

...with Nabila Cruz



R&D Data Officer at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust.
EDGE user since 2016. Contact: nabila.cruz@kcl.ac.uk

How and why did you move into clinical research?

It was sort of accidentally on purpose. I wanted to work in data management supporting research in a university. So when the opportunity to work in the Joint R&D Office for SLaM and the IoPPN (King's College London Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience) came up, I did not think twice to apply because not only it would be exactly what I wanted to do, but it also meant working closely with clinical research that aims to improve mental health and wellbeing, which are goals important to me personally, not just professionally.

What does your role as R&D data officer at South London and Maudsley entail on a daily basis?

My main responsibility is to manage the data of our portfolio of studies. This means ensuring that the most accurate and up-to-date information is in EDGE by working with the R&D governance team, researchers, and NHS stakeholders. I provide systems admin support to KCL and SLaM staff EDGE users, as well as training them whenever necessary. I also report our research activity data regularly to senior management.

How do you utilise EDGE in your daily role?

Reports, reports, reports! 70% of the time I am in EDGE creating new reports – either ad hoc ones requested by a colleague or ones that may help me in creating data dashboards. When I started working here, there was a lot of that cleansing to do, but over the last couple of years, our data quality has greatly



improved, which means even better reports!

Which aspects of using EDGE provide the most pleasure and satisfaction?

To be honest, getting the notification that the first participant has been recruited in project is always pleasant because it is the culmination of months of work done by the study team and R&D team.

What are your department's priorities in relation to EDGE for 2019?

Firstly, our aim is to improve how we record a participant's origin within the trust. We want to better capture which Clinical Academic Group a patient may have been recruited from. Secondly, we dream of one day being a paperless R&D, so we hope to use EDGE for more aspects of the approvals process.

What are some of the most efficient ways for new R&D data officers to become an expert using EDGE?

Play around with it! It sounds cliché, I know, but I found it extremely helpful to use EDGE Demo when I first started using EDGE because it meant I could get to know how the system works without 'breaking' it. I also find that following the lifecycle of a project (from set up to completion) has given me a much better understanding of how EDGE can help us.

We see that you are attending next year's EDGE Conference in Birmingham! What are you most looking forward to, and what information do you expect to take back to the office?

I attended the last two conferences and always had a great time, so I'm looking forward to meeting fellow EDGE users, especially from other mental health trusts as I would love to hear about their experiences using EDGE. The R&D Team loves to hear about any new EDGE developments, so I'd like to bring good news about the new version of EDGE.

One clinical research superpower that you wish you possessed:

The ability to remind researchers to add participants to EDGE regularly without sending them reminders. Regular uploads are all I want!

One great thing that you think clinical research has achieved, and why:

A better understanding of mental health issues. Clinical research has been essential in changing how we see people that live with conditions such as depression, schizophrenia, PTSD, and eating disorders.

Describe one of the greatest achievements of your research team:

Not to brag, but totally bragging: SLaM/KCL researchers have won numerous awards. But I am proudest to work in a team that goes above and beyond to ensure that innovations in clinical care can be developed through research. The R&D office usually approves about 100 studies a year, in a team with only 3 facilitators!

One thing that you most love about your job:

Being able to work with people from diverse backgrounds, and coming together with same aim: to help and improve people's lives.

One useful bit of life advice that you live by:

Never be afraid to ask questions. There are no stupid questions, just impatient answers.



One thing that you most about living in London:

It feels like I'm right at the centre of things, which is both wonderful and overwhelming. I love noticing how much London has changed over the last 10 years.

And finally, in which way does EDGE resemble your personality?

Probably the fact that it holds so much information. I'm an information hoarder myself, so I wish I could access it as easily as in EDGE's project search.