

The Starworks Project: Achievements and Next Steps

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The Starworks Project: Achievements and Next Steps

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Summary

This talk was a guest speaker presentation to the ISPO-UK conference in order to discuss the progress to date of The Starworks Network; a child prosthetics research collaboration funded by The Department of Health via the National Institute of Health Research.

Abstract

Following the announcement in March 2016 of the government's investment of £1.5 million in child prosthetics, National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Devices for Dignity MedTech Co-operative were given the role of leading the £750,000 fund created to "*incentivise the development of new breakthrough innovative prosthetic products for the NHS.*" The agreed approach was to pump-prime the formation of a Child Prosthetics Research Collaboration, which brought together children and their families with key opinion leaders from the NHS, industry, clinical academia and leading national research centres with capabilities in child prosthetics. The aim of this work was to increase research focus across the system to accelerate the translation of new inventions and developments in child prosthetics into everyday use. This initiative is centred on the needs of children, patient and families and the NHS and will ensure there is the ideal balance of 'clinical pull' and 'technical push' to create an energetic environment in which to innovate.

This talk will give an overview of the approach taken to developing a new, much-needed collaborative research network in the field of child prosthetics, including:

- Establishing the network
- A multi-stakeholder needs assessment, considering the perspectives of children and families, clinicians, academics and industry experts.
- A series of 'Sandpit' events, bringing together these key stakeholders to collaboratively explore and innovate in emergent challenge areas
- The funding of ten 'Proof of Concept' projects that respond to these challenge areas, whilst keeping children and families in the centre of the research focus.

As part of this talk, we are also pleased to confirm that Starworks has received further funding from the NIHR to continue to develop the network, reinforcing its current foundations and also extending its reach. We will give an insight into initial plans for 'Starworks 2', and hope that this talk will encourage families, clinicians, academics and industry experts to reach out to us, learn more, and help us to grow the network further.