Discontinuity of primary care puts older patients at risk of emergency hospital admission

New research funded by the School for Primary Care Research has found that older patients who do not see the same GP over a period of time are at higher risk of emergency hospital admission than those who see the same or a small number of GPs.

Researchers at the Universities of Bristol and Oxford found that the risk of emergency hospital admission was more than twice as high for patients with the least continuity of care compared to those with high continuity of care.

The study, published in Annals of Family Medicine, involved analysing data from 10,000 electronic records of patients aged 65 years and older, from 297 general practices in England, between April 2010 and March 2014. These data were linked to hospital records to measure the association between continuity of care and risk of emergency hospital admission. The team focused on older patients as they are seen more frequently in general practice than younger adult patients and are most at risk of emergency hospital admission.

Read more.

Promoting diversity and inclusion at Wellcome

Dr Robbie Duschinsky, from the University of Cambridge, has been appointed as a member of Wellcome’s new Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group.

The Group has the responsibility to support the new Diversity and Inclusion team at Wellcome in their work to improve equality and inclusion in their grant-giving, in the science and medical sector, and within the Trust itself.

Read more.
All Party Parliamentary Group on Pancreatic Cancer

Professor Julia Hippisley-Cox, University of Nottingham, spoke about her research into the earlier diagnosis of cancer at the launch of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Pancreatic Cancer (APPGPC) on 15 November.

“Over the last couple of years I have been an expert witness to the Parliamentary Enquiry because of my role in the research, development, and implementation of the QCancer tool (www.qcancer.org) into clinical practice.

This has been of particular interest in relation to pancreatic cancer because of how difficult it is to diagnose in primary care, especially at a stage when any treatment can help.

With the support of Macmillan and CRUK, QCancer was piloted in 500 practices nationally. It was then fully integrated into EMIS Web and is available to over 4,500 GP practices nationally (though currently awareness of the tools among GPs is very low).

We are now at a point, for the first time ever, where the majority of GPs have access to cancer decision support tools to help assess a patient’s risk of different types of cancer with the aim of making earlier diagnoses.

Ageism and alcohol policy tackled in the House of Lords

Beth Bareham, SPCR Launching Fellow at Newcastle University, represented the Institute for Ageing at the House of Lords on 21 November.

Beth was asked to contribute to discussions on alcohol policy and clinical practice at the launch of the ‘Calling Time’ report by Drink Wise Age Well.

“Whilst hearing more about work in this area, I was excited to meet the authors around whose research my own work is shaped, as well as the main group implementing research in my area.”

The trip proved a fantastic opportunity, and afterwards Beth was invited to visit them in Wales to learn more about the group. “I hope to keep in close touch with my new colleagues moving forward to see where my work might help shape developing interventions and strategies.” Read the blog ‘Time we ‘rosé’ to the challenge: combating ageism in alcohol policy and practice at the House of Lords’
Tessella Industry Prize

SPCR trainee Chris Morton at Keele University won the Tessella Industry Prize for the `Best Computational MSc Statistics Dissertation' and the Postgraduate Statistics Centre Prize for `Learning Excellence' on the MSc in Statistics from Lancaster University. The prizes were awarded for the outstanding quality of his dissertation and for his overall performance on the course.

Chris undertook his MSc in Statistics at Lancaster University in 2016/17 - just before becoming a School trainee - for which he received a distinction. Funding for the MSc enabled Chris to lay the statistical groundwork for his SPCR funded PhD. Read more.

Vice-Chancellor’s Impact Awards

Prof Gene Feder and the IRISi team were recognised for their work on improving the primary health care response to domestic violence with a Vice-Chancellor’s Award from the University of Bristol. The team were winners in the Policy and Practice category and presented with their prize on 23 November.

Health services, including general practice, have been slow to respond to the needs of women experiencing domestic violence and abuse (DVA). Professor Feder, Centre for Academic Primary Care (CAPC), led the team that developed Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS); a programme of DVA training and support for general practice teams, helping them recognise patients with experience of DVA and giving them a direct referral route into specialist DVA services.

IRIS started out as a research project, led by the University of Bristol, and has now been commissioned in over 30 areas in England and Wales. Over 800 general practices have engaged in IRIS training and more than 8,000 women have been referred to their IRIS advocate-educator, improving their safety, quality of life, and mental health. Additionally, thousands of women have been offered signposting and information by general practitioners and practice nurses to enable them to take up support when the time is right for them.

Commenting on the IRIS training, one clinician said:

“Best, most informative, and inspirational training I have been on in 30 years. Fantastic service, gives me hope for humanity, you’re doing an amazing job.”

Read more about the awards.

Professor Feder and Dr Alison Gregory have been involved in domestic violence research and implementation for many years. Alison’s SPCR funded PhD explored the impacts of domestic violence on informal supporters of survivors. She then received funding from the School and the Elizabeth Blackwell Institute to work with informal supporters of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and co-led the VOICES study to investigate how children living in a situation of DVA are impacted by their exposure.

Gene received funding from the SPCR in 2011 to determine whether a psychological intervention delivered by domestic violence advocates was effective and cost-effective. He currently leads a programme of domestic violence research with a NIHR Programme Grant for Applied Research.

Left to right: Alison Gregory (CAPC), Medina Johnson (CEO IRISi), Gene Feder (CAPC), Lucy Downes (national lead IRISi), Carol Metters (CEO Next Link), 3rd sector collaborators in the DV research programmes.

Credit: Jon Rowley
Fifth of GPs are foreign and work in poorest communities, research shows

New figures compiled by SPCR researchers at the University of Manchester have revealed that one fifth of practising GPs in England trained abroad and typically work in the country’s most deprived communities.

Drs Aneez Esmail, Maria Panagioti and Evangelos Kontopantelis, based at the University’s Health eResearch Centre, say overseas GPs often support the most deprived communities, work longer hours, treat more patients, but are paid less than their UK-qualified counterparts. Uncertainties about future immigration policy caused by Brexit could impact on the retention and replacement of foreign trained GPs - even from outside the EU - in an NHS already hit by a chronic shortage, they add. The study, published today in BMC Medicine by BioMed Central and jointly funded by the Medical Research Council and the NIHR, reveals that 4.1% of UK GPs were trained in the EU. The figure rises to 17% for doctors trained outside the EU. Read more.

The potential impact of Brexit and Immigration policies on the GP workforce in England: a cross sectional observational study of GP qualification region and the characteristics of the areas and population they served in

Chair of Data Science & Health Services

The Data Science and Health Services Research Chair from the University of Manchester has been awarded to Dr Evan Kontopantelis for his contributions to primary care and health services research. Here he answers questions about how he anticipates the new role will shape his career and his hopes for changes within the NHS.

How will the Chair help your career and make a difference to primary care practice?

I hope there will be more opportunities for involvement at a higher and more strategic level, to help UK primary care deal with some of the immense contemporary challenges it faces. In my opinion, these relate to the budgetary and workforce crisis that is looming in the NHS, which appears to be accelerated by Brexit and the choices of the current government. There are increasing costs largely due to an ageing population (but also new technologies and treatments). It will be a tremendous challenge for the NHS to continue providing high quality care that remains free at the point of use particularly if funding levels remain the same or the increases do not match the demand. Whether funding levels remain the same, there are small increases, or increases are in line with the levels of health spending of other Western European countries, we need to harness the wealth of the data within the massive organisation that is the NHS, and use it actively to inform on real-world interventions (the effects of which may differ to what is ‘known’ from randomised controlled trials) and policy decisions (for example distribute funding according to health needs). Related news below.

What direction do you see your research taking in the future?

I’d like it to help harness the tremendous amount of data that is routinely collected in the UK, and to translate it to actionable information with the ultimate aim being to improve the health of the population. I am particularly interested in inequalities: quantifying and exploring them.

Evan Kontopantelis was SPCR post-doctoral fellow from 2010 - 13. Since then he has received SPCR funding for four separate projects. The latest is a large cross-department collaborative study Quantifying the severity of chronic conditions in English primary care using the Clinical Practice Research Datalink.
Wellcome Trust PhD Programme for Primary Care Clinicians

Biographies from the first cohort of Wellcome Trust Fellows are now available and provide a context to the background, current research interests and publications of each of the four successful Fellows.

The Wellcome Trust PhD Programme, initiated in 2017 and administered at Keele University, supports the academic development of Primary Care Clinicians through high quality training in a critically important but still under-resourced field. The programme will support up to four PhD fellowships each year over the next five years. Read the biographies.

School for Primary Care Research

CPRD training day

Tuesday, 12 December 2017
St Luke’s Chapel, University of Oxford

The SPCR invites all PhD/ DPhil students to register for a CPRD training day in Oxford.

You will gain knowledge of the type, format and breadth of data contained within CPRD and linked datasets (including hospital episodes and mental health data) and how these data can be used to conduct observational research studies.

The day is aimed at both clinical and non-clinical students who are considering using CPRD data in the future, or are currently involved in a CPRD study which is in its early stages.

Event website: www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/events/cprd

Please contact Sarah for further information:
sarah.stevens@phc.ox.ac.uk

The SPCR welcomes ALL PhD/DPhil students who belong to SPCR member departments, regardless of whether or not they are funded by the School.
This year’s annual NIHR training meeting in Leeds saw a number of School funded trainees present their work. Amongst the delegates were Beth Bareham (Newcastle University), Hajira Dambha-Miller and Karen Morecroft (University of Oxford).

**BETH**

As a NIHR School member, this month I attended the NIHR trainee meeting to take up some of their training opportunities from an inspiring set of expert guest speakers. Through this great experience, I learned some fantastic tips on employing leadership skills in my work which I hope will support me in my new role as co-convenor for MedSoc North East. I also acquired an effective and novel presenting style involving graphic, wordless slides, which I carried forward to apply in my presentation at SAPC North last week.

Beth has subsequently won ‘Best Research’ prize at SAPC North Conference held in Kendal on 24 November. Congratulations Beth!

**HAJIRA**

The conference kicked off with some inspiring introductory speeches that welcomed trainees from every discipline into the ‘NIHR family’. I was particularly excited to hear about the NIHR academy that will be launching soon alongside new opportunities for funding. Many of the proposed changes that were described stem directly from trainee feedback and highlighted the progressive and responsive nature of the NIHR. The range of research topics covered by the trainees were on display in the form of many posters. This spectrum of NIHR research was further highlighted by the poster prizes. We also heard from successful multidisciplinary trainees at all stages who have taken varying pathways en route to their clinical academic careers to date. Professor Chris Whitty then delivered a thought provoking talk emphasising the need for scientific and clinical structures to consider multiple morbidity, rather than focusing on single disease. He also offered plenty of helpful advice on how to have a successful academic clinical career. One suggestion that sticks in my mind was on the value of attempting to predict the research questions of the next decade, and to begin working on them today.

Hajira was awarded a prize for her poster on empathy in type 2 diabetes. Congratulations Hajira!

**KAREN**

The day was a real eye opener to the breadth of research the NIHR funds, and the range of backgrounds the trainees come from. Attended by over 200 trainees from around the country, I met people undertaking research in a variety of areas such as Emergency Medicine, Paediatrics, Haematology and Physiotherapy to name a few over the two days in Leeds.

I attended sessions on leadership and delivering effective presentations, both of which had practical advice applicable to all roles, not just research based, and found the day really informative and useful.
On 23-24 November, the Newcastle University Primary Care and Ageing team organised and hosted the School for Academic Primary Care (SAPC) North, Scientific Meeting at the Castle Green Hotel in Kendal. The conference was very well attended, in spite of the best efforts of the northern weather, and SPCR members and trainees were among those invited to present their research to delegates.

SPCR doctoral fellow at Newcastle University Bethany Bareham (pictured below) was awarded the research prize for her presentation ‘A systematic review and qualitative synthesis of health and social care workers’ views and experiences regarding older adults’ drinking’ – a feat she attributes in part to the presentation skills training she received at the recent NIHR trainee meeting.

The research poster prize was won by Alice Moult (Keele University) for her poster ‘Self-management of distress in older adults – does the Internet have a role? A Qualitative study’.

I was invited to present a poster outlining preliminary findings of a systematic review ‘What are the palliative and end of life care needs of older people living with frailty’, which forms part of my SPCR funded doctoral fellowship. Other recipients of SPCR funding invited to present were Robert Barker (Newcastle University), who presented the results of his systematic review ‘Who should provide first line medical care for care home residents to optimise health outcomes?’ (recently awarded the prize for best public health masters dissertation at Newcastle University) and Susan Hrisos (Newcastle University), who presented findings from her research on patient involvement in improving safety in UK general practice.

All delegates enjoyed a variety of fascinating posters, presentations and keynote speeches covering a wide range of topics relevant to education and research in Primary care. Delegates were also treated to an evening meal followed by a grassroots ceilidh.
The NIHR School for Primary Care Research has established a new undergraduate medical student prize in memory of Professor George Lewith.

The award is open to medical undergraduates at any UK medical school.

The prize winner will receive a certificate and funded attendance and accommodation at the Society of Academic Primary Care Annual Scientific Meeting from 11 - 12 July in London.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: Friday 16th March 2018.

For more information: www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/trainees/GL
National GP ACF Annual Conference

12–13 April 2018 • Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford

The annual conference for academic GP trainees and early career primary care researchers.

This two-day conference aims to inform and inspire with keynote talks from world-renowned leaders and workshops that will help you make the most of the ACF period and beyond. This is also a chance to present your research as a talk or poster to a knowledgable, supportive audience.

Confirmed speakers include:
• Robbie Foy, Leeds Institute of Health Sciences
• Fiona Godlee, Editor in Chief, BMJ
• Ben Goldacre, University of Oxford
• Sir Muir Gray, University of Oxford
• Carl Heneghan, University of Oxford
• Ann Louise Kinmouth, University of Cambridge
• Pali Hungin, Durham University; President, British Medical Association
• Debbie Sharp, University of Bristol

Visit the website for more details: www.phc.ox.ac.uk/events/gpacf
**Dates for your diary**

**SAPC SW**
13 - 14 March 2018
Plymouth

**BJGP Research Conference**
23 March 2018
Call for abstracts open

**GP ACF conference**
12 - 13 April 2018
Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford

---

**Blog**

*Why doctors need to improve the way we discuss assisted dying*
Paul Teed, University of Bristol

*‘Time we ‘rosé’ to the challenge: combating ageism in alcohol policy and practice at the House of Lords*  
Beth Bareham, Newcastle University

*‘Researchers: To make an impact, write less and talk more!’*
Lesley Wye, NIHR blog

*Five steps to help you involve the public in communicating research*
Anastasia Skamarauskas, NIHR blog

---

**Round 11 of NIHR Fellowships Programme now open**
Deadline: 19 December

---

**James Lind Alliance Adult Social Work Priority Setting Partnership**
The JLA wants to find out what research needs to happen in future to improve social work with adults. Find out more and complete the survey.

---

**NIHR News and Research**
November 2017

---

**NIHR Funding**
November 2017

---

**NIHR Webinar**
NIHR Webinar: How Clinical Academic Careers can benefit the whole NHS
12 December

---

**Publishing soon?**
Please send all SPCR funded publications and press releases to Kate Farrington before the proposed date of release. All info about outputs is available on the [website](#)