Pioneering change at SAPC’s 46th Annual Scientific Meeting

Another year down and another fantastic turnout for the SPCR at SAPC. Hosted by the University of Warwick this year, from 12 to 14 July, the event gave rise to lively talks and debate around key issues affecting the primary care environment under the theme ‘Pioneering Change’.

Former SPCR Fellow, Dr Helen Atherton (Scientific Chair), who received the RCGP/SAPC Yvonne Carter Award in 2014, presented the first of two ‘Papers of Distinction’ for her top scoring abstract on alternatives to face to face consultations in general practice.

The second was presented by Dr Jenni Burt (pictured above) entitled ‘Developing appropriate polypharmacy in primary care’.

SPCR Fellow at UCL Dr Nathan Davies was presented with the RCGP/SAPC 2016 Yvonne Carter Award and spoke about his research on the challenges and uncertainty in end of life care for people with dementia.

Department Lead for the SPCR at Newcastle University, Professor Louise Robinson, gave a plenary on dementia and implementing research. She later discussed her School funded ‘85+’ study for which she received the prestigious NAPCRG (North American Primary Care Research Group) Senior Travel Prize.

UCL’s Dr John Barber won the NAPCRG Junior Travel Award, and Newcastle University’s Bethany Bareham, presented her research in a Doctoral Masterclass. She talks about the conference and her participation in the masterclass here.

Read CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal) Associate Editor Domhnall MacAuley’s blog on the conference here.

Dr Jenni Burt sums up her experiences of the conference here.

RCGP recognises the valued work of SAPC colleagues with multiple awards
Read more LINK
**Professor Louise Robinson** has been awarded NIHR Global Health Group funding, to the tune of £1,928,469, to create a Global Health Research Group on Dementia Prevention and Enhanced Care (DePEC). The aim of the research group is to reduce the personal and societal burden of dementia approaches in order to bring down the numbers of people getting dementia in the future, and to develop more efficient post-diagnostic care. The group will collaborate with dementia experts in public health and primary care at the Universities of Newcastle, Kings College London, and partners in low and middle income (LMIC) areas of Tanzania, Malaysia and India to create a global, multi-disciplinary translational research group. Find out more about the study.

Read the news from the NIHR.

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**Dr Katrina Turner** and **Professor John Macleod** have been appointed joint Heads of the Centre for Academic Primary Care (CAPC) and the Bristol NIHR School for Primary Care Research. They will take up the post on 2 October 2017. Read more.

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**Dr Catherine Woods** recently graduated from the University of Southampton with a PhD. Her research was a qualitative examination of how callers to a leading cancer helpline in the UK requested assistance about their various practical, emotional and medical problems; and how call-handlers managed these requests – focussing specifically on the challenging aspects associated with providing healthcare over the telephone. This research was part funded by an NIHR fellowship for Prof. Geraldine Leydon (her primary supervisor) and a three year studentship from the School for Primary Care Research. Catherine continues to work in Primary Care and Population Sciences at Southampton, mainly on projects that aim to understand and improve healthcare communication for both practitioners and patients using Conversation Analysis (CA).

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**Dr Caroline Vass** (University of Manchester) wrote an editorial for PharmacoEconomics as part of her post-doctoral research. The piece was a continuation of the research she conducted during her SPCR funded PhD on Discrete Choice Experiments (DCE) to risks and benefits. The metrics received included a staggering 1,500 downloads in the first week!

In addition, she received a message from the journal notifying her that her paper was one of the five most downloaded articles on the SpringerLink platform during the period January to June 2017 (despite it being published in late May).

Link to the editorial: Using discrete choice experiments to inform the benefit-risk assessment of medicines: Are we ready yet?

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The Aston Webb Award for Outstanding Early-Career Academic was awarded to **Dr Derek Kyte**, Institute of Applied Health Research, Birmingham University for his research on Patient Reported Outcomes in Primary Care. Derek was funded by the School as a PhD student from 2011 to 2015.

This award identifies the work of an outstanding early-career academic whose research has international significance. Dr Kyte has been recognised for his ground-breaking work into the use of patient-reported outcomes in clinical trials. View the interview with Derek here.
Prof Geraldine Leydon has been promoted to Professor of Medical Sociology & Healthcare Interaction at the University of Southampton.

Dr Claire Planner received an award at the ‘PPIE in Biology, Medicine and Health: Partnerships and Perspectives’, run by the University of Manchester’s Centre for Engagement and Involvement, for her involvement in PRIMER (Primary Care Research in Manchester Engagement Resource).

Claire completed her PhD at the University of Manchester on collaborative care for serious mental illness, an exploration of the potential to improve health care delivery and health outcomes, and has received a Launching Fellowship from the School to start in October this year.

New Chair for the HTA

Dr Kamal Mahtani (University of Oxford) has been appointed chair of one of the HTA Programme’s five advisory committees. The Primary Care Topic Identification, Development and Evaluation (TIDE) panel, advises on the research agenda for the HTA programme based on the needs of NHS primary care.

The NIHR is the research arm of the NHS - the HTA Programme is its biggest research programme and assesses around 600 research funding applications every year.

The advisory panels have two roles: First to support the identification and development of potential research questions to be put to the research community as calls for research in the programme’s commissioned workstream. Second, to evaluate and prioritise first stage research applications to the HTA’s researcher led work stream based on the importance of research questions to the NHS, and whether a proposed study would make a significant difference to practice.

Kamal Mahtani is a GP and deputy director of the Centre for Evidence Based Medicine, Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences. He has been the deputy chair of the panel since 2015 and will take over from Professor Clare Wilkinson in early 2018.

Commenting on the appointment, Kamal said “There are currently many challenges facing those working in and served by NHS primary care. My focus will be to support the NIHR HTA programme in identifying and funding research that seeks to meet some of these challenges.”
The Art of Communication: my experiences on the NIHR Doctoral Research Training Camp

by Rachel Ryves

“...The first day eased us into the theme of the camp, with brilliant talks from Dr Giles Yeo and Professor Anthony Redmond. Dr Yeo gave a thoroughly entertaining and powerful talk about the importance of conveying your research effectively, succinctly, but more importantly accurately. Professor Redmond added to this by talking about how we need to be able to describe our research in 20 words and ourselves in 10 seconds, taking into account our audience.

“I cannot thank the SPCR enough for giving me the opportunity to attend this event, and strongly recommend this camp to future trainees who are interested in going. It’s intense, it’s hard work, but it’s so rewarding and an experience I will never forget.”

Above: The Io-Team, Rachel Ryves top left.

Then the hard work began. We were split into our groups and were introduced to our mentor. I was in a group with delegates from a range of disciplines: a respiratory research nurse, a gastroenterologist, a radiologist, a health economist, and a medical physicist. We were then handed our research paper for our communications plan: iodine deficiency in the UK. This was an unfamiliar topic for all of us, so we had to establish what skills we had between us in order to understand the paper’s message and how we were going to put together a strong communications plan to the expert panel on the final day. Our team name was quickly decided: “Io-Team”. Read the full blog.

Insights from the Oxford Leadership Programme

by Sarah Tonkin-Crine and Alyson Huntley

Two individuals are supported by the SPCR to attend the Oxford Leadership Programme every year. This year researchers Drs Alyson Huntley (Bristol) and Sarah Tonkin-Crine (Oxford) attended the first week of events at St Hughes’ College, Oxford.

“As cohort#12 of the International Primary Care Research Leadership Programme we were lucky to stay at St Hugh’s College, Oxford during a very hot and sunny week in July. After arriving at the college on Sunday afternoon we were given our timetable and a list of our cohort members spanning the UK, Catalonia and the Republic of Ireland. We realised that there were a couple of familiar names to ourselves including some people we had only ever spoken to by email. Sunday evening allowed us to enjoy a college dinner with excellent food whilst trying to learn everyone’s names, institutions and research areas.

We were given allocated time on Monday to present an overview of our research and it was interesting to identify many overlaps in people’s work which was not always apparent from our general conversations the night before. It was clear early on that everyone in the group was happy to contribute to discussions, get involved in a constructive way and the course organisers commented on how quickly we had formed a bond. This set the tone for the week, whether we were sat around the table working or enjoying free time in Oxford...”. Read the full blog.

Last year Evan Kontopantelis (Manchester) and Fiona Stevenson (UCL) attended. Read about their expectations before they embarked on the programme and their points of view from a statistician and a qualitative researcher after their first meeting.
Shortlisted in Round 2 of the NIHR digital media competition

The School co-funds (with the NIHR CLAHRC Oxford) the OxFAB study, one of the shortlisted entries in the NIHR digital media competition. View the full shortlisted infographic (right) here and read about how the infographic was conceived here.

Keele University’s Dr James Prior was shortlisted for his photograph (above) taken during a Research User Group (RUG) meeting. “These meetings provide an opportunity for researchers to present their ideas to patients to gain their input on many aspects of involving patients in their study. The photo specifically highlights the patient involvement in developing study documentation, initially ensuring that content is clear to aid recruitment, with the ultimate goal to improve data quality.”

James is currently conducting a SPCR project investigating whether people with rheumatological or inflammatory (RoI) conditions are more likely to intentionally harm (self-harm) or kill themselves (suicide) than other patients. Read more.
Delegates meet in Prague for WONCA 2017

Dr Clare J Taylor, Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, University of Oxford, pictured on the right with the dragon

The World Organisation of Family Doctors (WONCA) Europe conference was held in the beautiful city of Prague this year and attended by several thousand family doctors from around the world.

On behalf of the European Primary Care Cardiovascular Society (epccs.eu), Professor Arno Hoes from Utrecht, Netherlands and Professor Richard Hobbs and I from Oxford, UK presented a workshop on the burden of heart failure. We explored the challenges of early diagnosis and effective management for the 15 million people living with heart failure across Europe and included an update on the European Society of Cardiology 2016 guideline which offers some solutions.

The conference programme offered great diversity with everything from fourth generation technology to boredom. The plenary on 'Embracing diversity in the digital transformation of primary healthcare' by Dr Harris Lygidakis was a phenomenal exploration of the potential of technologies to transform the way we deliver care, but with a cautionary note that digital data by itself is useless and need to be analysed, interpreted and acted upon in a meaningful way. The parallel session titled ‘A healthy dose of boredom’ was presented by a young GP who advocated that, in this fast paced world, being bored is something we should aspire to, at least for a time. She argued boredom urges us to ‘seek new goals, explore new territories and dream new ideas’.

There were also sessions where I was genuinely moved. In the workshop on migrant health, case studies were used to highlight the horrific experiences of migrant patients prior to their arrival in the safety of a European healthcare system. Professor Amanda Howe, WONCA President and a British academic GP, also delivered a powerful plenary which started with a slide depicting the victims of recent terror attacks and international conflicts to place her talk in the current global context.

And the relevance of the dragon? He is the mascot for the WONCA Europe 2018 conference in Krakow, Poland and really stole the show in the conference exhibition area. I’ll certainly be thinking about going again next year.”

NIHR Signal

Screen reminders for GPs did not improve anticoagulant prescribing in atrial fibrillation


General practice software that generated screen reminders for patients with atrial fibrillation did not increase the proportion taking oral anticoagulants appropriately.

This NIHR-funded trial included GPs in 47 surgeries in England and found that at the start only 63% of eligible patients with atrial fibrillation were being prescribed anticoagulants. Six months later the rate had increased to 66% in intervention practices and 64% in those following usual practice, a non-significant difference between the groups.

Use of the software was associated with increased diagnosis of transient ischemic attack, which could be due to improved detection or over-diagnosis. A reduction in strokes of any type was of borderline statistical significance after 12 months.

Longer term studies, collecting more detail on anticoagulant prescribing and the reasons behind patient and doctor choices, may support practice improvements in the future. Read more.
Before, during and after the NIHR Knowledge Mobilisation Research Fellowship

Two recipients of the KMRF, Drs Sarah Knowles and Lesley Wye, write about the opportunities and benefits of the award, as well as developing a level of application perserverence.

Confessions of a NIHR Knowledge Mobilisation Research Fellow
Dr Lesley Wye, University of Bristol
How can patients be involved in the implementation and improvement of research?
Dr Sarah Knowles, University of Manchester

The NIHR’s KMRF competition is now open for applications.

New collaborative projects beginning in October 2017

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<th>PROJECT</th>
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<td>Dr Rachel Johnson</td>
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<td>The TEST (Trial of Eczema allergy Screening Tests) Study: feasibility randomised controlled trial with economic scoping and nested qualitative study</td>
<td>Dr Matthew Ridd</td>
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<td>Optimising Management of Patients with Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction in Primary Care (Optimise-HFpEF)</td>
<td>Prof Christi Deaton</td>
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<td>D-Mannose to prevent Recurrent UTI: a double blind randomised placebo controlled trial</td>
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<td>Quantifying variation in UK primary care test use: A 15 year retrospective analysis of temporal and geographical variation in test use</td>
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<td>Microbiology of throat swabs collected when patients present to primary care with acute cough</td>
<td>Dr Kyle Knox</td>
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<td>Evaluating the impact of the 2011 NICE Hypertension Guideline on the Management of Hypertension in Primary Care and Subsequent Outcomes</td>
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<td>Expectation Management for Patients in Primary Care: Developing and Feasibility Testing a New Digital Intervention for Practitioners</td>
<td>Dr Hazel Everitt</td>
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Automated tailored telephone support, or interactive voice response (IVR), could help people to take important medicines

School funded research undertaken by Dr Katerina Kassavou and Prof Stephen Sutton (University of Cambridge) explored the reasons for patients’ non-adherence to prescribed medications, the current action to address these reasons, and tested the acceptability of an interactive voice response (IVR) intervention to provide advice and support between primary care consultations.

The study involved face-to-face interviews with patients with hypertension, type 2 diabetes, or both conditions recruited from primary care and presumed to be non-adherent, and practice nurses. Based on participants’ input researchers developed an IVR intervention, elements of which patients tested at a second interview using think aloud protocols. The findings suggested that beliefs about taking medications, beliefs about the ability to cope with the underlying affective state within challenging contexts, and the complexity of the medication regimes are important reasons for adherence to medications.

Patients expressed positives views about the IVR as a way to support adherence, and made recommendations for delivery mode and intervention messages. Findings were integrated to inform the development of a highly tailored medication adherence intervention.

Project page: Reasons for non-adherence to cardio-metabolic medication, and acceptability of an interactive voice response intervention in patients with hypertension and type 2 diabetes in primary care

Article will be published shortly in BMJ Open.

Reasons for non-adherence to cardio-metabolic medication, and acceptability of an interactive voice response intervention in patients with hypertension and type 2 diabetes in primary care: a qualitative study.
NIHR funding alert

CLINICAL TRIALS FELLOWSHIP
SENIOR INVESTIGATOR COMPETITION

NIHR Funding and support round-up
July 2017

Watch the new NIHR video

PPI PULSE
Patient and Public Involvement from the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, University of Oxford.

Inside Evidence-Based Health Care

The University of Oxford’s Department of Continuing Education is inviting prospective students from across the globe to a webinar series with insights from global experts on the latest in Evidence Based Medicine and its application. Each of the four virtual events provides a chance to discover what it’s like to study on the University of Oxford’s part-time postgraduate programme in Evidence-Based Health Care. Find out more.

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.

NHS Health and Care Innovation Expo 11 - 12 September

The Health and Care Innovation Expo is one of the NHS’ biggest events and celebrates world leaders in science, research and innovation. The NIHR will be there to showcase its work and increase awareness of its role in funding innovation in health, social care, public health and global health research.

The NIHR would like to invite you to submit digital materials, for example videos and infographics that fit on a TV screen, for the stand. You can also submit two slides showcasing your centre and a collaborative research project. Read more.
Dates for your diary

SPCR Trainees' meeting
18-19 September 2017
Worcester College, University of Oxford

SPCR Showcase: Working better together
19 September 2017
Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford

NIHR Trainees' meeting
14-15 November 2017
Queen's Hotel, Leeds

Blogs

The Art of Communication
Rachel Ryves, University of Southampton

Pre-Grant patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) at University of Bristol
Catherine Jameson

Insights from the Oxford Leadership Programme
Sarah Tonkin-Crine and Alyson Huntley, Universities of Oxford and Bristol

Public involvement workshops 2017: Public contributor blog
Eric Deeson, Public Contributor

Diversity in public involvement workshop: Researcher blog
Rose Watson, Newcastle University

Promoting best practice in public involvement
Emma Palmer-Cooper, SPCR PPI Officer

My place on the TUTOR-PHC programme
Gemma Mansell, Keele University

Confessions of a NIHR Knowledge Mobilisation Research Fellow
Lesley Wye, University of Bristol

If you haven’t yet completed the SPCR communications survey, we would be very grateful for your feedback

communications survey

Thank you