The School’s Director Richard Hobbs and Senior Scientific Manager, Georgina Fletcher arranged a second meeting of the three NIHR Schools (Primary Care, Social Care, and Public Health) on 15 December, to discuss innovative ways to collaborate on future research.

Delegates met in London to talk about whether, considering the inevitable synergies, new steps can be taken to work together over the broader primary care, public health and social care landscape to improve the way we address key NIHR priorities. The following themes were discussed:

- Theme 1: Multiple needs
- Theme 2: Community and individual capability
- Theme 3: Diversity, equity, access and wellbeing

By working together, research has the potential to provide and consolidate evidence and implications across a number of platforms. It is hoped that by informing policy and implementation in GP practices, or care homes and care in homes, for example, influence will prove to be more effective.

We look forward to continued discussions in the future.

Related areas of interest in the recent NIHR themed calls include:

- 2017: Older people with complex health needs
- 2016: Prevention and treatment of obesity
- 2015: Multi-morbidities
- 2014: Long-term conditions in children and young people
- 2013: Antimicrobial resistance.
Revolutionising dementia care research

Dementia research is a global priority, with increasing numbers of people affected. Dementia diagnosis has a huge impact on families and considerable societal and economic consequences. In England policy has focussed on improving “timely” diagnosis and earlier intervention and led to new initiatives on dementia case finding and the development of risk prediction tools. We have little evidence about primary care professionals’ experiences and views of participating in dementia case finding and risk assessment programmes, such as the Dementia Enhanced Service (DES), their potential impact on practice and the harms, benefits and outcomes for patients and carers.

We used open-ended interviews to critically explore the views of general practitioners about the acceptability and feasibility of case finding, and tools to assess dementia risk in primary care. Sixteen general practitioners were interviewed and the following themes were identified:

Case-finding (and general population screening) programmes such as the Dementia DES were not felt to be useful approaches to improving diagnostic rates or clinical outcomes of dementia and were viewed as an administrative exercise. Instead targeted approaches based on a clear evidence base could be beneficial, in particular initiatives which take into account patient’s complex health & social care needs and the available post-diagnostic treatment and care options available.

Narratives were captured around the ethical implications of the routine use of risk tools for an illness for which there is currently no cure and clear therapeutic pathway and GPs clearly described the potential benefits and drawbacks of dementia risk prediction. Discussion of dementia risk factors and lifestyle modifications were generally acceptable within practice whilst practitioners acknowledged the complexities and difficulties of influencing behaviour change. Genetic risk testing and counselling were not felt to be the domain of the primary care practitioner as this requires specialist scientific knowledge and interpretation.

In conclusion, existing health needs and the ethical implications of the impact on the individual & their family with limited therapeutic options and a lack of social support systems remain a barrier to dementia case finding approaches. Policy makers should be mindful of presenting a clinically relevant evidence base for policy directives, consider the implications of the relationship and experience that the general practitioner has with their patients and their families and acknowledge individual clinical judgement for making decisions for when a dementia diagnosis is “timely”. Using dementia risk prediction tools could facilitate discussion of modification of lifestyle risk factors which could be met within usual care and should be further explored.

Co-investigators: Greta Rait, Maria Lytras & Kate Walters at Research Department of Primary Care & Population, Health, UCL; Louise Robinson at Newcastle University Institute for Ageing; Nadeem Qureshi University of Nottingham.

A successful collaboration will expand on a portfolio of work from UCL and Newcastle University on dementia diagnosis & management and prevention & risk reduction.

A Programme Grant from the Alzheimer’s Society worth £1.45M has been awarded to the PIs Professor Louise Robinson (Newcastle), Dr Greta Rait, Dr Kate Walters and J Wilcock (UCL).

Blog by Jane Wilcock, Centre for Ageing and Population Studies (CAPS), UCL originally posted on the Alzheimer’s Society website.
**BMA Award goes to Early Career Researcher at Newcastle University**

“Being my first successful grant application as an early career researcher, this BMA foundation award is a stepping stone towards becoming an independent/principal researcher and academic. It will provide me with a platform to continue to grow professionally and personally and gain invaluable research and project management skills.” [Read more.]

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**Antibiotic resistance in children is high when commonly prescribed antibiotics are used**

A study, conducted by SPCR fellow Dr Ashley Bryce, has found that antibiotic resistance in the treatment of children’s urinary E. coli, the most common cause of urinary tract infection, is high. This is against many commonly prescribed primary care antibiotics and it could render some antibiotics ineffective as first-line treatments. Bacterial resistance may persist for up to three months after treatment in children.

Ashley, Senior Research Associate at the Centre for Academic Primary Care, University of Bristol highlights that “we found evidence of an association between recent antibiotic prescribing and resistance in this cohort of children. Frequent challenge with antibiotics can disrupt normal balance of the microbial flora within the urinary and gastrointestinal tract, which can lead to increased risk of bacterial overgrowth and infection. Clinicians should therefore consider the impact and necessity of further antibiotic treatment before prescribing”. [Read the full press release.]

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**Voice North**

**Citizen Involvement Matters**

A short MOOC for researchers on actively involving citizens from across the EU to identify innovation needs and research priorities

Voice North, based at Newcastle University, is offering a free online course called Citizen Involvement Matters, beginning on the 26 February 2018.

The course will explore the value of citizen involvement and engagement in research, and participants will learn:

- How citizen involvement can improve research and innovation
- How digital methods can strengthen citizen involvement
- How to evaluate citizen involvement and routes to impact

The course requires a commitment of 2 hours per week for three weeks.

For more information, visit the [Voice North website](#), or to register your interest, contact voice@ncl.ac.uk
Excess winter deaths: routine data won’t help GPs identify patients who are most at risk

A School funded study by researchers at the Universities of Bristol and Oxford has found that it is unrealistic to expect GPs to use medical records to identify individual patients who are most vulnerable to cold weather.

Guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that GPs use existing data to identify patients most at risk from living in a cold home. However, the study, funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and published in the British Journal of General Practice today, found that there was little evidence to show that vulnerable subgroups could be identified using routine primary care data.

Every year in England and Wales an average of 24,000 extra deaths occur in the months December to March than in other four-month periods of the year. Those known to be most vulnerable are older patients aged 85 and over and those with chronic health conditions such as chronic renal disease, coronary heart disease, diabetes and COPD.

The researchers analysed data from over 300 general practices in the UK for patients aged 65 and over who died over a two-year period (34,752 records). They found that every 1°C drop in temperature was associated with 1.1% increase in deaths. However, they could not clearly establish any single group of patients that were particularly affected, despite analysing an enormous dataset. Read the full press release.

Enhancing health and well-being

University of Oxford’s Drs Emma Palmer-Cooper (Research Fellow and PPI Officer) and Anne Ferrey (Researcher) recently received funds from the University to conduct the ‘Yarnfulness Project’. The innovative new project will engage local and online communities to find out their opinions about mindfulness practice.

The internal seed funding is for academics and researchers who would like to improve existing, or start new, public engagement activities.

The Yarnfulness project aims to engage with local and online communities who practice yarn-based crafts, including knitting and crocheting. The project is one of 12 successful bids. The project will be public facing, and progress will be reported using an open access, web-based blog.

What are the sources of stress and distress for general practitioners working in England?

In a recent paper, published in the BMJ Mental Health, researchers at the Universities of Birmingham, Keele, Bristol and UCL say that the emotional impact of daily workload and confrontational patients are among the key stressors affecting family doctors in England.

Dysfunctional working relationships and unsupportive/bullying colleagues, combined with the fear of making mistakes, complaints, and inspections, add to the mix. All this suggests that rising workload and long working hours form only part of the high levels of workplace stress and burnout widely reported among GPs, say the study authors. They base their findings on in-depth interviews with 47 GPs to gauge their wellbeing and how well they cope with workplace stressors. Read more.

“Our study demonstrated that many GPs are working with symptoms of anxiety, depression, stress and burnout, and may not be supported within their current practices. This work highlights the need for formal support or supervision for GPs as a routine part of their practice.”

Professor Carolyn Chew-Graham
New US blood-pressure guidelines - who asked the patients?

New clinical guidelines on hypertension from the USA include a new definition for hypertension, as well as lower treatment targets and extended guidance on the implementation of multidisciplinary care, including self-monitoring of blood pressure.

The reclassifying of hypertension will increase the proportion of the US adult population labelled as having hypertension from 32% to 46%, according to estimates by the writing committee which drafted the new guidelines.

— A systolic blood pressure >120 mmHg is now labelled as elevated blood pressure,
— a systolic blood pressure of 130–139 mmHg or diastolic blood pressure of 80–89 mmHg is labelled as stage 1 hypertension,
— and a systolic blood pressure of ≥140 mmHg or a diastolic blood pressure of ≥90 mmHg is labelled as stage 2 hypertension.

This new classification is controversial and places the USA at odds with other countries, point out Professor Richard McManus from Oxford University’s Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences and Professor Jonathan Mant from the Primary Care Unit at the University of Cambridge in a commentary published in Nature Reviews Cardiology.

Read the full commentary in Nature Reviews Cardiology, published online 11 January 2018.

Paid Internship for a Cambridge medical student (second year), summer 2018

Applications are now invited from Cambridge medical students (currently in year 2) for a paid Internship in the University of Cambridge Primary Care Unit, in the Department of Public Health & Primary Care. The Internship will be two months in duration during the summer of 2018, with a flexible start-date, and the intern will be paid £1,500 in total for the two months. There is also a budget for research expenses.

Sponsored by the National Institute for Health Research School for Primary Care Research. Find out more.

Senior Research Fellow in Primary Care Epidemiology (Fixed-term)

Applications are invited for the above post based within the Primary Care Epidemiology Research Group within the Division of Primary Care, School of Medicine. This new Senior Research Fellow post has been created to support the Mental Health & Technology theme of the recently-funded NIHR Nottingham Biomedical Research Centre. Find out more.
George Lewith Prize for General Practice

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

George Lewith was Professor of Primary Care at the University of Southampton, and SPCR training lead, supervisor and mentor. George made remarkable contributions to academic primary care and in particular to research in the area of complementary medicine, as a training lead, mentor and supervisor.

BMA Foundation Medical Research awards

The BMA Foundation for Medical Research awards research grants each year (totalling approximately £600,000) to encourage and further medical research in a variety of areas. One of these grants, the Dawkins and Strutt, is to assist research into the multimorbidity in an ageing population. Applications are invited from UK registered medical practitioners or research scientists working in the UK. This grant, and other BMA Foundation grants, is now open for online application via the BMA Foundation website. The application deadline is 2 March 2018.

Contact researchgrants@bma.org.uk or telephone 020 7383 6341
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 and to register:
www.phc.ox.ac.uk/events/gpacf
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This 4 day course will improve your knowledge and skills in the design, practical conduct, management and analysis of randomised clinical trials (RCTs).

Through a combination of talks and workshop activities, you will be guided through the principles, methodology and practical implementation of RCTs.

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Dates for your diary

**SAPC SW**
13 - 14 March 2018
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**BJGP Research Conference**
23 March 2018
Call for abstracts open

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

**SPCR Annual Trainees’ Event**
24 & 25 September 2018
St Anne’s College, Oxford

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Blog

**Are you trying to lose weight? Do it with science, apps and scales**
Kerstin Frie, University of Oxford

**Multi-state modelling: a brief introduction**
Chris Morton, Keele University

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NIHR Training and Career Development

**Webinar Channel**
Click on the link for the collection of webinars from the NIHR Trainees Coordinating Centre. The webinars are designed for current and aspiring NIHR trainees and cover a variety of topics to help researchers develop their careers.

http://bit.ly/2rP2RuQ

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NIHR Funding opportunities
January 2018

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NIHR resources and information for trainees

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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