**Title of project:** Dietary intervention in people with a stoma  
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**Overall aims:** To establish current dietary advice and support provided to people with a stoma; to systematically review the literature to identify gaps in knowledge and potential targets for dietary intervention; to use this information to develop and pilot test dietary interventions to improve stoma management.

**Background:** Two of the main types of stoma (colostomies and ileostomies) are surgically created openings in the abdomen to enable the discharge of faecal contents into a stoma bag. Common reasons for having either a colostomy (from the colon) or an ileostomy (from the ileum) include colorectal cancer, ulcerative colitis, and Crohn’s disease. It has been estimated that over 13,500 people undergo stoma surgery per year and around 1 in 500 people in the UK are currently living with a stoma. In a recent qualitative investigation into perioperative nutrition in people who had undergone colorectal surgery, we reported that people who have a stoma are a particularly vulnerable group in regards to dietary intake and advice. This finding was further reiterated in feedback from members of our patient and public involvement (PPI) group and local stoma nurses. Issues include lack of (or poor) information provision and conflicting advice or mixed messages. It has also been noted by others that there is little standardisation of care post-discharge, at least in regards to the management of ileostomies with high output stomas. Potential complications of mismanagement include dehydration, acute kidney injury, and malnutrition. The purpose of this PhD will be to develop a greater understanding of dietary issues in people living with a stoma, with the ultimate aim of improving outcomes.

**Specific research questions:** The student will be encouraged to develop their own research plan, however the thesis could answer the following research questions:

1. What evidence is available in the literature on dietary management and/or interventions in people with a stoma?
2. What is current practice in regards to dietary advice and support for people with a stoma?
3. What are the attitudes and views of people with a stoma about dietary management?
4. Are there suitable dietary intervention(s) for pilot testing?
5. Is/are these dietary interventions acceptable, how compliant are people with these interventions, and do these interventions have the potential to improve factors such as quality of life?

**Methods:** The research will adopt a mixed methods approach. The literature on the evidence for dietary management and dietary interventions in people with a stoma will be systematically reviewed. Data on current advice and support given to patients with respect to dietary intakes with a stoma will be collected. In addition, qualitative interviews will be used to explore the views of people who have had a stoma placed following colorectal surgery (and potentially also healthcare providers involved in the care of people with a stoma) on dietary management. Based on these findings, dietary interventions to address issues raised by patients (which may include factors such as stoma output) will be developed and pilot tested.

**References**
2. http://www.stomawise.co.uk/types-of-stoma/overview