



Royal College  
of Physicians

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Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP  
Secretary of State for Health

Ms Nicola Blackwood MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health and Innovation

Department of Health  
Richmond House  
79 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2NS

15 September 2016

Dear Mr Hunt and Ms Blackwood,

On behalf of the Royal College of Physicians we warmly welcome the recent announcement by the Department of Health committing £816 million investment for health research. Those working in the health community have a strong interest in becoming more involved in research and academic medicine, however ability to access funding is often reported as a barrier. In our recent report [\*Research for all: Building a research-active medical workforce\*](#) doctors of all specialities outlined that time constraints and funding were the biggest barriers for doctors becoming more involved in research.

We were also delighted that academic partners were advised that they would need to hold an Athena Swan silver award in order to be shortlisted. The RCP's research further found that despite a strong desire for women doctors to become more involved in research they often cannot, as women are less likely than men to be able to accommodate research around their clinical demands. The requirement of a minimum standard of an Athena Swan silver award as part of the funding process will support diversity in research.

Research is not a luxury but a vital part of our healthcare economy. Research has been shown to improve the quality of patient care and experience, drive up standards through innovation, and improve the efficiency of care services. But most importantly research improves the health of the nation. This additional funding will significantly contribute to achieving this.

The RCP hopes that in addition to these research grants that you will consider making available smaller pots of funding to doctors working on the frontline of care to facilitate work on small scale quality improvement and audit programmes that can substantially improve quality of care.

The RCP looks forward to working with our academic partners over the coming years to cement the UK's position as the leader in research and innovative health care.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M Johnson'.

**Professor Margaret Johnson FRCP**  
**Academic Vice President**  
**Royal College of Physicians**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J Dacre'.

**Professor Jane Dacre MD, PRCP**  
**President**  
**Royal College of Physicians**