It has been ten years since the NIHR School for Primary Care Research held its first funding competition in 2006, providing the momentum to make significant contributions to applied primary care research within the NIHR. Since its inception the School has strengthened the evidence base to support primary care practitioners and has evolved to reflect the changing healthcare needs of the nation through policy reforms and public engagements.

To mark the ten year anniversary, a celebratory event in November will bring together researchers and trainees from over the years to debate the changing primary care landscape and highlight significant School driven impacts to date. The NIHR will also celebrate ten years since its launch this year with a series of ‘NIHR at 10’ events.

The School was established to produce research-based evidence in primary care with a focus on applied research which still underpins the School’s vision — to increase the evidence base for primary care practice.

To date, more than 330 projects have received funding with findings appearing in a number of high impact journals. Increased collaboration between primary care expertise across the School has been influential in disease specific areas of research such as cancer, kidney and mental illness. Research has also been instrumental in informing developments in patient safety, antimicrobial resistance, multimorbidity and new technologies.

The School’s capacity programme was created in 2010 to develop the research capability of clinicians and non-clinicians across a wide range of disciplines. Over 90 trainees have received awards to date and, through association with the NIHR, have access to additional funding opportunities for furthering their research careers. Numerous accolades for the presentation and publication of impactful research have been awarded to trainees. There have also been a number of trainee-driven successful public engagements and patient and public involvement initiatives.

Looking to the future, the School hopes to further strengthen the evidence base to support healthcare practitioners with the decisions they make both at the interface between practitioner and patient and at policy level.
Researchers from the Centre for Academic Primary Care at the University of Bristol have created a unique dataset of 300 GP/patient consultations that will soon be made available for research and educational purposes.

Millions of consultations between GPs, patients and caregivers happen across England every day. Despite this, and the importance of communication for health care outcomes, research and/or teaching based on datasets of recorded encounters are relatively uncommon. The School funded study successfully recorded 327 adult patient consultations with 23 different GPs between July 2014 and April 2015 and 89% consented to having their data archived to allow researchers access to it. Academic researchers will have access to the dataset via the University of Bristol Research Data Repository from March this year.

Principal Investigator Dr Rebecca Barnes said: “Opportunities for academic researchers and teachers to work with high-quality existing consultations datasets are few and far between. So in line with a wider push towards making publicly funded research data available to the scientific community we were funded by the NIHR School for Primary Care Research to create this unique dataset. This dataset is a hugely valuable resource for a wide variety of health communication research because in addition to the consultations data, each recording is also linked to wider patient survey and anonymised medical records data.” Read the full press release.

The One in a Million team will showcase the data archive, outline conditions and procedures for access at a launch event on Friday 4 March in Bristol. To register, please visit the website.

Congratulations

Sam Watts was highly commended for public engagement in 2015 at the Dean’s awards, University of Southampton. Sam is Principal Investigator on a School funded project developing a digital GP behaviour change intervention to support GPs in the delivery of evidence based practice around the management of PSA screening and active surveillance in primary care. Read more.

Mike Moore, Professor of Primary Care Research, took the reigns as Head of Academic Unit at the University of Southampton from 1 August 2015.

PhD student Mairead Murphy won best poster prize at the University of Bristol’s sixth Population Health Symposium for her poster entitled: Development and cognitive testing of the PCOQ: A questionnaire to measure outcome in primary care. Mike is supervised by Chris Salisbury and Sandra Hollinghurst at the University of Bristol. Read more.

Emily Wersocki (ACF at Keele University) and David Jameson (ACF at University of Manchester), attended the SAPC North annual meeting on 26 - 27 November where they were awarded the ‘Best research oral presentation’ and ‘Best research poster’ prizes respectively. Read more.
Addressing the second translational gap

Researchers from across four School departments have been involved in exploring the causes of the evidence to practice gap (2nd translational gap) for complex interventions in primary care and what strategies are effective for closing the gap. The project, led by Professor Elizabeth Murray (UCL) and Professor Bie Nio Ong (Keele), completed last year and the team were invited to present their findings to the NIHR Evaluations Trials and Studies (NETSCC).

On 18 November Dr Hazel Everitt, Dr Anne Kennedy, Ms Rosa Lau and Professor Krysia Dziedzic presented the results and the implications for NETSCC's further plans to enhance impact and implementation of the research they commission and fund. Read more. Below: The NETSCC team with project team members Krysia Dziedzic, Rosa Lau, Hazel Everitt and Anne Kennedy in the front row.

Contributing to the ‘Do something good for U in JanUary’ initiative

An intervention to encourage healthy weight gain during pregnancy supported an initiative launched by the National Obesity Forum’s campaign in January.

The School funded project ‘Preventing obesity in pregnant women’, led by Dr Kate Daley from the University of Birmingham, aimed to assess the difference in weight gain per weeks of pregnancy between groups of pregnant women. Changes to weight gain during pregnancy were monitored as well as changes in psychological health, quality of life, physical activity and diet quality.

In the Thames Valley, the trial was taken up by 49 pregnant women at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust’s John Radcliffe and Horton General Hospitals. Dr Lucy Mackillop, co-investigator in Oxford was interviewed about the initiative and appeared on BBC One Today show where she said “We know that if we reduce excess weight gain during pregnancy, we can measurably improve the outcome for mum and baby.”

Read the press release by the Oxfordshire’s Clinical Trials Network. Findings from the research will be published in 2016. Read more about the trial.

Film features latest e-health interventions

With part-funding from the NIHR School for Primary Care Research, researchers in the acclaimed e-Health Unit at University College London have developed a digital health intervention that is successfully increasing uptake and reducing costs to the NHS. The study considers self-management of Type 2 diabetes to reduce the risk of heart disease, kidney failure and premature death.

With the challenges facing primary care and the NHS more generally, including a larger and ageing population, budget constraints, and higher expectations of care standards, e-health is recognized as a key component in achieving more for less.

The UCL e-Health Unit has collaborated with NHS Alliance and ITN Productions to produce a short film celebrating innovation and new ways of working in primary care. The film features several of the interventions developed by the e-Health Unit including work in areas of alcohol, safer sex and diabetes. It showcases the HeLP-Diabetes Programme, which was developed by the eHealth Unit and implemented via Help-Digital, a Community Interest Company led by UCL, as a working example of how research has been practically implemented into CCGs to the benefit of the NHS and patients. The short film can be viewed here.

RCGP John Fry Award

The John Fry Award is presented to a Member or Fellow of the College who has promoted the discipline of general practice through research and publishing. The award is intended to encourage people to undertake research as a practising GP early on in their career and within 20 years of qualification as a GP.

Previous School winners include Tony Avery (Nottingham), Alastair Hay (Bristol), Richard McManus (Oxford), Christian Mallen (Keele), Dan Lasserson (Oxford) and Hazel Everitt (Southampton). Deadline for nominations to SAPC: end February 2016. More information.
Profile: Fiona Stevenson

Fiona is a Senior Lecturer at University College London and principal investigator on a School for Primary Care Research collaborative study looking at improving the doctor-patient relationship by enhancing the use of internet resources. She joined UCL in 2001 and prior to that was Lecturer in Concordance at King’s College London and Research Fellow at Birmingham University.

Fiona’s current research interests lie in: The construction of decision making about medical care; the impact of complex interventions, technology and medical interventions on communication between health care professionals and patients; and, patient and public involvement in medical research and education.

What has shaped your current research interests?

My interest in medical interactions started with my PhD for which I studied decisions in relation to prescribing and taking oral steroids for asthma, I then worked on a study concerned with doctor-patient communication about drugs and my interest in communication in medical consultations, and specifically potential disruptions to communication, has not waned yet!

How has School funding supported your research?

I have previously been involved in studies examining both patients’ and GPs’ experiences and perceptions concerning discussion of information from the internet in consultations but this only tells part of the story; what I was really interested in was what was happening in consultations in relation to discussion of the internet so was delighted to get the opportunity to examine this with funding from the School. I am also really excited about the opportunity to work with my ‘dream team’ of co-applicants who bring such a great range of knowledge, skills and experience.

I have also been funded by the School on the Oxford Leadership programme which has given me the time and resources to consider the future direction of my career, as well as giving me access to a really supportive group of people from a range of disciplines and countries.

How will your research impact on the doctor-patient relationship?

The project will help to develop strategies that both patients and practitioners can use when negotiating discussion of the use of internet, discussions which we know can prove interactionally challenging.

How has School collaboration helped strengthen skills and developed networks?

This large study has enabled a group of people with a similar interest, namely understanding how the internet is discussed in consultations and the role of e-health, to get funding to work together. This project has been discussed informally for a few years and this funding has allowed us to actually do the research. I have also been involved in discussions in relation to other School funded projects (in Southampton and Bristol) that use conversation analysis and this project will help to further develop these links to provide greater methodological expertise in the School.

Will your HaRI project bring opportunities for further research?

This is the biggest grant I have received as a PI and there are a number of areas for future research both in relation to the likely findings and putting them into practice as well as working with complementary data sets that members of the team already have to develop further knowledge. We also plan to lodge the data with the Bristol Data Archive (funded by the School) to provide a resource for future researchers.

eHealth Unit

The eHealth Unit at UCL was established in 2003, by Professor Elizabeth Murray, to explore the use of new information and communication technologies. Besides the new collaborative HaRI study mentioned on page five, the School also supports the following projects in the Unit:

- Computer-based self-management programmes for adults with type 2 diabetes: Cochrane Systematic Review
- Qualitative evaluation of an innovative online services for hazardous and harmful drinkers
- Sexual health outcome measurement: online questionnaire development, validation and piloting
- Health on the Web: trial of work-based online screening and brief intervention for hazardous and harmful drinking
- From evidence to practice: addressing the translation gap for complex interventions in primary care.
- Process evaluation of the Digital Alcohol Management on Demand feasibility randomised controlled trial
- Online structured education with email facilitation for people with type 2 diabetes: feasibility trial
- Exploring barriers to help seeking - hazardous drinkers’ views on drinking and its consequences.
Harvesting Resources from the Internet

The doctor-patient relationship is at the heart of medicine, and has long been acknowledged as a source of therapeutic power. Societal changes such as the increasing emphasis on self-management and widespread online access to previously privileged health information are fundamentally altering the GP-patient relationship. Although patients have always sought information prior to consulting the doctor, the advent of the internet has vastly increased the extent and accessibility of medical information.

Previous research has shown that patients use the internet for health information prior to consulting their doctor, but do not want to be seen to challenge medical authority so are reluctant to share this once in the consultation. Similarly, many GPs report concerns about how to respond appropriately when patients do raise the topic of information from the internet in consultations. This is increasingly common, and our research has shown that even occasional miscommunications around this can have serious deleterious effects, including loss of trust and breakdown of the doctor-patient relationship. Moreover, little is known about the extent to which GPs make reference to, or even use, the internet in consultations. In summary, there is a need to investigate discussion in the consultation of use of the internet as this is a longstanding and major source of potential miscommunication in general practice.

This is a qualitative study which will combine (1) brief survey data from patients before the consultation to determine the help sought and information sources accessed prior to the consultation, with (2) videotaped recordings of consultations and (3) interviews with selected patient and GPs to explore decisions about information seeking, in particular use of the internet.

Previous studies have focused solely on doctor and patient reports; but we know that what people actually do differs from what they say they do.

Conversation analytic methods will be used to identify patterns of interaction between GPs and patients and the consequences of what is said by both GPs and patients for discussion of use of the internet in consultations. Interviews with patients and GPs will be analysed thematically to consider perceived barriers and facilitators to disclosing or promoting use of the internet. Analysis will be combined to identify effective strategies employed by patients and GPs for raising or responding to health information from the internet. These strategies will then be shared with patients and doctors, with the aim of making discussion of materials from the internet smoother in the future. The team consists of experienced qualitative researchers from UCL, Oxford, Bristol and Southampton with particular expertise in GP-patient communication, e-health, organisational research and interactional analysis. We also have two Patient and Public Involvement representatives.

Following successful completion of the work, we will seek further funding to formally develop and test the format, acceptability and effectiveness of the strategies identified for use in GP training and continued professional development. This will take the form of a video elicitation approach to develop a training tool in which groups of GPs will be asked to reflect on clips of interactions about the internet in consultations and reflect on what happened and what might happen next. We will then seek to develop an online version. Funding will also be sought to design a toolkit for patients, with the suggested home being the healthtalkonline website.

Principal Investigator: Fiona Stevenson.
Collaborators: Sue Ziebland (Oxford), Elizabeth Murray (UCL), Trisha Greenhalgh (Oxford), Geraldine Leydon (Southampton), Rebecca Barnes (Bristol).


Janice Atkins

**Title of PhD:** Body composition, dietary patterns, cardiovascular disease and mortality in older age

**Supervisors:** Professor Goya Wannamethee, Professor Peter Whincup and Professor Richard Morris

**Current role:** Associate Research Fellow, University of Exeter Medical School

**Current research:** Epidemiology of ageing; body composition; dietary patterns; age-related diseases.

Leah Bowen

**Title of PhD:** Exploring the use of emergency healthcare services by parents who access care on behalf of pre-school children

**Supervisors:** Professor Sarah Purdy and Dr Alison Heawood

**Current role:** Research Associate, University of Bristol

**Current research:** A&E attendance and admissions, urgent care use, children’s minor illness.

Grace Moran

**Title of PhD:** Missed opportunities for primary prevention of stroke and transient ischaemic attack (TIA) and residual impairments after TIA

**Supervisors:** Prof Tom Marshall, Prof Mel Calvert, Dr Max Feltham

**Current role:** Research Fellow, University of Birmingham

**Current research:** Stroke, CVD, primary care database studies.

Sophie Orton

**Title of PhD:** Smoking in the home after childbirth: prevalence, trends and relationship to smoking in pregnancy

**Supervisors:** Professor Tim Coleman, Dr Laura Jones, Professor Sarah Lewis, Dr Sue Cooper

**Current role:** Research Fellow, University of Nottingham

**Current research:** Childhood secondhand smoke exposure, smoking in pregnancy and postpartum smoking relapse.

Lorna Hobbs

**Title of PhD:** Psychotherapeutic interventions for sexual difficulties delivered via the Internet: Effectiveness, acceptability and reach

**Supervisors:** Professor Elizabeth Murray and Dr Julia Bailey

**Current role:** Trainee Clinical Psychologist, University of East London

**Current research:** Sexual health and sexual difficulties

Caroline Vass

**Title of PhD:** Using discrete choice experiment to value benefits and risks in primary care

**Supervisors:** Prof Katherine Payne, Prof Dan Rigby, Prof Stephen Campbell

**Current role:** Research Fellow, University of Manchester

**Current research:** Discrete choice experiments, best-worst scaling, quantitative preference elicitation, benefit-risk trade offs, risk communication, eye-tracking, qualitative.

Paula Dhiman

**Title of PhD:** Incorporating novel risk markers into established risk Prediction models

**Supervisors:** Professor Nadeem Qureshi, Professor Min Yang and Professor Richard Morris

**Current role:** Research Fellow, University of Nottingham

**Current research:** Statistical Methodology, Risk Prediction, Health Economics, Large Databases.

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NIHR

Obesity themed call

In December 2015 the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) issued a call for research into the evaluation of interventions or services for the prevention and treatment of obesity in adults and children. Preventing obesity and type 2 diabetes is a priority for the UK Government. With over 60 percent of the adult population either overweight or obese and more than 2.7 million people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, the health burden and economic impact of obesity in the UK are increasing.

This call is an initiative by the NIHR in recognition of the need for further research-based evidence to underpin the prevention and management of overweight and obesity in adults and children.

Issues of particular importance for this call include the prevention of type 2 diabetes and increasing levels of physical activity.

More information

Future events

NIHR SPCR Annual Trainees’ Event 2016 19 - 20 September Queen’s College, Oxford

SPCR Ten Year Anniversary Celebration 15 November Wellcome Trust, London

NIHR Trainees Co-ordinating Centre Annual Training Meeting 22 - 23 November Leeds

SPCR capacity funding

The School is currently offering training opportunities in the form of PhD studentships, Post-doctoral Fellowships and GP Career Progression Fellowships.

www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/trainees

From the NIHR

NIHR Clinical Research Network Study Support Service Programme

NIHR Central Commissioning Facility January news and funding opportunities

Funding opportunities from the NIHR. NIHR Special newsletter NIHR at 10

NIHR New Media Competition

If you are involved in NIHR research (as a researcher, a patient or a member of the public) and are interested in communicating this research, then you may like to enter the NIHR New Media Competition.

Find out more: www.nihr.ac.uk/our-faculty/new-media-competition.htm

View last year’s winning film by Sam Creavin (Bristol), about his School funded project on dementia.

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Rosa Lau, UCL

13 January 2016

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Dr Kamal Mahtani, University of Oxford

22 January 2016

Buses, bicycles and building for health

Dr Jenna Panter, UKCRC Centre for Diet and Activity Research

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Antimicrobial Stewardship

IMPROVING PRIMARY CARE FOR CHILDREN’S RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

After five years of NIHR-funded applied health research aiming to improve the use of antibiotics in primary care, the NIHR TARGET Research Programme would like to share the findings with you and discuss their implications at a one-day implementation event in London.

When: Friday, 26 February 2016

Time: 09:15 to 15:45

Where: London

Event details and draft programme