

the gastroc-soleus complex and a return to high-level physical activities; the incidence of re-rupture should not be considered as the main outcome.<sup>8</sup>

In clinical practice, an increasing number of patients managed non-surgically have no re-rupture, but the healed Achilles tendon has elongated, thus altering its relationship with the gastroc-soleus muscle complex.<sup>9</sup> These patients present with a more acute Achilles tendon resting angle,<sup>9</sup> are not able to push off properly, and behave similarly to patients with chronic Achilles tendon rupture. Reconstructive surgery to correct this condition is possible,<sup>10</sup> but it is more technically demanding than primary repair procedures, and probably much more expensive.

The musculoskeletal system thrives under load and motion, not immobilisation. Weight-bearing with functional bracing, which was originally developed for use after surgical management of acute Achilles tendon tears<sup>11</sup> and has been used in more than 1000 patients in the past 20 years, is at least as good as plaster cast immobilisation for patients being managed conservatively, and, as shown by the UKSTAR trial, probably cheaper. At this point, we should explore whether the application of other strategies could improve outcomes. For example, electrical stimulation of the gastroc-soleus complex could be introduced in the early phase of management of Achilles tendon rupture, together with isometric contractions of the same muscle group. Eccentric exercises might also be beneficial. Communication between orthopaedic surgeons, muscle physiologists, and rehabilitation specialists would greatly benefit patients with acute Achilles tendon ruptures.

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## The UK as a global centre for health and health science

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In 2015, the UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Health (APPG) mapped the UK's contribution to health globally, showing that it had world-class universities and research, was a global leader in health policy and international development, had strong life sciences and biomedical and biotech industries, and had a vibrant and diverse not-for-profit sector.<sup>1</sup>

In 2019, the APPG looked at what had changed in the intervening time and in the context of understanding the likely impact of Brexit on the UK's global role in health. We gathered data from published and

unpublished sources and interviewed 78 health and academic leaders—half from the UK and half from other countries—about their perceptions of the UK's current and potential future role. On Feb 6, 2020, the APPG publishes its new report, *The UK as a Global Centre for Health and Health Science*.<sup>2</sup>

There have been considerable improvements in the past 5 years with, for example, big increases in funding for research, new regional collaborations between universities and National Health Service (NHS) bodies, and increased foreign investment in UK life sciences.

There have also been advances in genomics, mental health, artificial intelligence, and other areas.

The health and academic leaders from outside the UK who were interviewed saw the UK as a force for good in health in the world. They commented positively on the UK's track record in improving health globally and on its values, scientific and business standards, the strengths of its institutions, and its achievements in health and health science. They were, however, concerned about the UK becoming more inward looking and neglecting its global contribution, particularly at a time when other countries were already becoming more insular and protectionist. The UK health leaders largely had similar views and raised concerns about the potential loss of access to European collaboration and funding and the problems in staffing health services and research institutions.

Our new report proposes that the UK now needs to act decisively to maintain and strengthen its role as a global leader in health and health science.<sup>2</sup> The UK must grasp the many opportunities represented by the fast-growing health and health sciences sectors and at the same time recognise, plan for, and mitigate the difficulties and risks.

Our vision is for the UK to become a global centre for health and health science, a go-to place for all aspects of health globally. We propose a two-part strategy that maintains the UK's position as a trusted leader in health, with high standards and strong values, and at the same time invests in further development in and greater collaboration between all the UK organisations working in health and health science. The two parts of the strategy are shown in the panel.

The timing is perfect. The health sector is growing fast, science and technology promise new breakthroughs, and the UK has a well established core of expertise and institutions that are able, given the right support, to take advantage of them.

The new APPG report<sup>2</sup> makes 12 recommendations that address both the risks and the opportunities. Two are highlighted here. The first recommendation emphasises the importance of international partnerships and global solidarity in tackling health globally. This is not a zero-sum game. The APPG recommends that the UK should further strengthen and develop its existing global partnerships, collaborations, and

#### Panel: The UK as a go-to place for health globally

The UK needs to act decisively to seize the opportunities and manage the risks. We propose that it should:

- 1 Re-state its commitment to improving health globally, advocating for the right to health for all people everywhere, and working to the highest standards in science, business, and partnerships.
- 2 Bring together the combined strengths of its academic, government, commercial, and not-for-profit sectors to realise synergies and create a shared vision for the UK as a global centre for health and health science.

networks with international organisations, partners in high-income countries, and the fast-growing economies that are working to develop their health systems, as well as continuing to support low-income countries to improve the health of their populations. The second recommendation focuses on the importance of supporting and developing regional UK collaborations and institutions. It recognises the as yet untapped potential for growth and development, particularly in the Northern Health Sciences Alliance, Edinburgh BioQuarter, Life Sciences Hub Wales, GW4 Alliance in southwest England and southeast Wales, and MedCity in the southeast of England.

The UK is well known as a world financial sector. We believe it has the potential to be equally well known as a global centre for health and health science.

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- 2 All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Health. The UK as a global centre for health and health science. 2020. <http://www.appg-globalhealth.org.uk/> (accessed Feb 5, 2020).

For more on the **Northern Health Sciences Alliance** see <https://www.thenhsa.co.uk/>

For more on the **Edinburgh BioQuarter** see <https://edinburghbioquarter.com/>

For more on the **Life Sciences Hub Wales** see <https://lshubwales.com/>

For more on the **GW4 Alliance** see <https://gw4.ac.uk/>

For more on **MedCity** see <https://www.medcityhq.com>