

WOLFSON INSTITUTE OF POPULATION HEALTH NEWSLETTER ISSUE 54: 30 APRIL 2024

In this issue of our Wolfson Institute of Population Health Newsletter, we celebrate the achievements and work of staff and students in the second half of April.

FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues

We have a very full newsletter today, including more evidence of the impact our work is making locally, nationally, and internationally. It's great to read about invited lectures and presentations at numerous conferences, plus contributions to the popular press - congratulations to all.

This month, six new PhD students have joined our WIPH teams. Please extend them a very warm welcome. And a reminder to all our PhD students that our WIPH Student Showcase is on 6 June - please do your very best to attend and contribute. As with last year, we look forward to several students being selected to present at our WIPH annual Showcase on Tuesday 18 June.

Then on 19 June we are delighted to host the inaugural lectures of Rohini Mathur (CPC), Jianhua Wu (CPC) and Beth Stuart (CEM) together at 5pm in Charterhouse Square - a real summer highlight - so please put these dates into your diaries.

Finally, after such a washed-out April, the sun is shining today, and May weather looks more promising. Hoping that all colleagues enjoy a lovely Bank Holiday weekend.

With best wishes

Fiona



MEET WIPH

MEET – Robert Blakey (Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health)

How would you describe your roles and responsibilities?

Containing anxiety. Students these days are more anxious. Jonathan Haidt calls young people The Anxious Generation in his book just out. He's a clever person so he might be onto something. The teaching team is on the receiving end, encouraging students to add water to the fires they face on an MSc. When tougher challenges come their way beyond the MSc, maybe they will bring to those problems a little practice at reducing the time interval between seeing a problem and disengaging from the self-critical emotion of it.

What has been your greatest professional achievement?

Practising this process, of seeing a problem and disengaging from the self-critical emotion of it, so that a next step can clarify itself. It does not sound like a professional achievement, but it takes time to develop patience with your capacity to see direction. Work is a good place to practise developing the capacity to extract yourself from the latest thing that claims to be a problem, but always, is another flash of the lighthouse.

What aspects of your role do you enjoy the most?

Watching anything generate its own energy. It is cool to see someone, or a group of people, start to run themselves with renewable gas. Dependency is the cause of many problems. If a person sees the value in building their own generator, they can form relationships that say more, because what they say becomes less about receiving a like or two, and more about understanding that the brain is designed the same way as a city, or some other thing that is fun because it is true.

What would be your second choice as a profession?

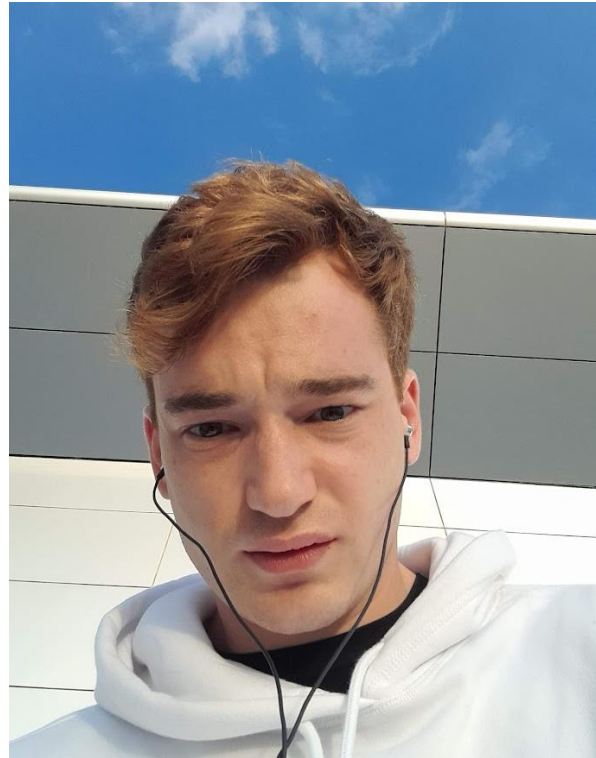
Jet skier! I wait for the day you can be paid to bounce off the wake of a ship.

What do you enjoy doing outside work?

Anything after the gym - if you have the energy to push hard in the gym, afterwards your perception is more vivid because of vasodilation.

Something most people don't know about you?

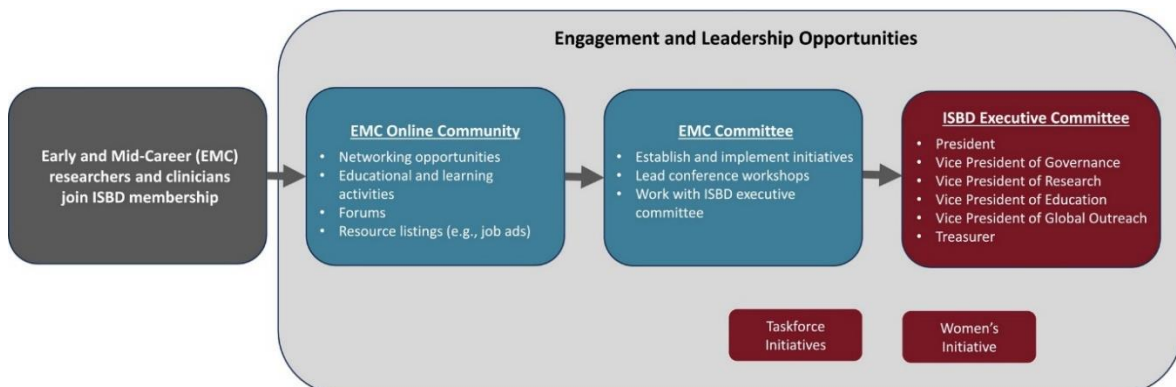
I have been writing about this process - mental health is the resolution with which you perceive things, because trauma offers people the opportunity to see in high resolution. That is why substance misuse is more common in this population. Joy is fulfilling that potential for high resolution of perception interpersonally (and without drugs). It is possible. We are doing it here.



GENERAL INSTITUTE NEWS

Supporting career development for researchers working on bipolar disorder 15 April (Georgina Hosang. Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health)

The lack of funding for clinical research, and inequality in academia make it difficult for early- and mid-career professionals to maintain a career in research into prevention and treatment of bipolar disorder. A [paper](#) from the Early- and Mid-Career Committee (EMCC) of the International Society for Bipolar Disorders (ISBD) discusses proposed initiatives to support career development for early and mid-career professionals, and potential barriers to their implementation.



Trial launch: exploring environmentally sustainable shopping choices 15 April (Lola Oyeboode. Centre for Public Health and Policy)

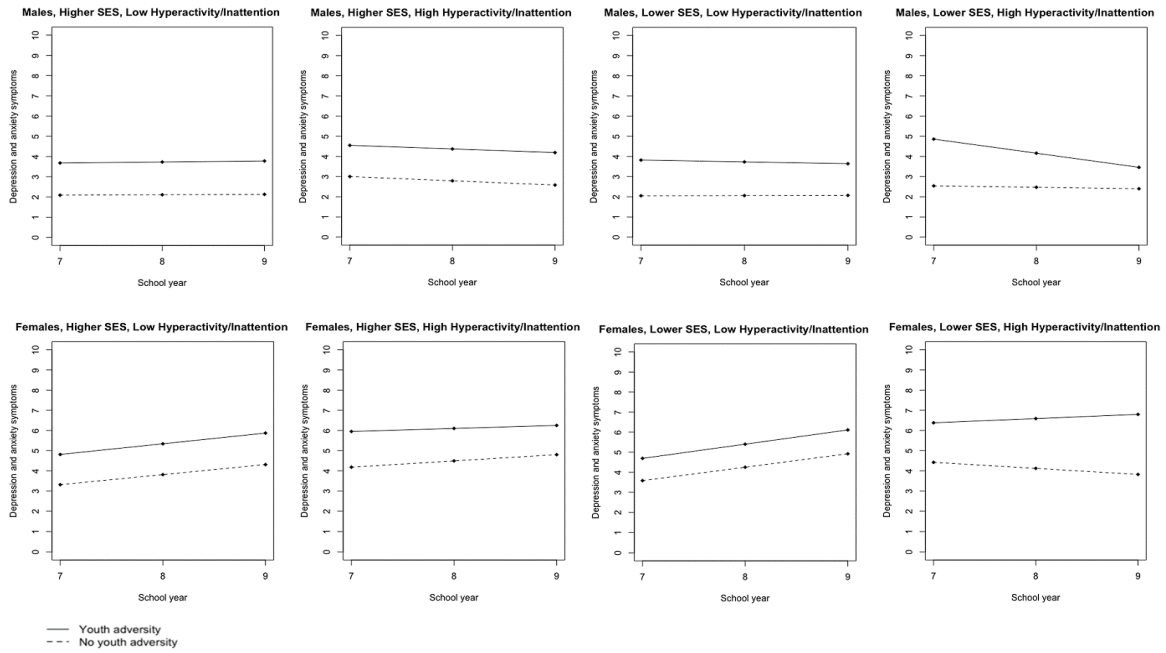
A research project exploring how to encourage shoppers to make more sustainable food choices in online shopping has launched, with an impressive recruitment of 994 by day 1 (projected enrolment 550). Co-led by Lola Oyebo, the project is part of the SALIENT food trial, which is looking at ways to support healthier eating and reduce the impact of food on the planet. From the online platform of a major UK supermarket, the trial will access a database of over 14,000 'life cycle assessments' for available products, compiled by food sustainability experts Sustained. Shoppers who join the trial download a browser plug-in which provides eco-labelling and product swap nudges to guide purchases. Researchers will evaluate the impact of these interventions on the environmental rating of consumers' shopping baskets, to understand whether either intervention results in more sustainable shopping habits, and by how much.



Youth adversity and trajectories of depression/anxiety symptoms

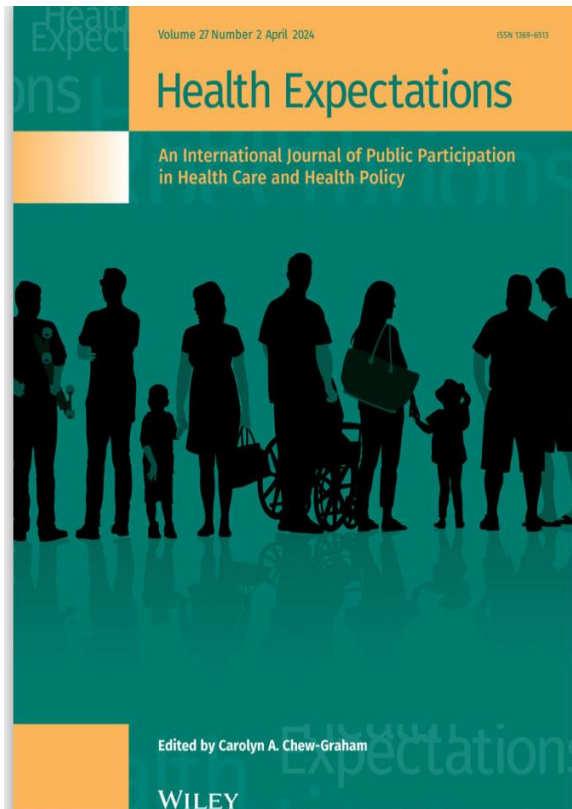
16 April (Laura Havers, Ruichong Shuai, Sania Shakoor, Georgina Hosang. Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health)

Youth adversity (eg. stressful and potentially traumatic experiences such as abuse, parental separation, bullying and victimization) is more prevalent in disadvantaged, minoritized, and neurodivergent groups. It's association with persistence of depression and anxiety symptoms may be greater for disadvantaged than advantaged groups (eg. females v males). Using data from HeadStart Cornwall researchers considering whether the intersection of individual characteristics may be an important moderator of inequality [find](#) that youth adversity was associated with higher average depression/anxiety symptoms at baseline (11-12yrs) across all intersectionality profiles. The magnitude of effects differed across profiles, with suggestive evidence for a moderating effect of youth adversity on change over time in depression/anxiety symptoms attributable to the intersection between gender and socioeconomic status (SES)/ and gender, SES, and hyperactivity/inattention.



Self-managing multiple long-term conditions in socioeconomically deprived people

16 April (Megan Armstrong. Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health)



Exploring the barriers and facilitators to self-managing multiples long-term conditions (MLTCs) among people experiencing socioeconomic deprivation, an interview study of adults in Sheffield and London identifies 4 themes: Challenges in accessing healthcare services, financial assistance, and cultural awareness/ Empowerment and disempowerment through technology, including digital exclusion, and use of technology/ Impact and causes of exclusion on self-management, including social isolation, area-based and economic exclusion, and health related stigma/ and Adapting self-management (including cost-effective and culturally & lifestyle appropriate) strategies. Authors call for increased awareness among practitioners and commissioners of complexities surrounding the lives of people experiencing socioeconomic deprivation, and for targeted strategies to promote self-management of MLTCs.

UCL Pharmacoepi Data Collaborative spring seminar

16 April (Paris Baptiste. Centre for Primary Care)

UCL Pharmacoepi Data Collaborative: Spring Seminar 2024



Congratulations to Paris Baptiste, who won the 5-minute methods competition for her talk at the UCL Pharmacoepi Data Collaborative spring seminar. Paris presented her work on reference trial emulation methods, which she used to explore whether results from the ONTARGET trial extended to those with chronic kidney disease (CKD), who were underrepresented in the trial. The research used CPRD Aurum to emulate the trial design, and benchmarked findings against the trial results, before extending analysis to explore the comparative effectiveness of dual RAS-blockade with ACE inhibitors. Results showed that in UK patients with high CVD risk there was no difference in treatment effectiveness of dual therapy compared with single ACE inhibitors in the prevention of CVD events, consistent with the trial, however, there was an increased risk of eGFR decline and end-stage kidney disease associated with dual therapy v ACE inhibitors among patients with and without CKD.

Factors influencing recovery from paediatric stroke

16 April (Anna De Simoni. Centre for Primary Care)

To characterize the main barriers to and facilitators of recovery from paediatric stroke, researchers analysed posts from survivors of stroke or third parties (mostly mothers) in a UK-based online stroke community. Factors influencing recovery were mapped to 4 areas: medical, physical, emotional, and social, and divided into short-and long-term factors. Posts identified comorbidities as a barrier to recovery, and medical interventions (eg: speech and language therapy, physiotherapy) as useful. Exercise, particularly swimming, was deemed a facilitator. Fatigue and chronic pain, memory loss, confusion and dizziness which could persist decades after a stroke and were long-standing impairments. Fear, grief, anxiety and uncertainty were identified as emotional barriers, and social barriers were loneliness, exclusion, and hidden disabilities not being acknowledged by third parties. The [paper](#) concludes that greater awareness of these issues by relevant professional groups is needed.



Frederick P Li Lecture at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

16 April (Ranjit Manchanda. Centre for Cancer Screening, Prevention and Early Diagnosis)

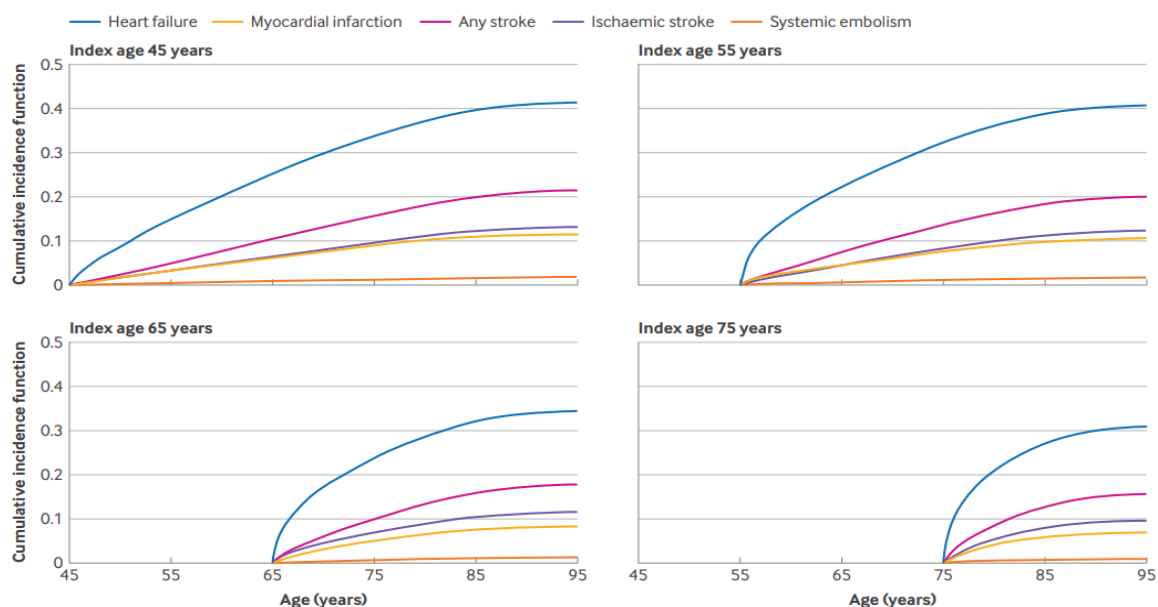


Professor Ranjit Manchanda delivered the Frederick P Li [lecture](#) at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, USA. Invited and introduced by Judy Garber, Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, Ranjit discussed the importance of improving precision prevention for women's cancers and presented the NHS Jewish BRCA Testing [programme](#). The lecture is part of the Seminars in Oncology [series](#) at Dana-Farber, in which internationally recognised research-oncologists present diverse topics in cancer research and care. Dana-Farber is a principal teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School.

The growing burden of atrial fibrillation and its consequences

17 April (Jianhua Wu. Centre for Primary Care)

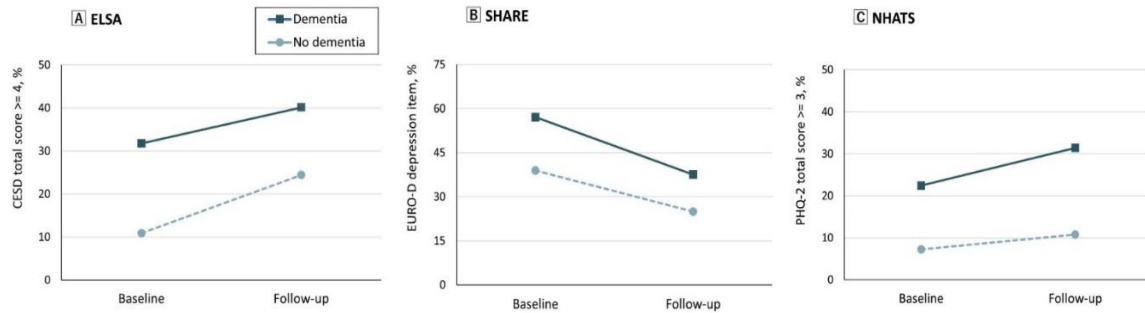
Commenting on a new paper (Vinter et al) on trends in lifetime risks of atrial fibrillation, a BMJ [editorial](#) says that this noteworthy, robust observational research from Denmark provides novel information that challenges research priorities and guideline design, and raises critical questions for research and clinical communities about how to stop the growing burden of atrial fibrillation. The paper shows lifetime risk of atrial fibrillation increasing from 1in4 to 1in3 over the past 2 decades. The editorial notes that interventions to prevent stroke have dominated atrial fibrillation research and guidelines in this period, but no evidence suggests that these interventions can prevent incident heart failure. It concludes: *Alignment of both randomised clinical trials and guidelines to better reflect the needs of the real-world population with atrial fibrillation is necessary because further improvements to patient prognosis are likely to require a broader perspective on atrial fibrillation management beyond prevention of stroke.*



Dementia and the pandemic: change in home care use due to the pandemic

17 April (Claudia Cooper. Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health)

Analysing data on home-dwelling older adults from three large cohorts, researchers examine the association between dementia, change in home care use, and presence of depressive symptoms following the COVID-19 pandemic. In all three cohorts (ELSA, SHARE, and NHATS) dementia was significantly associated with increased risk of depressive symptoms, and home-care use during the pandemic (regardless of change in amount) was significantly associated with increased depressive symptoms, compared with the non-use of home care. Authors say their [results](#) highlight the need to tailor dementia care at home, to promote independence and provide sustainable emotional support.



British Thoracic Oncology Group Annual Conference

17-19 April (Evangelos Katsampouris. Centre for Cancer Screening Prevention and Early Diagnosis)

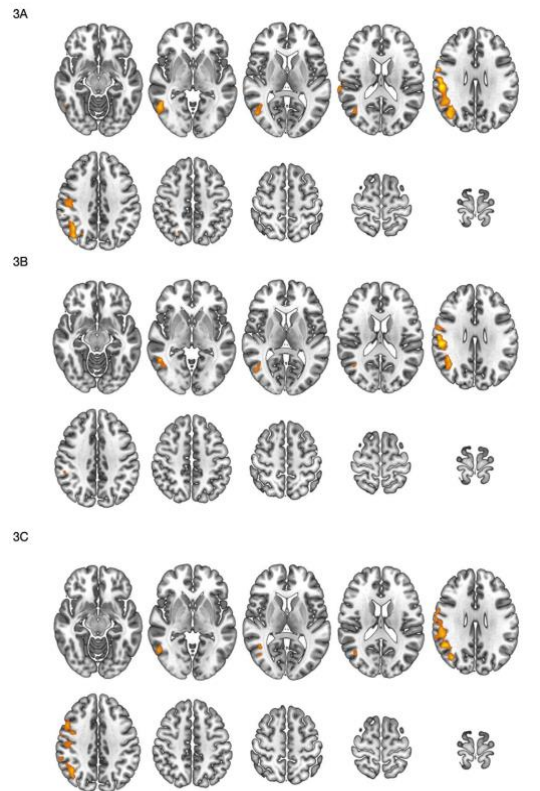


At the 22nd British Thoracic Oncology Group Annual Conference in Belfast, Evangelos Katsampouris presented a research poster on the communication practices of healthcare professionals for disclosing LDCT-detected pulmonary nodules to patients undergoing surveillance. The BTOG is a multi-disciplinary group for healthcare professionals involved with thoracic malignancies throughout the UK.

Mitochondrial complex I density: association with IQ

17 April (Ellis Onwordi. Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health)

Investigating whether mitochondrial function contributes to intelligence, researchers have analysed the association between mitochondrial complex I (MC-I) and measures of cognitive function using a novel positron emission tomography tracer in vivo. Cognitive tests included the Rey's Auditory Verbal Learning Test (RAVLT) and an abbreviated version of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence scale (WAIS-IV). Analyses identified significant associations between [¹⁸F]BCPP-EF DVR_{CS-1} in the precentral gyrus and parietal lobes and WAIS-IV predicted IQ, WAIS-IV arithmetic and WAIS-IV symbol-digit substitution scores. The findings support the theory that mitochondrial function may contribute to general intelligence, and indicate that interindividual differences in MC-I should be a key consideration for research into mitochondrial dysfunction in conditions with cognitive impairment.

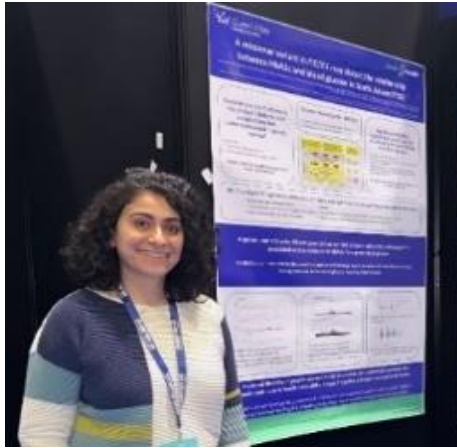


Diabetes test may be inaccurate for thousands of South Asian people in UK

17 and 18 April (Miriam Samuel, Moneeza Siddiqui. Centre for Primary Care)



New research by Miriam Samuel and colleagues identifies a genetic variant, almost exclusive to people of S. Asian heritage, that affects the accuracy of the diabetes HbA1c test. The research was presented by Miriam at the Study Group on Genetics of Diabetes in Exeter on 17 April (where it was awarded best oral presentation), and by Moneeza Siddiqui at the 2024 Diabetes UK Professional Conference in London on 18 April (see Diabetes UK press release). The test measures average blood sugar levels over the previous 2-3 months and is crucial for diagnosing type 2 diabetes, monitoring prediabetes, and guiding diabetes treatment. South Asian people carrying this genetic variant may receive falsely lower HbA1c results, leading to delays in the diagnosis of type 2 diabetes. In England an estimated 32,000 South Asian people with diabetes



and 17,500 with prediabetes may have underestimated blood sugar levels due to this variant.

Anti-psychotics for people with dementia

18 April (Charles Marshall. Centre for Preventive Neurology)

Commenting on new research in the BMJ on adverse outcomes associated with antipsychotic use in people with dementia, Charles Marshall said: 'This evidence should prompt renewed efforts to reduce the prescribing of antipsychotics to people living with dementia. There are rare circumstances where antipsychotics are genuinely required and the benefits outweigh these risks, but for the majority of patients with behavioural symptoms that might lead to them being prescribed antipsychotics, we should be focussing on much safer behavioural management approaches.' He said this type of intervention is expensive and resource intensive. 'There is a risk therefore that patients might be prescribed harmful antipsychotics simply because trained staff who can safely manage their behaviour are not sufficiently available.' The comments were widely circulated in the media.



Dementia: experts urge doctors to reduce antipsychotic prescriptions



INDEPENDENT

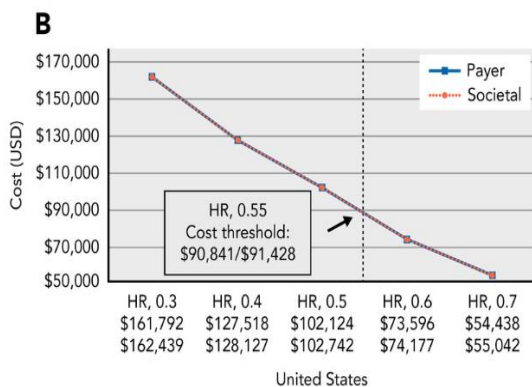
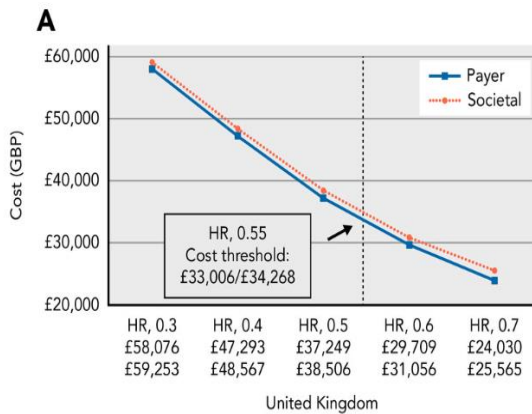
News & Health
Stop giving dementia patients antipsychotic drugs to avoid risk of strokes and broken bones, says research
Experts say side effects linked to antipsychotics for dementia patients "may be more severe than previously understood"

The Telegraph

Giving dementia patients antipsychotic drugs 'more dangerous than thought'

Cost effectiveness of multigene germline and somatic BRCA testing for ovarian cancer

18 April (Ranjit Manchanda, Li Sun, Monika Sobocan, Xia Wei, Ashwin Kalra, Samuel Oxley, Michail Sideris, Caitlin Fierheller, Dhivya Chandrasekaran, Saurabh Phadnis, and Rosa Legood. Centre for Cancer Screening, Prevention and Early Diagnosis)



Using data from 4 ovarian cancer cohorts, researchers make the first estimates for incremental lifetime effects, costs, and cost-effectiveness of parallel panel germline and somatic *BRCA* testing of all patients with ovarian cancer (OC) in UK and US health systems. **Results** suggest that unselected panel germline and somatic testing for patients with OC can substantially reduce future breast and ovarian cancer cases and related deaths compared with a clinical criteria/family history-based strategy. The approach could be cost-effective if PARPi costs decrease by 45% to 46%, but authors conclude that panel germline testing alone is highly cost-effective and maximizes variant identification for precision prevention, and note that it is important for clinical germline/genetic testing guidelines to move from single-gene (*BRCA1/2*) testing toward a multigene panel testing approach.

Scottish MS Primary Care Conference

18 April (Alison Thomson. Centre for Preventive Neurology)

At the 5th national Scottish MS Primary Care Conference, Alison Thomson presented a talk entitled '*Digesting Science: co-designing with families affected by MS*'. Members of the audience described the Digesting Science programme as an 'essential teaching programme for children of people with MS'. The conference in Glasgow was attended by over 100 healthcare professionals from across Scotland.



Cancer & Primary Care Research International Network (Ca-PRI) Conference

18 April (Yin Zhou. Centre for Primary Care)



Yin Zhou presented her work on identifying patterns of suboptimal care and contributors of potential missed diagnostic opportunities in urological cancer, at the 2024 Ca-PR1 Cancer in Primary Care Conference in Melbourne, Australia. Yin discussed the findings of her research on improving the diagnostic process for patients with possible bladder and kidney cancer. The conference theme was Equity, Policy, and Transforming Care.

The Times: Things that lower risk of dementia

18 April (Charles Marshall. Centre for Preventive Neurology)

Charles Marshall, quoted extensively in an article in The Times about risk factors for dementia, says memory problems are probably the most important early sign of dementia. Other areas of thinking can be involved as well - problems with finding words or understanding the meanings of words. The early signs may be a change in behaviour or personality, or depression. He said that the key factor in who does or doesn't develop dementia is whether you have an accumulation of toxic proteins in your brain. All other risk factors probably influence general brain health and how long you're able to withstand the buildup of these toxic proteins before you get symptoms. 'We know removing amyloid protein accumulation from people's brains when they have symptoms of Alzheimer's can slow the disease, he says, but currently, by the time people are diagnosed, they've had these toxic proteins causing damage in their brain for around 20yrs'.



How to prevent dementia: the things that will lower your risk

Lifestyle does affect your brain as you age, according to the latest research. Here's what neuroscientists say you can do to help avoid the onset of memory loss

Co-occurrence of depression, anxiety and insomnia

18 April (Claudia Cooper. Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health)

Depression, anxiety and insomnia often co-occur but research is lacking on how they cluster and how this is related to treatment medications. A study of 739,834 individuals with primary care records indicative of any of these 3 conditions finds that the probabilities of co-occurring anxiety, depression and insomnia symptoms, diagnoses, and treatments are high. Depression was the most common condition, SSRIs were the most common prescribed medication, and patients with a record of

anxiety were most likely to have co-occurring symptoms and diagnoses of other mental health conditions. Of those with recorded generalised anxiety disorder (GAD), 24% also had a depression diagnosis, but only 0.6% of those with depression had a diagnosis or symptom of GAD. Prescribing more than one psychotropic medication in the same year was common.

	Depression diagnosis	Depression symptom	GAD	Panic attack/disorder	Anxiety disorder other or unspecified diagnosis	Anxiety disorder other or unspecified symptoms	Mixed depression-anxiety	Insomnia	SSRI	SNRI	TCA	Other antidepressants	Benzo diazepine	Other anxiolytic	Z drug	Melatonin
Depression diagnosis																
Depression symptom	25.8		0.6	0.8	5.3	8	8.5	1.5	64.7	24	15.1	1.9	16.6	0.8	15.7	0.7
GAD	23.4	15.1		3.6	18.8	22.4	7.3	0.7	51.7	27.1	16.5	2.2	31.9	2.9	17.8	1.3
Panic attack/disorder	16.3	14.9	2		16.3	23	5.4	1.9	45.4	19.6	17.6	1.5	37.9	2.1	14.8	0.6
Anxiety disorder other or unspecified diagnosis	16.6	15.7	1.4	2.2		16.6	6.9	3.3	44.5	19.2	15.8	2.3	30.1	1.8	15.5	0.8
Anxiety disorder other or unspecified symptom	13.1	15	0.9	1.8	9.2		3.7	1.9	43	17	15.7	1.9	30.6	1.7	16.1	0.8
Mixed depression-anxiety	49.4	22.9	1.1	2.2		13.2		5.9	61.2	25.4	15.6	2.6	20.4	0.9	16.3	0.5
Insomnia	11.5	15	0.1	0.7	8.5	8.9	2.1		25.8	18.5	22.9	2.4	27	1.5	51.4	6.3
SSRI	17.3	15	0.4	0.6	4	7	2.8	0.9		12.6	16.3	1.4	20.1	0.7	15.1	0.7
SNRI	16.8	15.4	0.5	0.6	4.6	7.3	3	1.7	33		21.7	3	28.8	1.3	23.3	1.6
TCA	5.4	5.9	0.2	0.3	1.9	3.4	1	1.1	21.8	11		1	17.9	0.4	12.4	0.7
Other antidepressants	12	12.2	0.4	0.4	4.9	7.3	2.8	1.9	33.3	26.5	16.8		36.5	1.2	24.7	2.5
Benzodiazepine	7.5	8	0.4	0.8	4.6	8.4	1.7	1.6	33.8	18.5	22.5	2.6		0.9	19.8	1.3
Other anxiolytic	17.5	16.3	1.6	2.1	12.9	22.5	3.4	4.1	58.1	41.3	22.7	4.2	44.8		31.9	3.2
Z-drug	10.3	10	0.3	0.5	3.4	6.4	1.8	4.3	36.8	21.7	22.7	2.6	28.8	1		2.1
Melatonin	8.6	9.8	0.4	0.4	3.5	6.5	1.1	10.3	34.5	28.8	24.7	5.1	35.9	1.9	41.2	

Tackling the wider determinants of health: Research into policy

18 April (Trevor Sheldon, Meredith Hawking, Natalia Concha, Sonia Pombo, Laura Nixon, Pratima Singh, Mathilda O'Donoghue, Emma Doohan. Centres for Public Health & Policy/ Primary Care)

Food Improvement Goals in Schools (FIGS)
A qualitative study evaluating primary school food in Tower Hamlets
ActEarly Researchers: Natalia Concha, Meredith Hawking, Carol Oostaux, Mathilda O'Donoghue, Pratima Singh & Maria Bryant

What we did
We visited six primary schools where we did interviews, focus groups and observations with children, parents, carers, school and kitchen staff on school food provision. We aimed to evaluate the 'Fantastic Food in Schools' programme, led by Tower Hamlets council, which has been working to improve school food.

*"There was a gap between the parents like myself [...] didn't earn enough money really to pay for their [school] dinner, and that was a struggle [...] That was very, very hard [...] How that everybody gets it free, that means that every child gets a chance to have a possible hot dinner or food [...] I think it's really fair, regardless if you can pay for it."
(Single mother of 4)*

What we found

- Barriers:** families are struggling, too many fast-food places, government budgets and policy decisions not seen as helpful.
- Universal free school meals and breakfast clubs** are positively received by all, but portion sizes and quality are important.
- Key activities:** exposing children to healthy foods and involving parents to taste foods.
- Family dining** can help reduce school food waste.
- Children can help extend healthy eating from school to home.

What we recommend

1. Policymakers can support wider and more inclusive school food programmes, with the help of parents and staff.
2. Improve collaboration among different school food teams to ensure better experiences and nutrition for children.
3. Listen to children's experiences and ideas to improve school food policies.

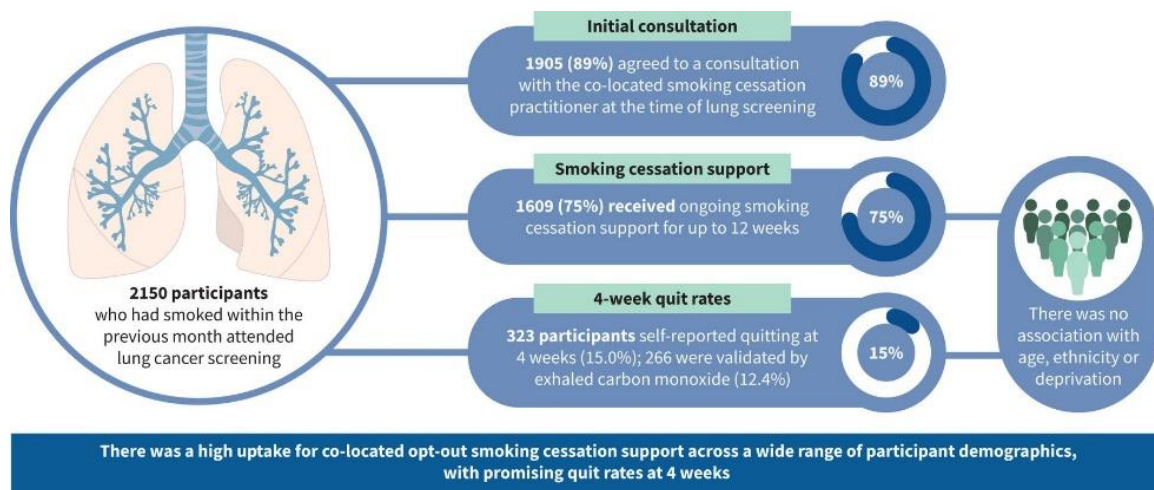
Queen Mary University of London, University of York, Brunel University Centre, FIGS

This ActEarly research consortium event brought together 250 delegates from across the UK to share interdisciplinary expertise on how to address the wider determinants of health. Trevor Sheldon chaired the session 'How we embed research into local government systems: Conversations about the challenges of creating a research culture in a wider, complex system', and Meredith Hawking and Natalia Concha (WIPH CEG) presented a poster on their qualitative evaluation of the 'Fantastic Food in Schools' programme led by Tower Hamlets council. The study found that families are struggling, and government budgets and policy decisions are not seen as helpful. Universal free school meals and breakfast clubs are positively received by everyone, and exposing children to healthy foods and involving parents to taste foods were found to be key in encouraging healthy eating.

Success of a smoking cessation service co-located with Lung Screening Trial

18 April (Panos Alexandris, Rhian Gabe, Sammy Quaife. Centres for Cancer Screening, Prevention and Early Diagnosis/Evaluation and Methods)

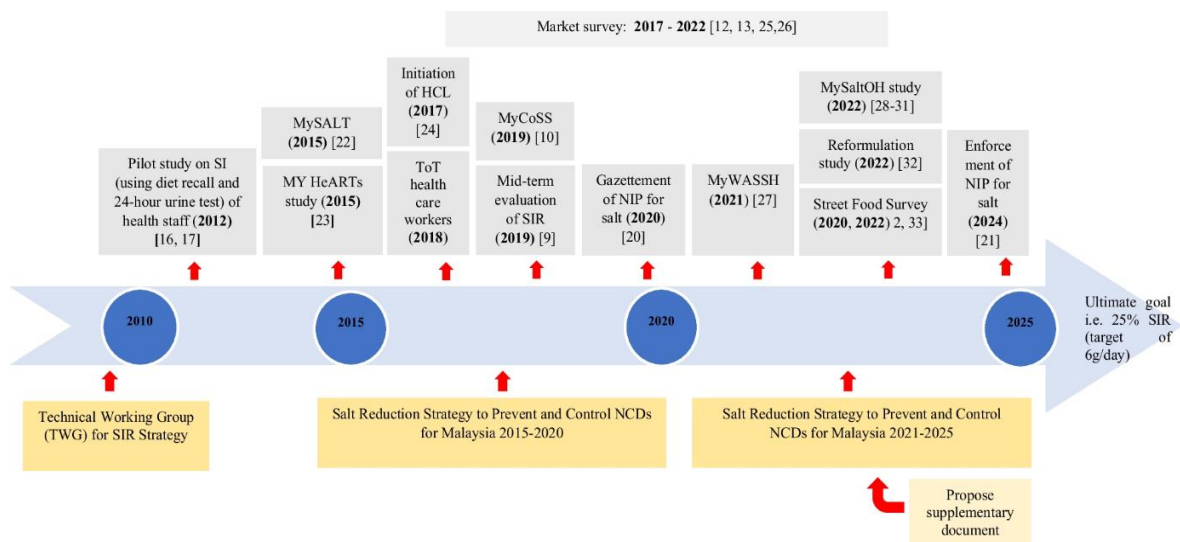
Up to 50% of those attending computed tomography (CT) screening for lung cancer continue to smoke. Data from a co-located smoking cessation service delivered alongside community based low dose CT screening in the Yorkshire Lung Screening Trial show that, of 2150 eligible participants, 89% accepted the offer of a smoking cessation practitioner consultation during their initial visit, and 75% received ongoing smoking cessation support over subsequent weeks. Uptake was not associated with age, ethnicity, deprivation or educational level, although men were less likely to engage. Overall, 323 participants (15%) self-reported quitting at 4wks with 266 (12.4%) validated by exhaled carbon monoxide. Authors call for protected funding for integrated smoking cessation services, to maximise programme equity and benefit.



Salt reduction strategy for out of home sectors in Malaysia

18 April (Mhairi Brown, Feng He, Graham MacGregor. Centre for Public Health and Policy)

In a supplementary document to strengthen the national Salt Reduction Strategy in Malaysia, researchers present a policy to address recent findings that eating outside of the home contributes to high salt intake. The proposed strategies include monitoring salt intake and educating consumers, strengthening the current enforcement of legislation on salt/sodium labelling, promoting research on reformulation, and proposing maximum salt targets for 14 food categories. Authors hope that by addressing the out-of-home sector it will be possible to achieve a reduction in mean salt intake of the Malaysian population to 6g per day by 2025.



Inaugural Lecture

18 April (Alastair Noyce. Centre for Preventive Neurology)

Alastair Noyce delivered his inaugural lecture, *PRE-occupied by Parkinson's*, on 18 April in the Perrin Lecture Theatre at the Blizard Building, Whitechapel. He covered early detection of Parkinson's, with a view to better treatment, risk factors, improving our understanding in under-served global populations, training the next generation of researchers, and imagining a future with fewer patients. The lecture, introduced by Professor Sir Mark Caulfield, was described by one audience member as 'a tour de force inaugural, showcasing teamwork, leadership and daunting level of scientific productivity'.



Maternal and neonatal outcome inequalities during COVID-19 pandemic

18 April (Jen Jardine, Matina Iliodromiti. Centre for Public Health and Policy)



Identifying NHS trusts where inequalities in maternal and neonatal outcomes were reduced during the pandemic, researchers conducting interviews with senior clinicians, heads of midwifery, and representatives of women giving birth explore how the changes that occurred may have led to this reduction. Using data from 128 organisations in England to assess maternal and perinatal composite adverse outcome indicators, 9 trusts were identified as ‘positive deviant’ organisations that reduced inequalities, with 10 trusts selected as comparators. Interviewees from positive deviant trusts reported necessary shifts in roles leading to productive and novel use of expert staff. They recounted proactivity and quick reactions, increased team working, and rapid implementation of new ideas. Comparators found constant changes overwhelming, and no increase in team working. No specific differences in care processes were identified, but authors conclude that harnessing proactivity, flexibility, staffing resource, and increased team working is vital in reducing health inequalities.

Extending screening interval to 5yrs for women with negative HPV tests

20 April (Matejka Rebolj. Centre for Cancer Screening, Prevention and Early Diagnosis)

At an educational day for health care providers working in cancer screening in Guernsey, Matejka Rebolj presented on the evidence for extending screening intervals with HPV screening. Her talk included the planned extension from 3 to 5yrs for women with negative HPV tests (compared with women with negative cytology tests), which is based on her completed epidemiological work on the English HPV pilot. She also spoke about the future extension for women vaccinated against HPV, and issues that need to be addressed in considering HPV self-sampling. Organized by public health authorities in Guernsey, the event covered predominantly breast, bowel,

UK experts give updates on latest in cancer screening

Expanding bowel cancer screening and introducing ‘at home’ smear tests were a couple of the ideas laid out by UK experts at cancer symposium on Saturday.

By **Juliet Pouteaux** | Published Apr 22 | Last updated Apr 22



Left to right, Dr Matejka Rebolj, senior epidemiologist from Queen Mary University in

and cervical screening, with updates on prostate and lung cancer, and was reported in the local press.

2024 Edinburgh Mental Health Conference

22 April (Jennifer Lau. Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health)



Jennifer Lau (Youth Resilience Unit) was the keynote speaker at the 2024 Edinburgh Mental Health Conference, delivering a talk on 'Navigating the Social World in Youth: Loneliness and Social Connections in Mental Health'. She presented novel findings on the frequency and nature of loneliness in young people, the current evidence-base of loneliness interventions for young people, and the general mental health benefits of social connections for young people. Edinburgh Mental Health is an interdisciplinary research network based at the University of Edinburgh. This year's conference theme was 'Navigating Mental Health Research: Uncertainty, Action and Change'.

NHS 'leading for improvement' London conference

22 April (Chris Carvalho. Centre for Primary Care)

Chris Carvalho presented an overview of the work of the CEG in the Primary Care session at this conference, speaking alongside NHS colleagues in SE London who have adopted the CEG model. He showcased the CEG success in quality improvement, and how the team are supporting expansion of the model into other areas. The conference included senior leaders from NHS England - London, and healthcare providers and commissioners. Positive feedback has led to further conversations with the London Chief Medical Officer, and NHS teams working in other geographic areas and specific clinical fields.

The Clinical Effectiveness approach

- A system for Quality Improvement



Protective factors following cumulative childhood adversity

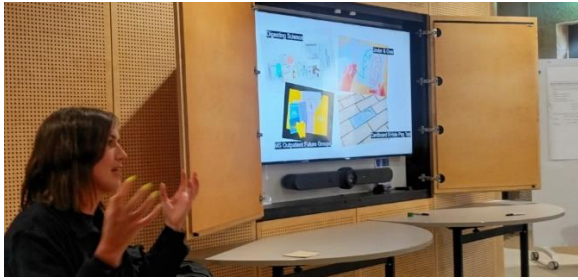
23 April (Camilla Parker. Dennis Ougrin. Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health)

A *BJPsych* editorial observes that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have significant impact on adult psychosocial outcomes, but protective factors can interrupt the realisation of negative developmental trajectories and result in positive adaptation, despite ACEs. Interventions that promote social support, encourage education and academic achievement, and address specific personality and dispositional factors are likely to be beneficial, and holistic assessment that considers both neuro developmental conditions and trauma symptoms is important for promoting resilience. Authors say an urgent need exists for clinicians to offer evidence-based interventions to prevent and treat ACE-related trauma symptoms. They note that the need to harness protective factors for children with cumulative adversity is gaining political traction, with a recent Scottish Govt £3.2million pledge to infant mental health services, and an RCPsych report, *Infant and early childhood mental health: the case for action*.



Inspiring the future of participatory research

23 April (Alison Thomson. Centre for Preventive Neurology)



At a Research England funded event, 'Inspiring the Future of Participatory Research', Alison Thomson delivered a talk on *Navigating the tensions of researching patient experience in participatory healthcare design*. The meeting was held at Lancaster University.

Self-directed digital interventions for emotion regulation in adolescents

23 April (Abigail Thomson, Erin Lawrence, Georgina Hosang. Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health)

Evidence on the effectiveness of self-directed interventions (ie. mobile apps) to improve how adolescents manage and respond to emotional experiences is lacking. A systematic review to synthesise evidence on current self-directed interventions available to adolescents aims to assess their effectiveness in addressing emotion regulation, psychopathology, and functioning (eg. academic achievement). The published [protocol](#) describes the proposed methodology and data to be collected.



Could a healthy active lifestyle help prevent dementia?

23 April (Claudia Cooper. Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health)

The Telegraph

Can supplements really help prevent dementia?

A growing number of nutritional supplements claim to reduce our risk of developing dementia – but is there any evidence that they work?

Ceri Roberts
23 April 2024 • 4:34pm



The relationship between supplements and dementia prevention or improvement is an evolving area of research | CREDIT: Getty

In [comments](#) for *The Telegraph* on new research from UCL suggesting that 40% of dementia cases could be delayed or prevented by prioritising a health active lifestyle, Claudia Cooper said 'We all have a certain risk of getting dementia, which is determined by our genetics, lifestyle and stress levels, and our individual experiences. There isn't a one-size-fits-all approach, but we know taking positive steps to support your cognitive wellbeing is the most empowering and helpful way forward. These are some very exciting new drugs, and in people with mild Alzheimer's, it looks like these have the potential to slow things down. This makes it a bit more important that we look at early detection, so that people

are better placed to access potential treatments’.

Asthma UK Centre for Applied Research 10th Annual Scientific Meeting

23 April (Steph Taylor, Liz Steed, Momoko Phelan, Atena Barat, Chris Griffiths, Helen Wood, James Scales, Jess Mitchell, Beth Stuart, Hajar Hajmohammadi, Harpal Kalsi. Centre for Primary Care)

In the opening address at the AUKCAR Annual Scientific Meeting in Reading, co-directors Chris Griffiths and Aziz Sheikh (U. Edinburgh) discussed the success of AUKCAR’s research work and impact over the past 10yrs. They also announced the launch of the new Centre for Applied Respiratory Research Innovation and Implementation (CARRii), which will tackle NHS winter pressures and respiratory health inequalities. AUKCAR, a network of 21 leading UK university research groups working to improve treatment and care for people with asthma, has leveraged £84m of new funding, trained >50 PhD students, published over 750 peer reviewed papers and changed UK respiratory health policy. Congratulations to 2 WIPH teams who received awards at the meeting: IMP2ART (IMPLEMENTING IMPROVED Asthma self-management as RouTine) led by Steph Taylor won Outstanding Contribution to Asthma Research, and CHILL (Children’s Health in London and Luton) led by Chris Griffiths received the award for Most Effective Collaboration.



Tower Hamlets Youth Council and the FIGS II study

24 April (Natalia Concha, Nicola Firman, Mathilda O’Donoghue, Pratima Singh (Centres for Primary Care/Public Health and Policy)

Researchers from the Food Improvement Goals in Schools (FIGS) study held an engaging session with young people in the Tower Hamlets Youth Council. FIGS II, led by Meredith Hawking, looks at the recent extension of universal free school meals to all secondary schools in Tower Hamlets. Through dynamic discussions and interactive activities, the research team gained valuable insights to improve the project’s relevance, approach, methods and materials, as well as generating future collaborations with the Youth Council. The participants said they want to be involved and heard on meaningful issues that matter to them. The session reflects the value

of co-developing projects with the insightful voices of our local youth. The team have been invited to share their career trajectories at a summer career youth-led event.



The Social Science Podcast formerly known as APOLLO

25 April (Stephen Hibbs. Centre for Primary Care)

To include a wider range of guests from outside the CPC APOLLO Research team the 'APOLLO Social Science Podcast' has been renamed 'Thinking In Between'. The most recent episode features clinical academic physiotherapist Jackie Walumbe, from UCLH. With a focus on pain, she discusses critical theory, multiplicity, and the work of Deleuze and Guattari.



Accuracy of urine high-risk human papillomavirus testing

25 April (Peter Sasieni. Centre for Cancer Screening, Prevention and Early Diagnosis)



An RCT evaluating the diagnostic accuracy of HPV tested urine to detect high grade cervical precancer (CIN2+) compares two collection devices in a cohort of women with abnormal cervical screening results who attended colposcopy. Matched clinician collected pre-colposcopy cervical and urine samples were available for 235 and 230 participants who used a first-void urine (FVU) collection device and standard pot, respectively. Results show that urine HPV test sensitivity for CIN2+ was higher with the FVU device than the standard pot (90.3% v 73.4%). The relative sensitivity of FVU device collected urine was 0.92 compared with cervical testing



Visual representation of Colli-Pee components.

(all women were referred after a positive cervical HPV test). General population HPV testing of FVU device collected urine will establish its clinical performance and acceptability as an alternative to routine cervical screening.

British Society for Haematology updated guideline on preoperative anaemia

25 April (Jahnavi Daru. Centre for Public Health and Policy)

An updated British Society for Haematology guideline provides a current literature review and recommendations for the identification and management of preoperative anaemia, and includes guidance on thresholds for the diagnosis of anaemia and the diagnosis and management of iron deficiency in the preoperative context. Guidance on the appropriate use of erythropoiesis-stimulating agents and preoperative transfusion is also provided.

Importance of preoperative anaemia

35-50% preoperative patients anaemic

80% due to iron deficiency

30% increase risk of complications

Diagnosis	Treatment
<p>Identify anaemic patients early in preoperative pathway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> screen with full blood count provide patient information on test results and potential treatment options 	<p>Treat absolute iron deficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer oral iron first line Offer intravenous iron if insufficient time to assess response to oral iron, if oral iron not tolerated, or there is failure to respond to oral iron
<p>Diagnose anaemia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hb <130g/L Consider potential cause(s) Reflex test Iron studies <small>Other investigations guided by clinical picture</small> 	<p>Other treatments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider erythropoiesis stimulating agents only if complex transfusion requirements or where transfusion is declined Administer with iron Consider preoperative transfusion only if very anaemic and urgency of surgery precludes other options
<p>Identify iron deficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ferritin <30 ug/L- absolute iron deficiency Ferritin 30-100ug/L, tsat<20% may benefit from iron supplementation 	

Physical activity & mental health in people with multimorbidity during the pandemic

25 April (Beth Stuart. Centre for Evaluation and Methods)

Survey and interview data on physical activity and mental health of adults with long term conditions show that, during the pandemic, people with one long term condition were more physically active and presented with higher well-being and lower anxiety and depression than those with 2+ conditions. The findings will inform policy in preparation for future pandemics to support people to remain physically active and to support their mental health.



UK Advancing Healthcare Awards – Rising Star

26 April (Ellie Keiller. Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health)



Congratulations to Ellie Keiller who has won the Rising Star Award at the 2024 UK Advancing Healthcare Awards in London, in recognition of her work in driving forward research in dramatherapy. The prize is awarded to a qualified health professional or healthcare scientist who has been working for less than five years in their field, and who has shown an exceptional level of initiative, skill, and commitment in their area of research. The awards are presented annually to celebrate the best practice, innovation, and leadership in healthcare

CanDetect Workshop

26 April (Fiona Walter, Suzanne Scott, Borislava Mihaylova, Megan Clinch, Oleg Blyuss, Rohini Mathur, Rhian Gabe, Kristen Arendse, Christina Derksen, Tyler Saunders, Runguo Wu, Robyn Collins. Centres for Cancer Screening Prevention and Early Diagnosis/Evaluation and Methods)

At the CanDetect project workshop hosted in London by WIPH and attended by representatives from UCL, Exeter University, KCL, and Imperial College, discussions centred around the Multi-Cancer Early Detection (MCED) tool for upper-gastrointestinal (UGI) cancers. George Hanna (Imperial) delivered the keynote talk on 'Volatile organic compounds biomarker work in primary care'. Tyler Saunders gave a presentation on Workstream1, which is looking at previous research using data currently available from general practice to develop a risk prediction model for UGI cancers. Christina Derksen gave a presentation on Workstream 3.1 & 3.2, which aims to develop strategies to implement the results as a user-friendly UGI MCED platform for primary care. Medical students Maria Andreou and Adriana Binti Akbar presented results from their dissertation projects analysing results from both workstreams.



Vapers' cough?

27 April (Peter Hajek. Centre the Public Health and Policy)

An article in the Mail reports that patients are now presenting with *vapers' cough*, which sounds different from smokers' cough. This cough may be a response to regrowing cilia as lungs recover after giving up smoking. The article cites a 2019 NEJM [paper](#) by Peter Hajek and colleagues in which smokers who swapped to vapes were coughing less a year later than those switched to other nicotine replacement products. Peter told the Mail that the tickly vapers' cough usually fades after a few weeks of use.

Mail Online

Forget the age-old smoker's cough, now doctors are seeing patients with 'vaper's cough' (and it can sound very different!)

• Doctors report 'wheezing' coughs after picking up vapes and quitting smoking



HaemSTAR Fellowship for Collaborative Research

28 April (Stephen Hibbs. Centre for Primary Care)



At the 64th British Society of Haematology Annual Scientific meeting in Liverpool, Stephen Hibbs, with Professor Omolade Awodu (President of the Nigerian Society of Haematology and Blood Transfusion - NSHBT), made a joint presentation on the NSHBT-HaemSTAR Fellowship for Collaborative Research. Working with others in the steering group, they have established a fellowship for two Nigerian early-career haematologists, to give them personal mentorship, project supervision, and funding for 2 in-person UK visits. Two excellent Fellows have been appointed (Drs Aisha Umar and Michael Egolum). The presentation covered progress on the fellowship to date, and what has been learned from working collaboratively as a steering group.

GPs' referral decisions for younger patients with cancer symptoms

29 April (Suzanne Scott. Centre for Cancer Screening, Prevention and Early Diagnosis)

As cancer incidence increases with age, some criteria for referring patients to the urgent suspected cancer (USC) pathway include age. An interview study finds that GPs interpret age criteria flexibly, and follow their own judgement and experience when make clinical decisions regarding younger patients. Decision making on younger patients was influenced by personal experiences, patients' views and behaviour, level of clinical concern, and ability to bypass system constraints. If clinical concern was high, GPs used their knowledge of local systems to ensure patients were investigated promptly, even when the age criteria was not met.



British HIV Association 2024 Spring Conference

29 April (Rebecca Mbewe. Centre for Public Health and Policy)



Congratulations to Rebecca Mbewe (Research Assistant with the SHARE Collaborative) who has been awarded the Unsung Hero Award at the British HIV Association (BHIVA) 2024 Spring Conference in Birmingham. BHIVA Is the leading UK association representing professionals in HIV care. Rebecca was given the award by Yvonne Gilleece, Chair of BHIVA.

Many thanks to all who so enthusiastically contribute. Please send any news items for the next newsletter to j.a.mackie@qmul.ac.uk