**PAPER NUMBER #84**

**Investigating the sustainability of a complex intervention for osteoarthritis**

**Presenting Author**

Andrew Walker

**Affiliation**

1. Faculty of Health and Social Care, St George’s, University of London and Kingston University
2. Health Innovation Network

**Country of residence**

United Kingdom

**Objectives/aims**

To investigate the factors influencing the sustainability of an evidence-based complex intervention for osteoarthritis (ESCAPE-pain) in England.

**Methods**

A qualitative approach was used. Forty clinicians and managers participated in in-depth interviews across 13 public sector organisations in England. Four National Health Service (NHS) providers were selected as in-depth case studies, which were >2 years post-implementation. A fifth in-depth case study was undertaken of a clinical-academic network’s role in supporting the spread of the intervention. This fifth case study used an ethnographic approach. Data were collected in 2016-2017. Data were managed and coded using NVivo software and analysed using thematic analysis.

**Main findings**

*Characterising sustainability*: Sustainability was a continuous process of integrating the intervention. It required on-going commitment to both the intervention and the adaptive work to integrate it.

*Adaptation and fidelity*: There were tensions between adaptation and fidelity. Adaptations depended on attitudes towards evidence. Training was a key quality assurance mechanism.

*Poor integration*: Integration problems continued for >2 years. This led to ‘fixes’ that created inefficiencies. Poor integration eroded the value of and commitment to the intervention jeopardizing sustainability.