

Health and Social Care Institute NEWS

Issue Three 2011



Health and Social Care Institute:

- conducts applied research with real clinical and social impact
- synthesises and evaluates evidence
- translates evidence into policy and practice

Foreword from the Director



Professor Janet Shucksmith
Assistant Dean (Research)

Welcome to the third edition of the Health and Social Care Institute (HSCI) research newsletter. The Institute was established in 2008 to provide a focus for research on health and social care topics across Teesside University.

HSCI has a particular focus on applied research, and the impact of this can be seen in the range of studies presented in this newsletter.

Professor Denis Martin's work on ways of visualising and representing pain has fed very directly into the patient experience and is part of a much broader programme of work on pain management and rehabilitation in the Institute.

This autumn the rehabilitation group will play host to a range of national and international collaborators, including Professor Patrick McKeon from the University of Kentucky.

Within the public health strand of our work the focus on translation of evidence into practice and policy is anchored within our commitment to Fuse, the UKCRC funded Centre of Excellence in Public Health. We are delighted to welcome Professor Rosemary Rushmer to our ranks. She joins the newly installed Fuse Knowledge Exchange Broker,

Avril Rhodes, and Fuse Communications Officer, Mark Welford, who are both based at Teesside.

We are also delighted to see the work of many of our PhD students nearing completion this year. In this issue we feature the work of Sandra McCormack, from the School of Health & Social Care, who has undertaken her PhD alongside very heavy teaching and managerial commitments within the midwifery team. Part-time study like this can be difficult, but Sandra is testament to the extent to which such study enriches the teaching curriculum too.

Please feel free to contact us if you wish to have further information about any of the projects examined in the newsletter.

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Actions speak louder than words

New Professor aims to get public health research into practice

Rosemary Rushmer joined HSCI in May 2011 as Professor in Knowledge Exchange in Public Health, and is keen to use her new post to promote ways of working more collaboratively with research partners. She continues her work with Fuse (the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health), which is a research collaboration across the five north east universities.



An on-going dialogue between those who produce research findings and those who might use them is essential.

Rosemary has worked in both a policy context and in practice, as well as being an academic for 25 years (at Durham and St Andrews universities). During 2003/4 Rosemary worked in the Scottish Government helping to design the national research programme to support the introduction of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Scotland Act. During 2004/6 she worked as joint head of R&D at NHS24 during a time of great organisational change following an external review of the service.

Rosemary said, 'Both posts gave me an appreciation of how pressures in practice and policy contexts may constrain what dedicated staff can actually achieve. Working with our research partners rather than simply doing research on them allows us to take these contextual factors into account, and is key to providing research findings that are useful, timely and answer the questions most pressing to their needs.'

Working with Alison Steven (Northumbria) and David Hunter (Durham), Rosemary's team has just completed a realist evaluation of the Research to Reality Programme – a knowledge-to-action initiative led by the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partners (RIEP). Seven workshops brought together academics, local authority staff, members of the NHS and the voluntary sector to discuss the latest evidence and best practice in key public health areas (for example smoking

and the under-18 conception rate) and to plan action. Delegates rated the workshops highly and enjoyed learning about the research evidence on 'what works', but there was little follow-up and no changes to practice were made.

Rosemary said, 'We often rely upon dissemination workshops to share our research findings, but this study suggests that simply informing practitioners of what works is not sufficient to prompt or sustain change.' Delegates wanted a more structured approach with a series of workshops, challenging goals that they were held accountable for and support to allow them to change the routines and pre-set priorities that make change difficult. Rosemary added, 'An on-going dialogue between those who produce research findings and those who might use them is essential.'

Beginning in January, Rosemary will lead a two-year NIHR SDO programme funded project to explore these issues further. The project will look at how research evidence is used (or not) in the commissioning and planning of public health services and interventions around alcohol services and what helps or constrains this process. It will also look at how other types of information, data and local intelligence are used. The project will be carried out by two new researchers to HSCI, and draw on case sites from Scotland, and the north east and north west of England.

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The Centre for Translational
Research in Public Health

A UKCRC Public Health Research Centre of Excellence

Robert the Bruce shows the way to pain management

The PAspider, inspired by the story of *Robert the Bruce*, helps people to manage chronic pain.



The PAspider is a unique digital application that provides feedback to people with chronic pain on their self-management skills. It has generated much interest in the USA and Australia, as well as the UK, and shows how research and enterprise skills can combine to produce something of clear value.

The idea came from working with Pain Association Scotland, a not-for-profit organisation that provides training and support in self-management for people with chronic pain in groups across Scotland and Northumberland. The challenge was to improve on a process in which people in the groups rated each of a set of key self-management skills on 0-10 scales. The scores were then presented as a radar graph on paper. This innovative use of data visualisation gave people simple and useful feedback on how they were managing overall, and was popular with group members. It was clear that this was a valuable process and that it would be worth investing time and effort to see if it could be developed further. Two areas for development were identified: the questions and the medium.

Analysing the available data, researchers including HSCI's Professor Denis Martin, pictured above right, found that most of the original questions were related in a

meaningful way. In a multi-stage consultation process with group members, these questions were reworded so that they were unambiguous and asked in a consistent manner, before being incorporated into a new, scientifically sound questionnaire.

At the same time, work was underway to develop an electronic medium for the questionnaire. Initial thoughts were that this could help people to store their records and allow them to see clearly how their skills had changed over time. It would also mean that the questionnaire could be made available, online, to people outside the groups, extending the range of people who could be helped by the Association.

The digital medium offered the opportunity to make the process of filling in the questionnaire more interesting than a paper and pencil exercise. As the radar graph looked like a spider's web it gave rise to the idea of placing the process in an interesting background related to a spider. All efforts to feature *Spiderman* proved too convoluted! One story did fit well though: that of Robert the Bruce, hiding out in a cave in Scotland, contemplating surrender after suffering setback after setback, only to be inspired to try again by the persistence and ultimate success of a spider spinning its web. The moral of the story – if at first you don't succeed, try, try again – is very apt for people learning the skills to live their day to day lives despite disabling pain.

It has a Scottish context, which suits Pain Association Scotland and appeals internationally. And it features a spider. The design work was carried out by Animmersion UK (www.animmersion.co.uk), a Middlesbrough-based company specialising in visual communication using 3D artwork and multimedia digital technologies. Animmersion UK expertly developed the functionality and the look and feel of the application to the specifications supplied.

The questionnaire is now online on the website of Pain Association Scotland, see www.painassociation.com for more details.



A selection of recent staff publications

Public Health

Carlebach, S. and Shucksmith, J. S. (2010) A review of an out-of-hours telephone support service for palliative care patients and their families, *International Journal of Palliative Nursing*, 16 (9), 445-450.

Conway, S. (Ed) (2011: forthcoming) Governing death and loss: empowerment, involvement and participation. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Riva, M., Terashima, M., Curtis, S., Shucksmith, J.S., Carlebach, S. (2011) Coalfield health effects: Variation in health across former coalfield areas in England, *Health & Place, Special Issue on Health Geographies of Voluntarism*, 17 (2), 588-597.

Rushmer, R., Themessel-Huber, M., Coyle, J., Humphris, G., Dowell, J., Williams, B. (in press) Is the Routine Recording of Primary Care Consultations Possible and Desirable? Lessons for researchers from a consultation with multiple stakeholders, *Patient Education & Counselling*, 82 (2), 247-253, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2010.04.020>

Rushmer, R.K., Steven, A., Hunter, D.J., (2011) Hearing what other people are doing is always interesting... from research to reality: A realist evaluation of a knowledge to action initiative. Available at:

http://www.fuse.ac.uk/uploads/news/vid_11774_The%20Research%20to%20Reality%20final%20report.pdf

Smith, S. A., Heslehurst, N., Ells, L. J., Wilkinson, J. R. (in press) Community-based service provision for the prevention and management of maternal obesity in the North East of England: A qualitative study, *Public Health*, doi: 10.1016/j.puhe.2011.05.004.

Spratt, J. Shucksmith, J.S., Philip, K.L., Watson, C. (2010) 'The Bad People Go and Speak to Her': Young People's Choice and Agency when Accessing Mental Health Support in School, *Children & Society*, 24 (6), 483-494.

Rehabilitation

Chin, K. J., Handoll, H. H. G. (2011) Single, double or multiple-injection techniques for axillary brachial plexus block for hand, wrist or forearm surgery in adults, *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 7.

Hatton, A. L., Dixon, J., Rome, K., Martin, D. J. (2011) Standing on textured surfaces: effects on standing balance in healthy older adults, *Age and Ageing*, 40 (3), 363-368.

Hibbs, A.E., Thompson, K., Batterham, A., French, D., Hodgson, D., Spears, I.R. (In press) Peak and average rectified EMG measures: which method of data reduction should be used for assessing core training exercises? *Journal of EMG and kinesiology*.

Jones, S. E., Hamilton, S., Perry, L., O'Malley, C., Halton, C. (2011) Developing workable research methods: Lessons from a pilot study with vulnerable participants and complex assessments, *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 16 (4), 307-318.

Lenza, M., Buchbinder, R., Christensen, R., Hanchard, N.C.A., Faloppa, F. (2011) Magnetic resonance imaging versus ultrasound for assessing rotator cuff tears in patients with shoulder pain for whom surgery is being considered (protocol). *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 3.

Negrini, S., Minozzi, S., Bettany-Saltikov, J.A., Zaina, F., Chockalingam, N., Grivas, T.B., Kotwicki, T., Maruyama, T., Romano, M., Vasiladiis, E. S. (2010) Cochrane review: Braces for idiopathic scoliosis in adolescents, *Evidence-Based Child Health: A Cochrane Review Journal*, 5 (4), 1681-1720.

Perruchoud, C., Eldabe, S., Durrer, A., Bovy, M., Brookes, M., Madzinga, G., Garner, F., Batterham, A. M., Menoud, C., Jacobs, M., Gulve, A., Buchser, E. (2011) Effects of flow rate modifications on reported analgesia and quality of life in chronic pain patients treated with continuous intrathecal drug therapy, *Pain Medicine*, 12 (4), 571-576.



Exciting time

for North East schoolchildren



With schools under pressure to meet academic targets, physical education can be squeezed out. But research has shown that physical activity in schools is essential for numerous health reasons and it could also improve learning.

Alison Innerd, a full-time PhD student at HSCI, has been developing a solution called **EXCITE (EXercise Classes In the Teaching Environment)**, which incorporates physical activity into the classroom and the curriculum for 10 to 11 year-olds.

At the heart of the EXCITE approach is a workbook of ten minute physical activities that can be incorporated into maths, English, science and other curriculum subjects. In the main part of her PhD, Alison is evaluating

whether 8-10 weeks' involvement in the EXCITE programme influences children's overall activity, fitness, motor skills, health and well-being, dietary intake, behaviour and learning. She is also assessing the enjoyability, practicality and sustainability of this novel strategy, from both the teachers' and the children's perspectives. Alison hopes that her blend of learning and moving will help children develop mentally, academically and physically.



The testing team, Lawrence Nnyanzi and Alison Innerd

Meet Sandra McCormack

member of the academic staff and part-time PhD student



Sandra's research is feeding straight into undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum development at Teesside University.

Sandra studied for her first degree as a mature student at Teesside University while working full-time as a midwifery sister. She went on to complete her PGCE before starting to teach midwifery. Sandra said, 'It was a natural transition for me to share my experience and deeply-felt convictions about midwifery and women's health.'

Sandra is now Principal Lecturer in Midwifery and Women's Health and Lead Midwife for Education in the School of Health & Social Care, where she leads a teaching team of senior lecturers (who are also midwives) in delivering a range of modules and courses from foundation degree to master's degree level.

Her team also liaises closely with midwifery practitioners. Sandra said, 'As midwives, everything we do must be based on a sound knowledge of theories and evidence supported by research-informed teaching.'

True to her word, she completed an MA in Women's Studies at Newcastle University, and later registered for a PhD – now nearing completion – at Teesside University. Using Grounded Theory methodology, Sandra is looking at the emotional well-being of women in pregnancy, birth and early motherhood. She added, 'Midwives in practice, and midwife educators, must listen to women's birth stories to understand how they experience birth in the context of the rest of their lives – their health, work, relationships and other children. Women's voices should be heard in our curriculum development.'

People with frozen shoulder have their say

A HSCI researcher is speaking to people with frozen shoulder about their experiences.

The pilot study has involved in-depth interviews with people at various stages of the condition.

'The primary aim was to develop criteria for measuring the progress of treatment. But the insights gained already go beyond this. Sue Jones, who is conducting the interviews, said, 'it's been especially interesting to hear what people with frozen shoulder want from their interactions with health care professionals. It's not always what you would have expected, which emphasises the danger of making assumptions.'

'Based on the results of this and subsequent studies, it may be possible to better match care provision to patients' needs by educating clinicians; and to develop more relevant patient information than is currently available.'





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