**Community-based support for preventing or delaying progression to dementia: evidence review and analysis of qualitative data on support needs and service use**

**Context**

The [Oxford Brain Health Centre (BHC)](https://oxfordhealthbrc.nihr.ac.uk/our-work/brain-health-centre/) is a new clinical and research service in which patients with suspected symptoms of dementia undergo a range of additional detailed assessments prior to the standard assessment and diagnosis pathway at Memory Clinic.

**Research context**

Our initial analysis of BHC data indicates that patients attending BHC are relatively younger and healthier than patients attending the standard pathway, with more than half of BHC patients receiving a diagnosis of either no cognitive impairment or Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) at the end of the process rather than dementia. There are currently no support pathways for these patients prior to a dementia diagnosis, but their identification through BHC presents an opportunity for early-stage intervention to prevent or delay progression to dementia.

**Research project**

This internship will involve two key aspects of applied research: evidence review and analysis of new qualitative data. First, it will involve conducting a scoping review following the rigorous methodology of the Joanna Briggs Institute, to characterize the range and effectiveness of community-based support for people at risk of dementia (e.g. those with a diagnosis of Mild Cognitive Impairment). Such support could focus on enabling people to increase their physical activity, mental health, or social connection (three key areas for action as identified in the 2020 [Lancet Commission on Dementia Prevention](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2820%2930367-6)). The intern, in consultation with the supervisor, will be responsible for running literature searches, screening references for inclusion, and extracting data from selected studies for comparative analysis.

There will also be the opportunity for the intern to work collaboratively with the supervisor to analyse qualitative data collected during the project. Interviews will be conducted with patients who attended the BHC for initial assessment but who did not receive a dementia diagnosis. We will analyse information about any support needed and services used around the time of assessment at BHC, and at two follow-up time points within a year of the BHC assessment. As a result of this research, we will gain a better understanding of the types of support that people at risk of dementia feel would benefit them in order to prevent progression, and the extent to which they are or are not currently able to access that support. Combining the insights from the interviews with the results of the review, we will identify the most promising interventions for dementia prevention that can be delivered within community settings (i.e. through the voluntary sector) via linking services such as social prescribing.

This internship is expected to be a day a week over 6 months.