

Case studies of projects funded by a network of four primary care PBRNs: capturing impact in clinical practice and implications for collaborative research

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Background

- Réseau-1 Québec (R1Q) is a primary care knowledge network in Quebec, Canada whose ultimate goal is to embed a collaborative culture in research and integrated primary care services, and to produce and apply knowledge that will improve practice and benefit patients.
- In partnership with the Healthcare Management Hub at HEC Montréal's business school, R1Q has begun a series of case studies to capture the impact of the projects that the network has funded in its annual call for projects.
- R1Q's annual call for projects aims to facilitate researcher-clinician partnerships and the involvement of patient-partners and decision-makers managers, and to generate impact on practice within one year. Four cohorts of small projects (20-25K per project) have been funded since 2013.

Objectives

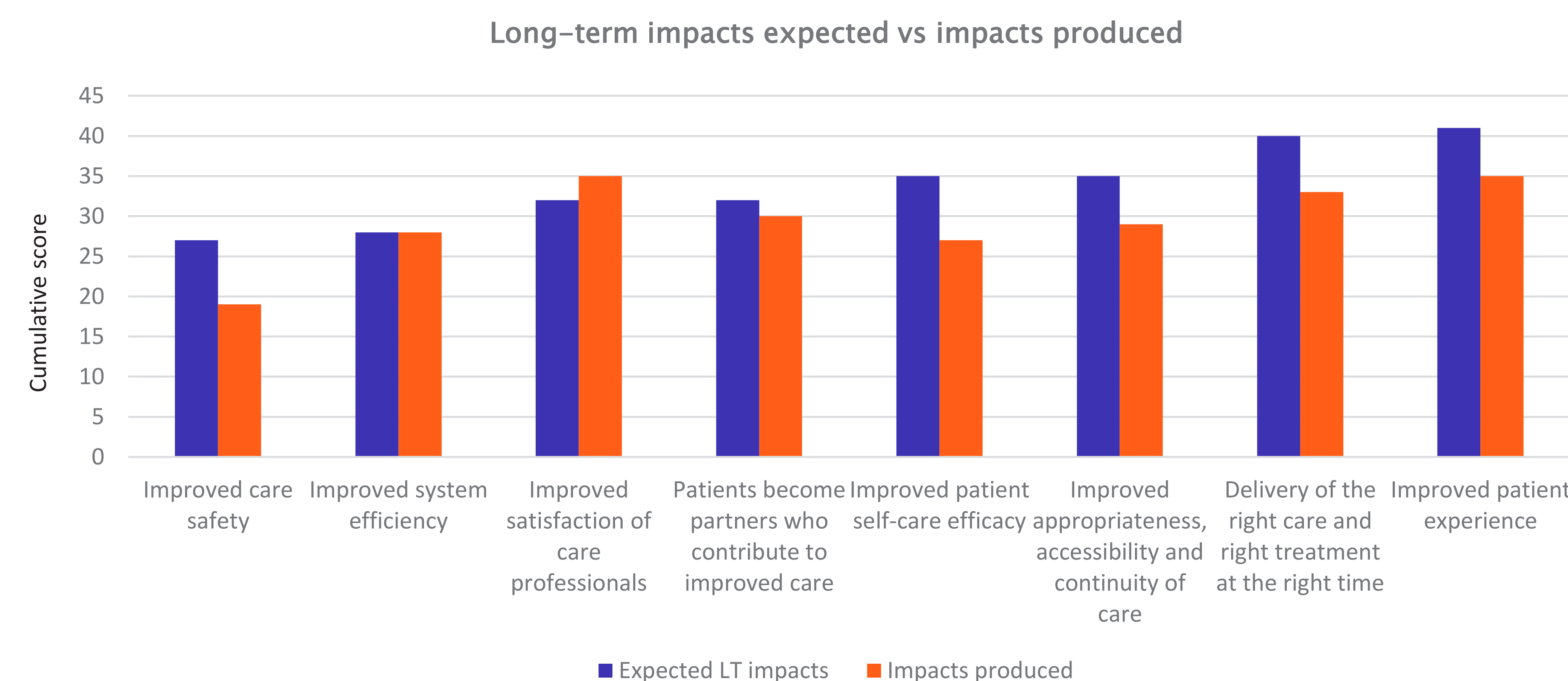
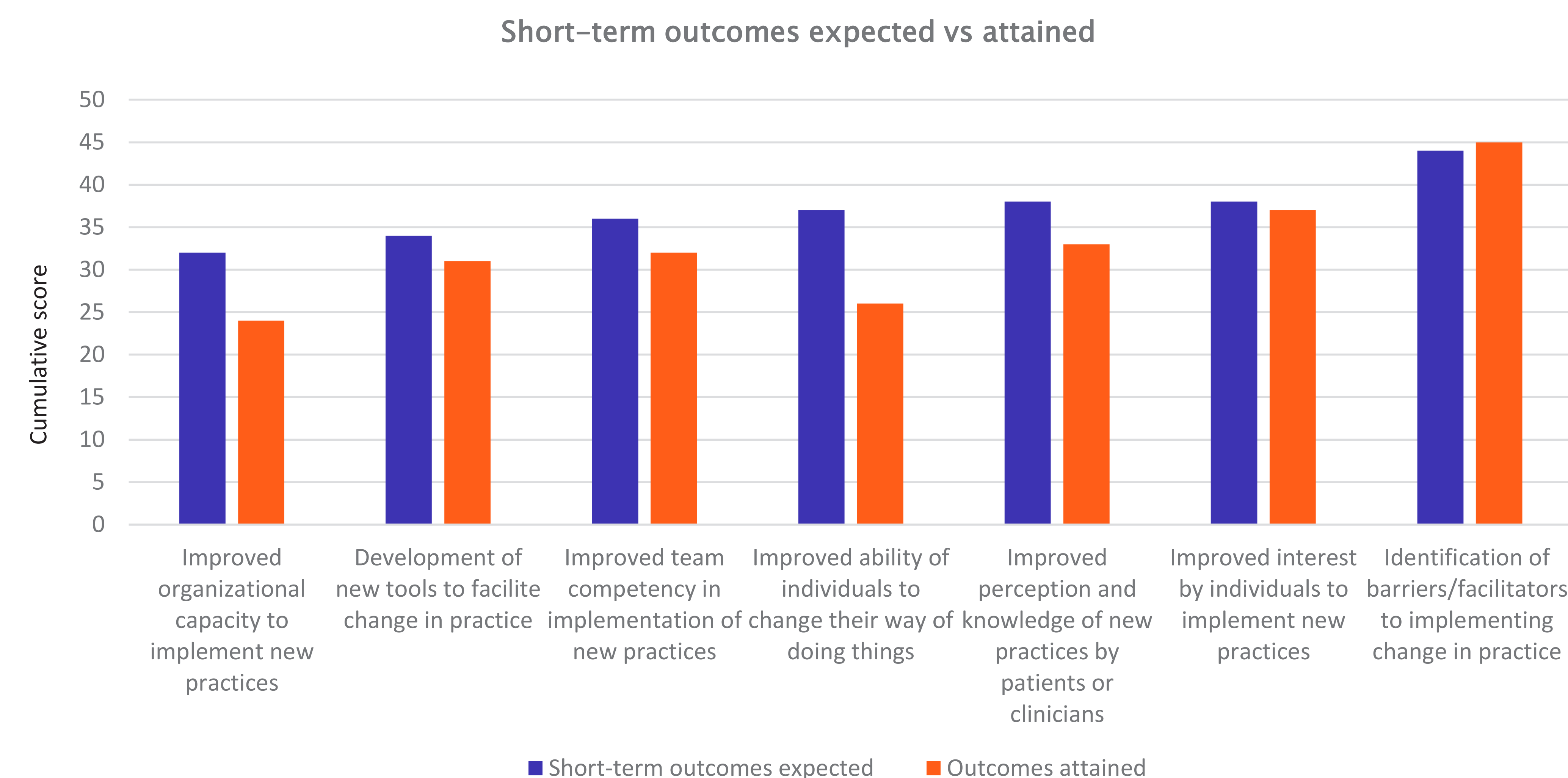
- The case studies' main objective is to demonstrate the impact projects funded by R1Q have had on clinical practice, and to document the resulting collaborations that have taken place, in order to support a renewal bid to our primary funder in the fall of 2018 and to guide strategic orientations.
- The central research question is whether and how funded projects have achieved the anticipated outcomes of R1Q's annual call for projects.

Methods

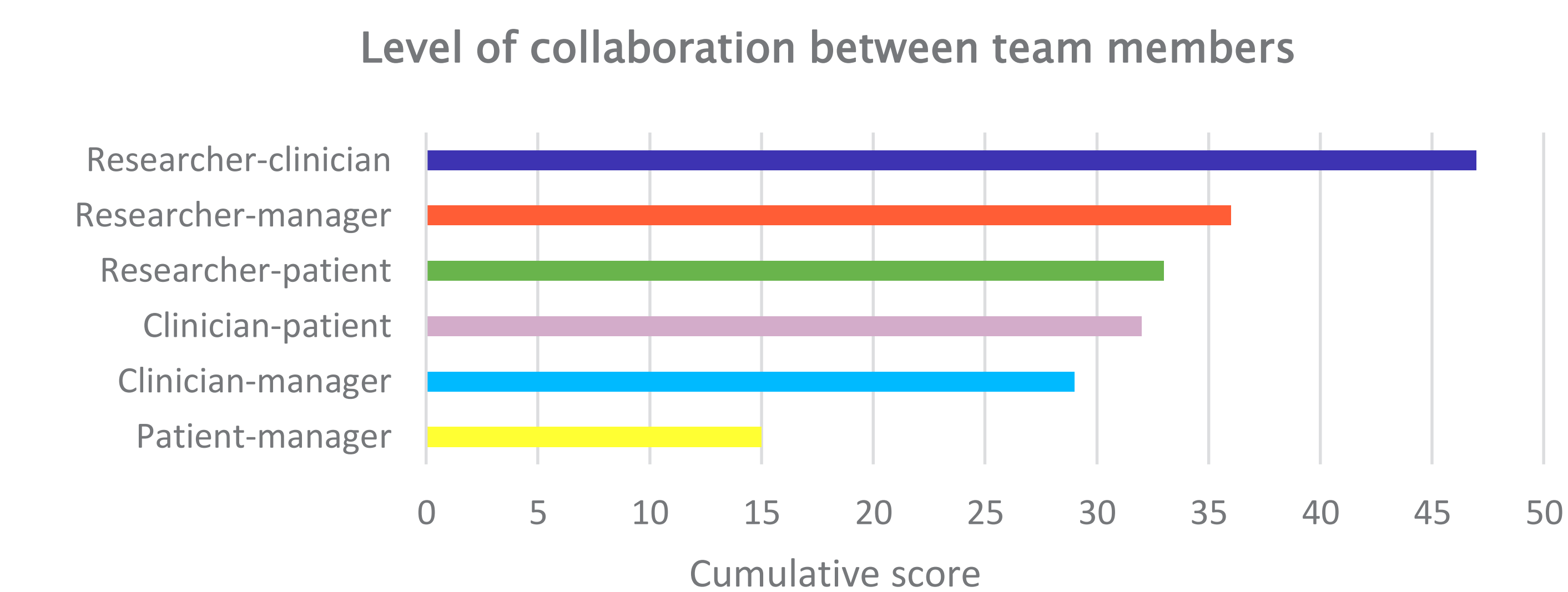
- Approach inspired by Australian and English impact assessment initiatives in which a small number of indicators, along with testimonials, are used to illustrate impact (Australian Research Council, 2017; CLAHRC, 2015).
- Phase 1: review of relevant documentation (call for project documents, project proposals, previous questionnaires, etc.) to identify key cross-cutting themes.
- Phase 2: based on cross-cutting themes, online questionnaire developed and sent to project leads (n=12) (researchers and/or clinicians) to assess impact.
- Phase 3: semi-structured interviews will be conducted with project leads and co-leads (researchers, clinicians, patients, and managers) to identify how and whether the call for projects facilitated an impact in clinical practice (n=8). Four projects will be the subject of in-depth interviews which will provide the basis for in-depth case studies.

Results

- In an online questionnaire, project leads were asked whether the following short-term outcomes and long-term impacts were expected and/or attained.



- In the short-term, the identification of barriers/facilitators to implementing change in practice was most commonly cited outcome attained.
- In the long-term, improved satisfaction of care professionals and improved system efficiency were impacts that were attained in line with or exceeding initial expectations.
- Project leads were also asked to what extent their project contributed to or facilitated collaboration between the following team members:



- Researcher-clinician collaboration, and collaboration between researchers and other team members, were most common, which is not surprising given that this is a requirement of the call for projects.
- Very few challenges to collaboration were identified. The benefits included adopting collaborative decision-making processes and developing respectful relationships.
- Other results from the questionnaire demonstrate that patients had limited involvement in the various stages of the research project, despite teams being encouraged to work towards this.
- Some projects did, however, include patients throughout: from conception and identification of objectives to data collection and the analysis and dissemination of results.

Conclusions

- Results from Phase 2 of the online questionnaire point to a variety of outcomes and impacts on practice, albeit to a lesser extent than what was initially anticipated.
- This could be due in part to the fact that some projects ended a relatively short time ago (btwn 1-4 yrs), such that the full extent of impacts will only be observed in follow-up studies.
- The forthcoming in-depth and semi-structured interviews will probe further into the impacts these projects had on clinical practice, and how our call for projects can be improved.

References

- Australian Research Council (2017) *The Engagement and Impact Assessment Pilot*, Commonwealth of Australia.
- CLAHRC (Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care) (2015) *World class research making a difference*, NIHR CLAHRC East Midlands.