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Birmingham team scoops RCN award

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The Collaborative South Asian Resource and Education (CARE) network in arthritis, which was developed by the Rheumatology Group at the University of Birmingham, has been awarded the Royal College of Nursing's 'Innovation in Rheumatology' prize 2011.

CARE, which links hospital-based Rheumatology services with the Birmingham Arthritis Resource Centre, based at the Central Library in Birmingham, provides a unique support service to patients from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

The service was set up to deliver a tailor-made service for patients from the hospital to the community, with multi-lingual educational material and an Asian helpline to enable patients and carers to cope with the burden of chronic disease. It encourages people to seek early intervention for RA, and also supports research.

'The CARE concept not only provides a great service to patients, it enhances compliance and addresses the important issue of getting patients to attend the clinic early enough to gain maximum benefit from the newer therapies for RA,' explains Professor Paul Bacon, of the School of Immunity and Infection at Birmingham, who was instrumental in setting up BARC.

'It also provides a great platform for future research studies. We have already shown that individuals and local communities really appreciate the education we provide. Now we are poised to research the effects of this on how far this goes to really change patients' attitudes and how to reinforce that to alter coping behaviour.'

'The CARE network represents a fantastic example of collaboration between a University, the NHS, a charity and a City Council. BARC has been supported for many years by a team of volunteers who work tirelessly to support patients in Birmingham and beyond, and it's wonderful for them that their work has been acknowledged with this prestigious award" says Dr Karim Raza, of the University of Birmingham and Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, who has worked closely with Kanta Kumar, nurse specialist in Rheumatology, in developing key aspects of the CARE network.

For more information, please contact the University of Birmingham Press Office on 0121 415 8134.

Notes to editors

* Photograph available. Please contact the press office for details

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