**BACKGROUND:** Among NIHR portfolio studies, there is variation in centre participation and recruitment rates. The limitations to participation within the NIHR network are poorly defined and are likely to be multi-factorial. Limited research has been undertaken to understand the barriers and facilitating factors in critical care research trials recruitment.

**AIM:** To identify facilitating factors and barriers to enrolling patients into established Intensive Care clinical trials within UK National Health Service (NHS) critical care units.

**METHODOLOGY:**
- Exploratory qualitative study.
- Sampling frame across the 25 Local Clinical Research Networks and devolved nations.
- Semi-structured telephone interviews based on themes derived from published literature.
- Framework Analysis. Facilitators and barriers to enrolment into clinical research were considered a priori.

**RESULTS:**
- 10 representative Clinical Research Networks interviewed. Interviews lasted 27-79 minutes, with senior critical care consultants and research nurses.
- ICUs had 19-33 beds and 1200-1800 admissions per year.
- Each hospital had 2-4 research nurses with 6-7 on-going clinical trials per unit.
- 6 themes were identified and are outlined below.

**LIMITATIONS:**
- Small number of interviewees (predominantly nurses) however ‘moderatum generalisations’ are possible.

**6 THEMES IDENTIFIED:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>UNIT FACTORS</th>
<th>STUDY FACTORS</th>
<th>CENTRE FACTORS</th>
<th>PATIENT FACTORS</th>
<th>CLINICIAN FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research nurse retention through permanent contracts, staff CFO, nurse consent training, unit workload, team recruitment initiatives</td>
<td>Co-enrolment agreements, addressing equipoise concerns &amp; regular meetings, staff secondments or rotations, clear communication plans</td>
<td>Trial resources, out of hours screening/recruitment/treatment plans, recruitment windows, trial complexity, randomisation &amp; trial preferences</td>
<td>Board level agreements, flexible &amp; reciprocal staffing, CRN &amp; R&amp;D Funding negotiation, capacity assessment &amp; piloting</td>
<td>Trial burdens, scheduling review, understandable trial information, education on randomisation treatment preference</td>
<td>Negotiation of PA session time, local lead investigator engaging clinicians</td>
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**KEY MESSAGE:**
- Research teams are highly committed to providing cover in recruiting to critical care trials.
- Several factors impede recruitment, which are beyond researchers’ control. These include organisational support, research nurse employment and retention, out of hours employment, and study complexity.
- Research teams have to be innovative with funding and employment to ensure continuity of studies and retention of research staff.
- Equipoise concerns continue to be a factor at clinician level.
- Patient and family factors regarding treatment preference were not a significant issue, and over half of families approached by researchers usually agreed to participation.
- A checklist has been developed to help identify facilitating factors and barriers to enrolling patients into Intensive Care clinical trials within the United Kingdom.