



Professor Paul Gill (centre) receives his award at the RCN Nurse of the Year Awards, pictured alongside Professor Daniel Kelly, RCN Chair of Nursing Research at Cardiff University and RCN Wales director Helen Whyley.

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## Prestigious awards see Northumbria academic recognised as nursing leader

Praised for transforming the lives of patients, professionals and students alike, [Professor Paul Gill](#) was named one of Wales' leading nurses at the 2023 [Royal College of Nursing \(RCN\) Wales Nurse of the Year Awards](#).

Recently appointed as [Northumbria University's](#) Deputy Head of the [Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health](#), Professor Gill won the Supporting Improvement Through Research award at RCN Wales' tenth

anniversary celebrations.

Judges commended his significant contribution as a nursing leader in the field of research and clinical practice and highlighted his “highly innovative” work looking at the impact of ketamine on bladder health.

Professor Gill spearheaded a study that found habitual, recreational ketamine use was causing significant damage to the bladder, with sufferers often misdiagnosed due to a reluctance to disclose their use of the drug.

His research raised awareness of the issue among GPs and healthcare professionals and helped to improve outcomes for patients, a development Professor Gill describes himself as “very proud” to have played a part in.

The professor’s work on a groundbreaking long Covid study was also highlighted. The initial pilot study, currently being progressed at Northumbria, demonstrated how hyperbaric oxygen therapy – usually used to tackle carbon monoxide poisoning and decompression sickness – could help improve many key symptoms, such as chronic fatigue and breathlessness experienced by patients suffering the long-term impact of Covid-19.

The awards panel praised the professor’s devotion to putting patients and families at the forefront of his research, an approach Professor Gill attributes to his own nursing career.

“As a nurse, I think it’s vital to put patients at the forefront,” he explains, “I got into nursing in the hope I could make people’s lives better in some way, and so seeing that my research has helped to change processes, and inform clinical guidelines and practice in a way that does make the lives of patients and their families better, is important to me.”

Professor Gill said the award came as welcome confirmation that his work is making a real difference to people, describing it as a “big achievement”.

### **Pictured: RCN Wales Nurse of the Year Awards winners**

His pride over the win is made more poignant by the fact his mother, who lives with dementia, was able to share in his happiness.

“I was genuinely delighted to win and felt it was validation in many ways, in that I suppose many of us who work in healthcare research often wonder whether our research is making an impact – this is confirmation that it is, and that’s really nice.

“It’s also made my mother really proud. She has dementia but is still doing quite well and it’s great she could see this while she’s still able to appreciate such things.”

He added: “When conducting this research – and when conducting research of any type – it’s as part of a team, the work and the results would not be possible without a team effort and I’d like to thank all of the people I worked with.”

While the award was given in recognition of work carried out in a former role at Cardiff University, Professor Gill is now based at Northumbria, where he is progressing his award-winning research and building upon it further.

### **Pictured: Professor Paul Gill celebrates at the RCN Wales Nurse of the Year Awards 2023**

Professor Debra Porteous, Head of Department for Nursing, Midwifery and Health at Northumbria University, said: “We’re delighted to see Paul recognised by the RCN in the award of Supporting Improvement Through Research award at RCN Wales’ tenth anniversary celebrations. This reflects worthy recognition of the impactful research Paul is delivering on transforming the lives of patients. It is to be commended.”

Northumbria’s Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health offers students the opportunity to develop caring careers that can transform the lives of patients, families and communities.

For more information about facilities and study options for healthcare courses at Northumbria, visit [www.northumbria.ac.uk/nmh](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/nmh)

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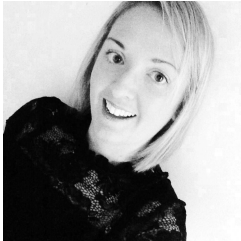
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