

Join Dementia Research: A Tool To Speed Up, And Increase, Recruitment To Dementia Studies

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Background

Join Dementia Research (JDR) was launched in February 2015. It enables the public to express an interest in participating in dementia research studies and provides an easy-to-access mechanism for researchers recruiting to dementia studies, to find participants that match their study enrolment criteria. It has become the leading source of recruitment to dementia research studies across the UK.

Figure 1

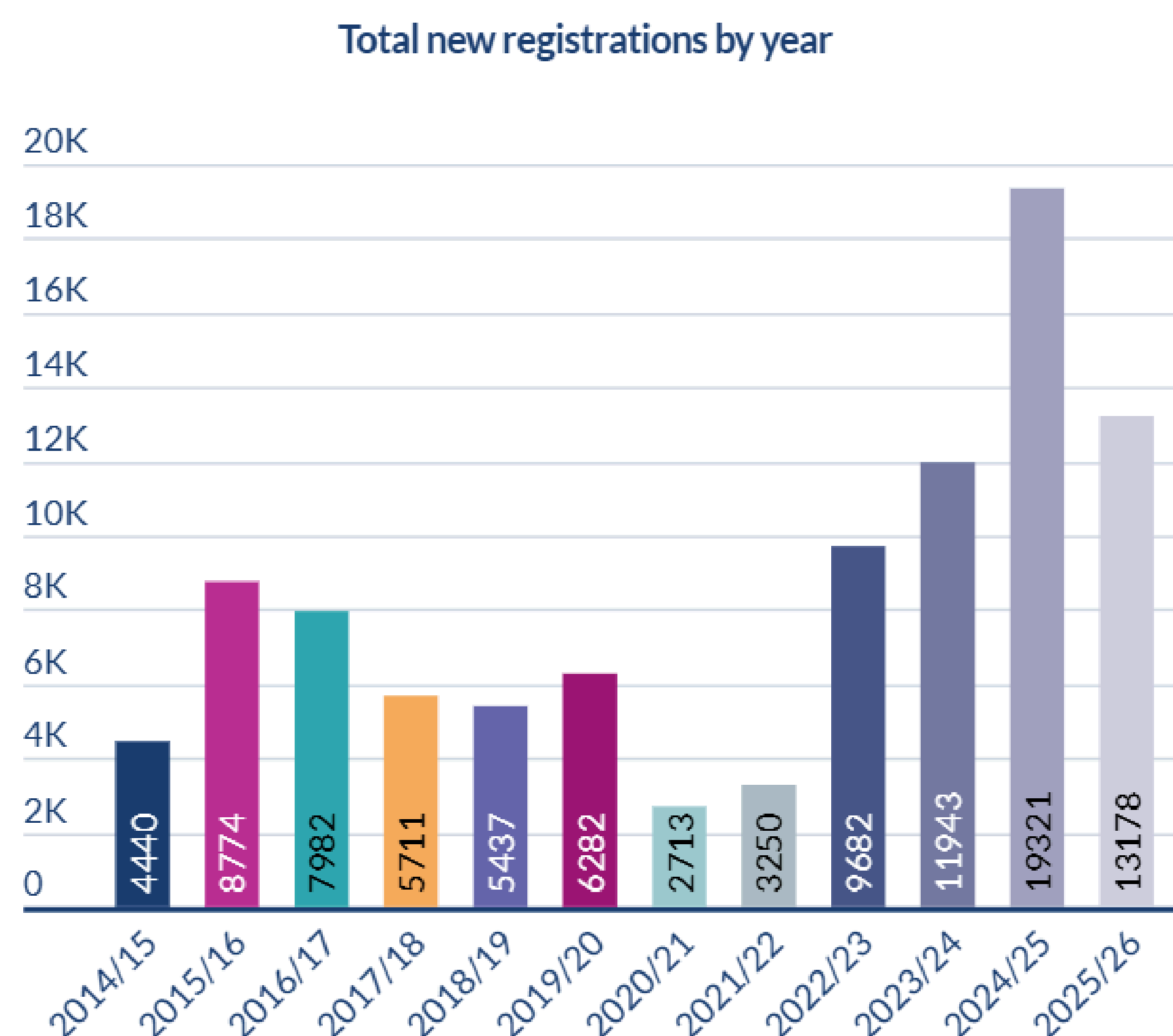


Figure 1 - shows the total number of new registrations to the Join Dementia Research service in each calendar year.

Results

As of June 2026, JDR had 100,000 registrants (20% with dementia), with 2024/25 being the most successful year for registrations (see figure 1). A key recruitment mechanism for volunteer signups has been our work with GP services. This has centered on working with GPs to deliver text messages to raise awareness of JDR and encourage registrations. This is our most popular route for new registrations and to date have accounted for over 22,000 registrations. JDR has also been effective in supporting enrollment onto studies. One current example is an open study looking at hearing loss and dementia, where the study matched 37 volunteers and 34 people volunteers subsequently enrolled - over 90% enrollment rate.



Methods

JDR uses innovative matching technology and provides volunteers with an opt-in, secure way of registering interest in dementia studies and allows researchers to access matched volunteers. It matches members of the public to research studies using their demographic and health information, making it easier to participate in research, as well as streamlining the recruitment process for researchers. Anyone aged over 18 can volunteer, people with and without dementia and carers. We then match volunteers to studies ranging from clinical trials of new treatments to surveys identifying improvements to the quality of life of those affected by dementia (see figure 2).

Figure 2



Figure 2 - shows an outline of the JDR study matching process.

Examples of current projects

Team Sahara pilot project

Working with the Alzheimer Society's Team Sahara to raise awareness of dementia and dementia research in South Asian communities.



E-learning packages

Creation of e-learning packages to help health & care professionals feel confident when speaking with service users about JDR.

Referral pathways with Memory Assessment Services (MAS)

Continue establishing referral pathways with MAS using JDR's "Callback function".



Outputs

100,000+

JDR has contributed over 100,000 study enrollments

890+

JDR has helped with successful enrollment into over 890 different studies

3,000+

Over 3,000 researchers have been trained to use the JDR service

330+

JDR has supported over 330 research sites with their recruitment



Conclusion / next steps

Increasing the number of volunteers with a dementia diagnosis will be essential in ensuring that JDR continues to support study recruitment. Future plans also involve exploring linking with other data sets, such as electronic health records, to enable better study matching for volunteers. JDR will continue to improve research productivity, and public engagement with dementia research and will help attract commercial studies to the UK, enabling the public to have earlier access to disease modifying treatments.

For any questions or to find out how we can support your study please contact - jdr.support@nihr.ac.uk