Doctoral students from around the SPCR organised the first of an ongoing series of PhD training days on 21 February. The brainchild of DPhil student Charlotte Albury and former trainee Ben Fletcher, the focus of the training days is “To give students the opportunity for specific skills training from experts within the SPCR. We hope to provide them with the opportunity to meet others interested in similar research topics and to present their work.” said Charlotte. The training will complement the annual SPCR trainee meeting held in September each year.

The series started at St John’s College, University of Cambridge, with around 30 students attending the ‘Randomised Controlled Trials in primary care’ themed talks. Beth Bareham, from Newcastle University, said the day gave an in-depth overview of RCTs from experts working on different aspects. “The session was fantastic and genuinely engaging. It was great to hear how qualitative research can be of value to many aspects of the RCTs, and all of the work that goes on in the background more generally when conducting them. It was comparable to sessions that charge a lot of money, and I think it is great that that training was provided free of charge to students of member institutes. It was also fantastic to meet more students interested in primary care and other areas that link to our own research interests. All of the talks were fantastic and well pitched, the students presented really well put together 3MT’s and the networking event was really effective and well thought out. Thanks to the SPCR for supporting these events!”

The next session on the theme of patient and public involvement in research will be held at Newcastle University. Contact Beth Bareham for more information.
IVR interventions help people take their medication

School funded research to develop and test a tailored interactive voice response (IVR) has had some positive results.

In England, about 8 million people have recorded hypertension, or high blood pressure, which often accompanies other risky conditions, including type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and stroke. Although doctors do prescribe medication to reduce hypertension, substantial proportions of people with these conditions don’t take their medicines as prescribed. Non-adherence reduces the effectiveness of treatment and increases the cost to the NHS from hospital admissions, additional consultations, referrals, investigations and medicine wastage. GP surgeries lack the time to provide ongoing support for medication adherence to people with long-term conditions.

The majority of research in this area has been conducted in the USA and shows that IVR interventions do have an important effect on supporting medication adherence. Researchers Vikki Houghton and Dr Katerina Kassavou, from the University of Cambridge’s Primary Care Unit, are looking at a new IVR intervention for the UK. Addenbrooke’s Outpatients provides the ideal setting to ask the public for ideas to feed into the development of a new intervention. Researchers asked members of the public for their help, inviting people to suggest messages that could be used during the intervention.

Vikki explained: “Overall it was a great success, with many people approaching our table to find out more and to also share their experiences and advice with taking medications...”

AMR outcomes presented to Prof Chris Whitty

by Ashley Bryce

“I was asked by Professor Chris Salisbury, Head of the Centre for Academic Primary Care at Bristol, to present some of the key outcomes from my NIHR SPCR funded PhD to Professor Chris Whitty, during his visit to the University of Bristol on 23rd January 2017. Many senior colleagues within the Faculty of Health Sciences were present.

My presentation focussed on the global prevalence of antibiotic resistance in children’s E. coli urinary tract infections and associations with primary care antibiotic prescribing, which was published in the BMJ in March 2016.

Antimicrobial resistance is a highly topical area of research; Public Health England, NICE and the Department of Health have all placed antimicrobial resistance at the top of their policy agendas and my BMJ paper received substantial media attention worldwide. I was delighted to learn that Professor Whitty said he was already very familiar with the paper, and that our findings had caught the attention of the Government Science and Technology Committee review meeting on antimicrobial resistance in November 2016, where our review findings were presented by Professor Paul Cosford, Public Health England Director for Health protection and Medical Director. I want to take this opportunity to once again thank my co-authors and PhD supervisors without whom the work would not have been possible.”
Supporting carers of people with dementia

Dr Nathan Davies, SPCR Fellow at UCL, has been invited to spend a month in Australia, presenting his work on dementia and end-of-life-care.

Nathan was introduced to several palliative care and dementia care researchers by Prof Wendy Moyle, from Griffith University in Sydney, who invited him to discuss his research on the uncertainties of dementia and end of life care. They will also hear about his current research on developing new ways to support the carers of dementia sufferers.

Nathan will discuss how practitioners can best support family carers in relation to his School funded project that explores the support needs of family carers. This project will also develop a prototype website to support them towards the end of life of the person with dementia.

Engaging with mental health research in very late life

Rachael Frost from the Primary Care and Population Health Unit at UCL has received a Beacon Bursary. Rachael and her team are planning a series of short workshops to give people in very late life an opportunity to shape future research and benefit from current research findings. Having observed that frail older people are rarely able to participate in engagement activities, this group of mental health researchers are delivering tailored workshops to change that.

Rachael has received School funding to investigate the management of anxiety and depression in frail older people.

“I am looking forward to presenting the work I have done on developing heuristics for practitioners caring for people with dementia, to aid in their decision making processes.”

Nathan Davies.

New head for CAPC

Professor Gene Feder has taken on the role of head of the Centre for Academic Primary Care (CAPC) on an interim basis, until Autumn 2017, from Professor Chris Salisbury. Read more.

Prof Feder has taken a lead on research into domestic violence (DV) for the School since 2008 when he received funding to develop and conduct a feasibility trial to determine if a psychological intervention delivered by domestic violence advocates is effective and cost - effective.
By the beginning of February 2017, one million patients had taken part in primary care research through their local GP practice in England, and through the NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN). The CRN celebrated this achievement by thanking all the participants across the 56% of local GP practices involved in research. Read more.

One million participants in primary care

The NIHR School for Primary Care Research congratulates the patients and the public, primary care and NIHR staff involved in reaching this recruitment milestone in primary care research. New and better treatments and services become available in the NHS because people take part in clinical research, and it’s marvellous that so many people have had the opportunity to get involved in research in their local community. What a milestone!

Richard Hobbs
Director
NIHR School for Primary Care Research

NIHR Dissemination Centre new signals

Association Between Chronic Physical Conditions and the Effectiveness of Collaborative Care for Depression: An Individual Participant Data Meta-analysis

Collaborative care is an intensive care model involving several health care professionals working together, typically a physician, a case manager, and a mental health professional. Meta-analyses of aggregate data have shown that collaborative care is particularly effective in people with depression and comorbid chronic physical conditions. However, only participant-level analyses can rigorously test whether the treatment effect is influenced by participant characteristics, such as chronic physical conditions.

Researchers, Drs Maria Panagioti, Evan Kontopantelis and Professor Peter Bower, concluded that there is evidence that collaborative care is effective for people with depression alone and also for people with depression and chronic physical conditions. Existing guidance that recommends limiting collaborative care to people with depression and physical comorbidities is not supported by this individual participant data meta-analysis. View the signal on the Dissemination Centre’s Discover Portal

Long-term impact of transient ischaemic attacks

In the UK, 46,000 people have a TIA each year. One in 12 people who have a TIA go on to have a stroke within a week. This high risk of a full stroke means that there is a focus on rapid diagnosis and early treatments to prevent it.

Strokes can have a significant long-term impact on people’s health and independence. However, a recent systematic review highlighted that the long-term impact of TIA is less well-known. The review suggested that there was a high rate of fatigue, psychological and cognitive impairment following a TIA. However, it was unclear whether this was higher than in the general population.

The findings of a study by Dr Grace Turner suggest that all health professionals supporting people following a TIA should be aware of fatigue and cognitive impairment as potential long-term consequences and ask patients specifically about them in order to provide appropriate treatment and support. View the signal on the Dissemination Centre’s Discover Portal

View the signal on the Dissemination Centre’s Discover Portal

View the signal on the Dissemination Centre’s Discover Portal
Gemma-Claire Ali

“My prize money will pay my registration fee for the SAPC annual scientific meeting in Warwick this July.

The literature review presented in my poster provides preliminary evidence in support of moving away from designing and testing resource-intensive, disease-specific mental wellbeing interventions. Instead it looks at developing interventions that help dyads living with any and/or multiple chronic physical conditions to draw on their own skills and strengths to improve their mental wellbeing. The results of this literature review, together with findings from forthcoming qualitative research with service users and supporters, will be used to promote the more efficient, more cost-effective, and more widely available delivery of mental wellbeing support to dyads living with chronic physical conditions.”

Alison Gregory

“I am attending the European Conference on Domestic Violence in Porto in Sept 2017. The research has so far resulted in a published paper in Trauma, Violence, & Abuse (The Impact on Informal Supporters of Domestic Violence Survivors: A Systematic Literature Review), I also have an accepted paper in BMJ Open (A qualitative study to explore the health and wellbeing impacts on adults providing informal support to female domestic violence survivors). An additional paper has been submitted and another 2 are being drafted from this work. I was the joint recipient of the Corinna Seith Award in 2015 (presented by Woman Against Violence Europe (WAVE)) for the work presented in the poster, and I have used the findings to write materials used in public health and awareness campaigns by Bristol City Council, Leicester City Council, and Avon & Somerset Constabulary.”

Read the blogs from the ten year anniversary

A primary care research success story
Domhnall MacAuley, CMAJ

Happy Birthday SPCR
Roger Jones, BJGP
NIHR TCC is recruiting 7 public members for its award panels

Please distribute this opportunity widely amongst your networks

The National Institute for Health Research Central Commissioning Facility (NIHR CCF) is currently looking for members of the public to join the following panels:

Invention for Innovation (i4i) programme One member on the Product Development Award panel

Programme Grants for Applied Research (PGfAR) programme One member on national sub-panel

Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) programme Seven members across six Regional Advisory Panels: West Midlands (x1), South East and Central (x1), North West (x1), Yorkshire and the North East (x2) and East of England (x1), East Midlands (x1)

Department of Health Policy Research Programme (PRP) Two members for the PRP Commissioning Panel

Deadline for applications: 12pm on Monday, 27 March 2017.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview. Please check the information pack for interview dates and location.

Find out more
Chaperones for Intimate examinations
How GPs use medical chaperones for intimate examinations

Intimate examinations, such as cervical smears for women or prostate examinations for men, are a routine part of going to the GP. When this happens, the doctor or nurse may offer a patient the services of a “medical chaperone”. This is usually another member of the health team who can reassure patients during these examinations, and witness that they have been carried out in a professional way.

GPs have to display a clear chaperone policy in the practice premises, and can face penalties if they do not. When the Care Quality Commission inspects GP surgeries, they will check whether GPs are offering chaperones in line with the guidance.

A group of researchers from the University of Oxford, will be asking patients and members of the public to help them in the design of a study to ensure research covers issues important to patients.

“We’d like to do some research to understand better how GPs use medical chaperones for intimate examinations, and to improve the evidence for the use of chaperones in primary care.”

They will also be asking patients and the public to help in developing ways of telling people about the research and to advise on how best to share findings. Read the full piece and contact the researchers involved.

Dates for your diary

SAPC North East Regional Meeting
21 March 2017
Lincoln

SAPC South West Regional Meeting
23 March 2017
University of Oxford

SAPC Annual meeting
12 - 14 July 2017
University of Warwick

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

SPCR Showcase: Working better together
19 September 2017
University of Oxford

NIHR Trainees meeting
November 2017
Queen’s Hotel
Leeds

Blogs

Qualitative research: We need to ask, “What’s going on?”
Rachel Ryves

How old is old, and what to wear: the value of PPI
Bethany Bareham

Increasing your visibility, improving your impact
Kate Farrington

Submit an abstract