

COLLECTING EVIDENCE IN REAL WORLD CLINICAL PRACTICE

ACU-Track is a new Oxfordshire based business venture. As explained by Nick Lowe, one of its founders, "It's a clinical outcomes tracking system that is designed specifically for the acupuncture profession. Its goal is to be able to record real life patient results, in real world clinical practice. We've partnered with a clinical software provider, configured and developed their software to uniquely suit the clinical environment of acupuncture. We're working with membership organisations, practitioners, colleges and educational institutions to try and get this software embedded in people's clinics and colleges, to collect real world data and real world patient outcomes on how much better people can expect to get when they see an acupuncturist for various types of health conditions and for what cost."

Nick and his business partner Spod Dutton are both acupuncture practitioners with backgrounds in research, IT data solutions and web applications. They wanted to help their profession conduct more validated research because they don't receive a lot of public funding for acupuncture research even though it's a very promising healthcare intervention for a lot of complaints.

They started the business early in 2020 following 12 months of concept development. The system has been through a lengthy pilot phase and officially launched at the end of April 2021. It enables the acupuncture profession to undertake its own research at a relatively low cost.

Spod explains "If you do a piece of research, to get the numbers to work, you need big volumes. Each practitioner has its own low numbers of data records, but you need hundreds. ACU-Track enables practitioners to enter every treatment which becomes a record in our database, so the database gets bigger and bigger, providing loads of real world evidence so that the numbers work for the research to be valid."

“ OxLEP have been extremely supportive throughout the whole process ”

How OxLEP helped turn the concept into reality

Although it's a global business, ACU-Track are based in Oxford. Their pilot phase trials were undertaken with local Oxfordshire based clinics, so the grass roots grew in that region. The partners had been researching innovation funding and came across the Go Create grant from OxLEP's Innovation Support for Business (ISfB) programme.

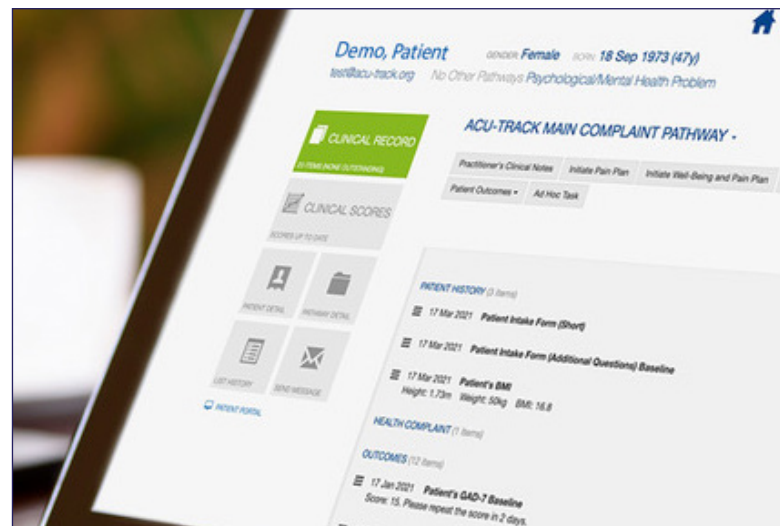
"We attended an online session which talked through the step-by-step grant application process which was very useful. We put a business plan together and were put in touch with a couple of OxLEP's advisors who were very good and so generous with their time. They looked through our application at length and gave us very useful feedback prior to submission. OxLEP have been extremely supportive throughout the whole process."

The Go Create grant was used primarily to fund the cost of software configuration and development so that it could be built into a working software package ready for launch. The business also received some secondary funding which was used for research consultancy to help design the software and functionality. As a start-up business, ACU-Track have been empowered to do more with the money available to them.

Support from the profession

The acupuncture profession has been universally supportive of ACU-Track's initiative which is proving to be a step in the right direction for the profession. Currently involved in a major marketing campaign and networking to get the word out, the future is looking very promising. "People are buying it, logging on and using it," says Nick. The company are in talks with a lot of colleges and educational institutions to get the software used in their teaching clinics so that as newly qualified practitioners exit college, they will naturally want to use the system and become direct customers.

A primary focus for ACU-Track is to expand into America and they're already seeing a lot of traction in that direction. Finally, Nick adds "Overall the future is looking very promising and the support and input from OxLEP has been overwhelmingly positive."



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
ACU-TRACK PLEASE VISIT :
www.acu-track.org



Find out more about OxLEP's Innovation
Support for Business (ISfB) programme:

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