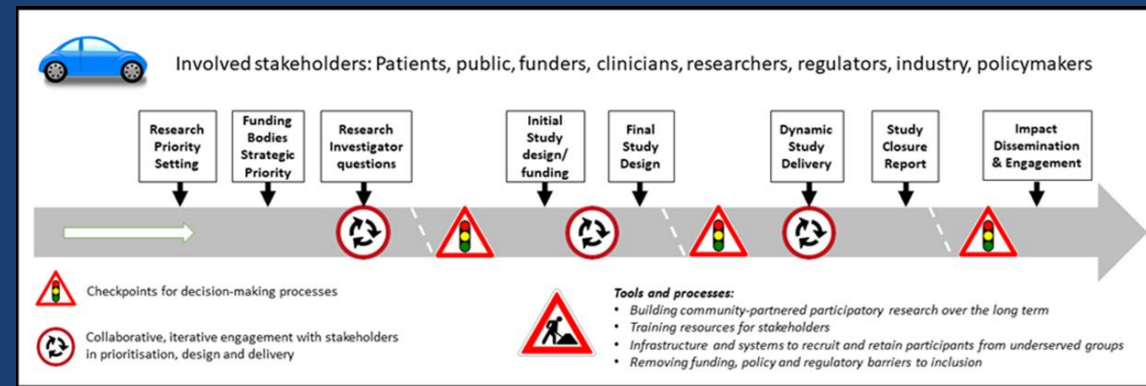


Representation in Trials: The NIHR INCLUDE Project



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Why bother making research inclusive?

- Three reasons:
 - Research that doesn't reflect the population it seeks to help will not lead to improved healthcare
 - Research that is not inclusive will not command the confidence of our patients or our colleagues
 - Its morally the right thing to do

Is there a problem with research not being inclusive?

- **Yes. COVID highlights this!**
- **Example 1:**
 - 50% of all COVID-19 trials were likely to exclude older people
 - 100% of all COVID-19 vaccine trials were likely to exclude older people
- **Example 2:**
 - People from BAME communities are often under-represented in research
 - Yet their risk of severe COVID is much higher than age-matched white people
 - And at present we don't know the ethnic make-up of many COVID-19 trial populations

Letters

RESEARCH LETTER

The Exclusion of Older Persons From Vaccine and Treatment Trials for Coronavirus Disease 2019—Missing the Target

Older adults are at greatest risk of severe disease and death due to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Globally, persons older than 65 years comprise 9% of the population,¹ yet account for 30% to 40% of cases and more than 80% of deaths.²

Unfortunately, there is a long history of exclusion of older adults from clinical trials. In response, the National Institutes of Health instituted the Inclusion Across the Lifespan policy, requiring the inclusion of older adults in clinical trials.³ Thus, we reviewed all COVID-19 treatment and vaccine trials on <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov> to evaluate their risk for exclusion of older adults (>65 years).

Each of the 847 clinical trials was abstracted by at least 1 trained research associate, with reliability checks of all ratings. Age exclusions were identified by viewing all of the eligibility and exclusionary criteria. Specific age exclusions were

 [Supplemental content](#)

classified into 5-year categories from ages 55 to 80 years; our focus was on exclusion of the 65 to 80 years age group most affected by COVID-19. Informed consent was waived because all data were deidentified and came from previously published studies.

Results | **Table 1** identifies clinical trials by treatment with an exclusion by age. We found large variability in the age exclusions. Among the 847 trials, 195 (23%) included an age cut-off.

Comment

COVID-19 and ethnicity: who will research results apply to?

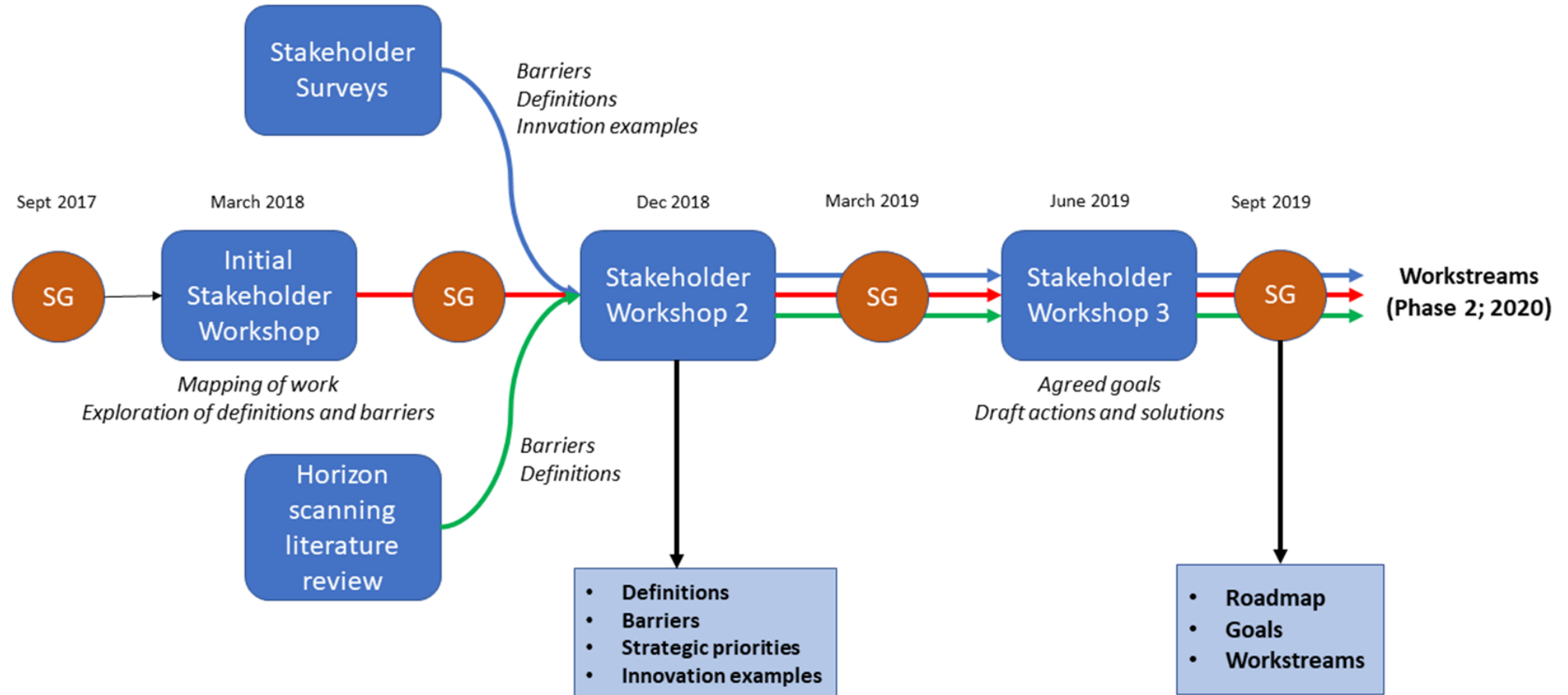


The toll of COVID-19 is not equal. Evidence globally shows a greater COVID-19 burden with older age, male sex, obesity, comorbidities, and poverty.^{1,4} Early data suggest that people from Black, Asian, and

poorer long-term outcomes,⁵ but in a review of 12 trials, the mean South Asian involvement was 5.5% despite South Asians representing 11.2% of the UK type 2 diabetes population.⁶ Four of the 12 studies

Published Online
June 12, 2020
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soi.2020.06.005>

Improving inclusion of under-served groups in clinical research: the NIHR INCLUDE project



INCLUDE roadmap for developing guidelines to improve inclusivity in clinical studies

Witham et al. *Trials* (2020) 21:694
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-020-04613-7>

Trials

- Guidance needs to be context-specific
- Each region/community/condition/study will need a different approach

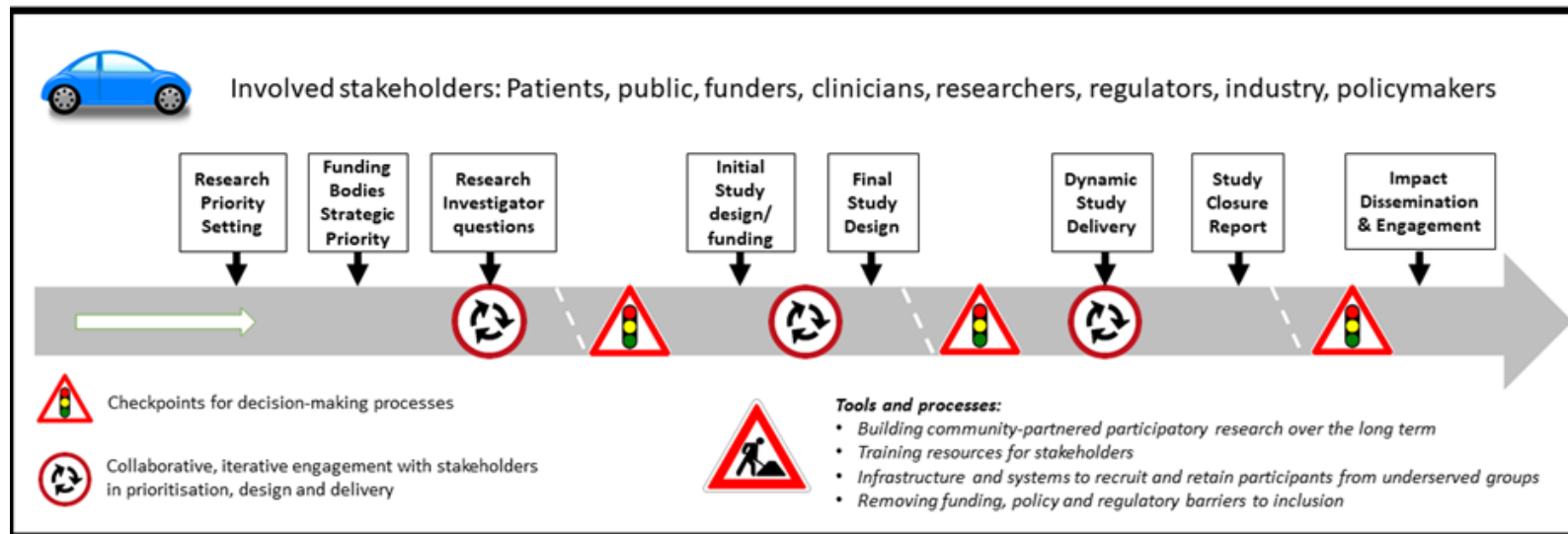
RESEARCH

Open Access

Developing a roadmap to improve trial delivery for under-served groups: results from a UK multi-stakeholder process



Miles D. Witham^{1,2}, Eleanor Anderson¹, Camille Carroll³, Paul M. Dark⁴, Kim Down¹, Alistair S. Hall⁵, Joanna Knee⁶, Rebecca H. Maier⁷, Gail A. Mountain⁸, Gary Nestor¹, Laurie Oliva⁹, Sarah R. Prowse¹⁰, Amanda Tortice¹¹, James Wason^{12,13}, and Lynn Rochester^{1,14*} On behalf of the INCLUDE writing group



Applying the roadmap - COVID-19 as an example

- COVID-19 is not an equal opportunities disease
- It causes severe disease and death more often in certain groups:
 - Some BAME communities
 - Men
 - People living with obesity
 - People living with multimorbidity
 - Older people
- Research on COVID-19 therefore needs to include these groups but does not always do so
- COVID-19 is an exemplar of everything that the INCLUDE project is about
- Used the roadmap to develop context-specific guidance



COVID-19 guidance content

- Identifies who is at heightened risk from COVID-19
- Identifies groups likely to be under-served in COVID-19 research (e.g. those self-isolating, care home residents, BAME groups, those without a car)
- Then works through the research journey
- Finishes with three checklists for promoting inclusion of underserved groups:
 - For researcher designing studies
 - For funders and reviewers evaluating proposals and analyses
 - For teams delivering research projects

Open access

Communication

BMJ Open Ensuring that COVID-19 research is inclusive: guidance from the NIHR INCLUDE project

Miles D Witham ^{1,2} Eleanor Anderson,² Camille B Carroll ³ Paul M Dark,⁴ Kim Down,² Alistair S Hall,⁵ Joanna Knee,⁶ Eamonn R Maher,⁷ Rebecca H Maier,^{8,9} Gail A Mountain,¹⁰ Gary Nestor,² John T O'Brien,¹¹ Laurie Oliva,¹² James Wason,^{9,13} Lynn Rochester,^{2,14} On behalf of the NIHR CRN INCLUDE Steering Group

To cite: Witham MD, Anderson E, Carroll CB, *et al.* Ensuring that COVID-19 research is inclusive: guidance from the NIHR INCLUDE project. *BMJ Open* 2020;10:e043634. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2020-043634

ABSTRACT

Objective To provide guidance to researchers, funders, regulators and study delivery teams to ensure that research on COVID-19 is inclusive, particularly of groups disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and who may have been historically under-served by research.

Summary of key points Groups who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 include (but are

Strengths and limitations of this study

- ▶ We provide detailed guidance across the research life cycle—a whole-systems approach to improve inclusion in COVID-19 research.
- ▶ We base the guidance on the robustly developed Innovations in Clinical trial design and delivery for

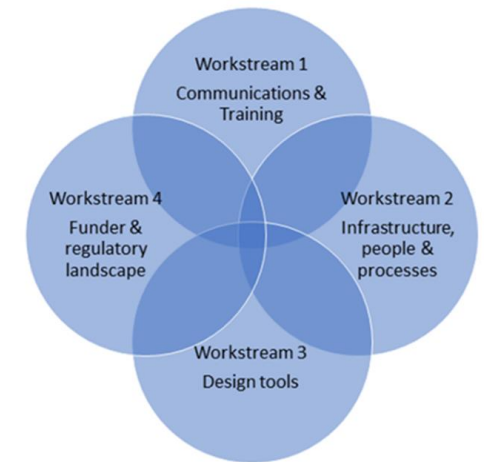
BMJ Open: first published as 10.1136/bmjopen-2020-043634 on 5 Nov

What else is coming out of INCLUDE?

- General guidance
- Ethnicity framework
- Funders starting to change their what they ask researchers for
- Local context-specific approaches (NENC)
- Collection of data by NIHR CRN (driven by COVID)
- Guidance on inclusion of older people (in progress; out in 2021)



The screenshot shows the NIHR National Institute for Health Research website. The header includes the NIHR logo and navigation links for 'Health and Care Professionals', 'Researchers', 'Patients, Carers and the Public', and 'Partners and Industry'. A search bar is present. The main heading is 'Improving inclusion of under-served groups in clinical research: Guidance from INCLUDE project'. Below this, it states 'Published: 07/08/2020', 'Read Time: 9 minutes', 'Version: August 2020 v1.0', and 'Print this document'. A 'Contents' button is visible, with '1. The purpose of the guidance' listed as the first item.



INCLUDE: Outputs & partnership working

“Better healthcare through more inclusive research”

INCLUDE online event



INCLUDE Guidance & COVID-19 Guidance



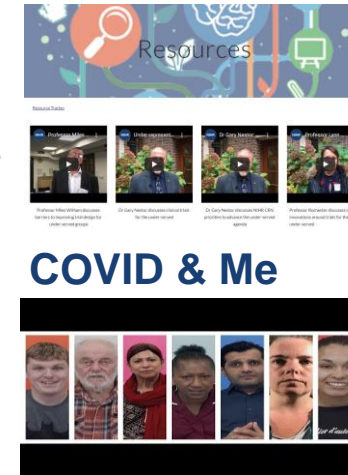
Published *Trials* article



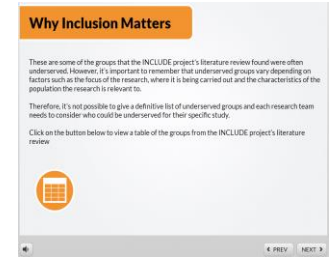
Published *BMJ* article



INCLUDE Website



NIHR Learn



INCLUDE Ethnicity Framework



Proud to have worked alongside:



INCLUDE resource tracker

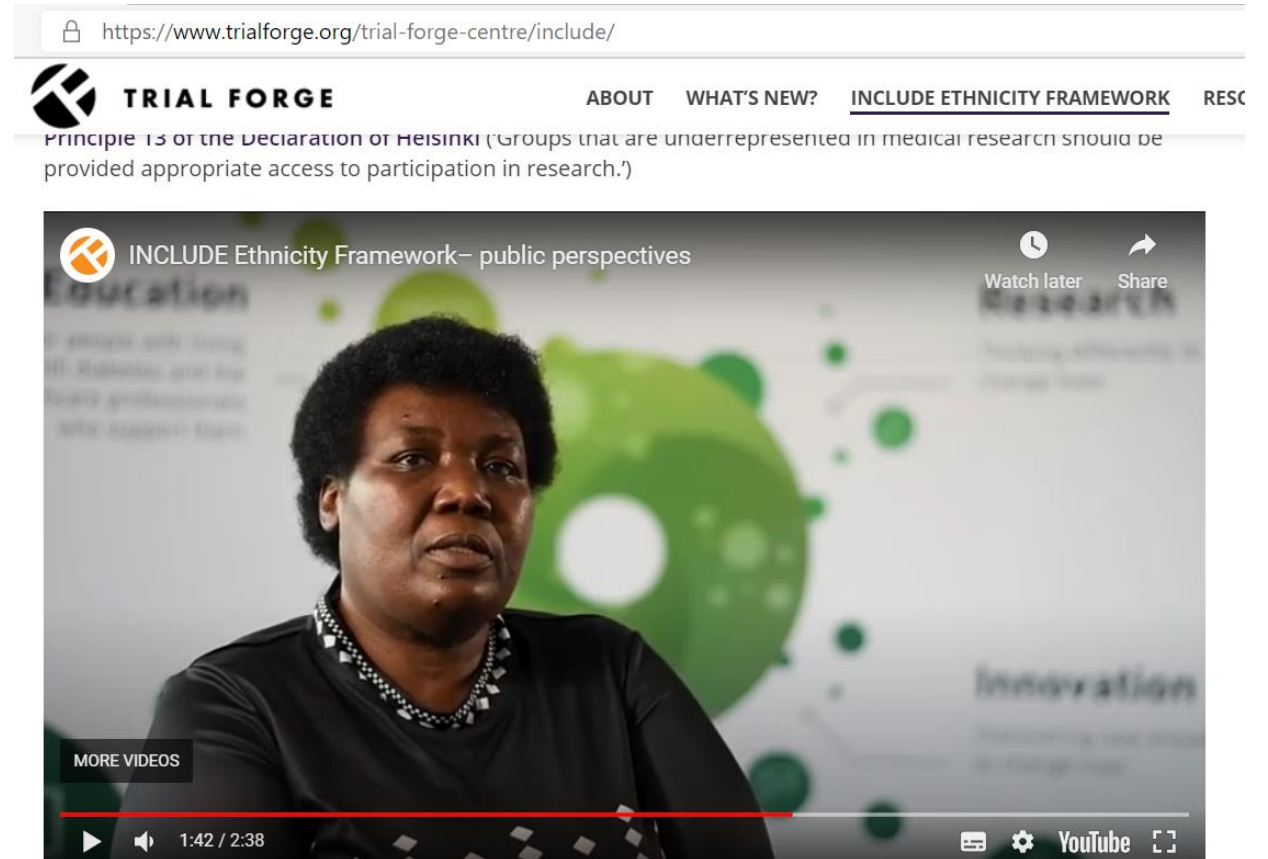
Item	Author	Publication Date	Publication Type	Link
Research with under-served groups in a world with COVID-19: implications for practice and policy, challenges and opportunities	Dr. Sarah E. Hill, et al.	2020	Journal article	[Link]
Developing a roadmap to improve trial delivery for under-served groups: results from a UK multi-stakeholder process	Dr. Sarah E. Hill, et al.	2020	Journal article	[Link]
Updated Wellcome Clinical Trials Policy	Wellcome	2020	Policy document	[Link]
Ensuring that COVID-19 Research is Inclusive: Guidance from the NIHR INCLUDE project	NIHR	2020	Guidance document	[Link]
Improving inclusion of under-served groups in clinical research: Guidance from the NIHR INCLUDE project	NIHR	2020	Guidance document	[Link]

NIHR Research Standard Application Form & Guidance



INCLUDE Ethnicity Framework

- Developed via a UKRI/NIHR rapid response grant
- Resources for study designers, to be used in partnership with patients, public (and delivery teams)
- Examples of good practice



The screenshot shows the website <https://www.trialforge.org/trial-forge-centre/include/>. The page features the TRIAL FORGE logo and navigation links for ABOUT, WHAT'S NEW?, INCLUDE ETHNICITY FRAMEWORK, and RESOURCES. A quote from Principle 13 of the Declaration of Helsinki is displayed: "Groups that are underrepresented in medical research should be provided appropriate access to participation in research." Below the text is a video player for "INCLUDE Ethnicity Framework – public perspectives". The video shows a woman speaking, with a background graphic containing the words "Education", "Research", and "Innovation". The video player includes a "MORE VIDEOS" button, a progress bar at 1:42 / 2:38, and standard YouTube controls.

Tailoring to the needs of regions

- NENC CRN conference workshop – 4th March 2020
- Key local under-served groups identified:
 - People who don't attend appointments
 - People who don't speak/read English
 - People who are socioeconomically disadvantaged
 - People at extremes of age
- Others included:
 - People living with multimorbidity, mental health conditions, those who struggle to give informed consent, BAME communities, full time employment, low educational attainment, carers



Some final thoughts:

- The INCLUDE team can't do all of this alone
- Each trial, each delivery team, each community and each disease area needs to adapt the approach to meet its own needs
- We want to partner with different groups to help make this happen – catalysis!
- Research teams, funders, regulators, delivery teams

- Like many things, COVID has acted as an accelerator for this work
- Starting to get traction
- Much to do, including the need for better tools to define when groups are under-served



Questions?

With thanks to NIHR CRN Cluster E staff, and all the stakeholders and steering group on the INCLUDE project

