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Newsletter

CHSS
University of Kent

Centre for Health Services Studies

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Improving the health of Kent's migrant communities

CHSS is currently working with Kent's migrant communities to improve public health and access to services.

The work includes an evaluation of a project designed to improve access to preventative services.

See the full story on page 3

Excellence in health research

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News and events round up

Medal for 'Team CHSS'!



CHSS Research Fellows Dr Rowena Merritt and Dr Sarah Hotham were delighted to receive the ESPCH (European Society for Person Centered Healthcare) silver medal for their research into people's experience of Parkinson's across Europe.

ESPCH is a multi-disciplinary professional body of clinicians, academics, expert patients and patient advocacy groups.

In December Sarah and Rowena attended a special awards ceremony in London, where they collected their medal and a certificate for their publication *The subjective experience of Parkinson's disease: a qualitative study in 60 people with mild to moderate Parkinson's in 11 European countries*.

The research aimed to capture what it means to be diagnosed and live with mild to moderate Parkinson's disease.

The research data from in-depth interviews showed areas where improvements could be made to help those with the condition. These included prompt referral to a specialist and sensitive, reassuring communication of diagnosis and prognosis by healthcare professionals.

In terms of self-care, access to helpful information and patient groups helped people feel more in control and able to manage their disease more effectively.

Big turnout for World Café Dementia event



1

On Monday 14 January, CHSS visiting Darzi Fellow, Dr James Hadlow hosted a World Café event at Thanington Resource Centre, Wincheap, Canterbury. 'Tea, technology and me' explored various themes around the ethics and acceptability of using digital technology and Artificial Intelligence for those living with dementia. This lively and thought-provoking event was very well-attended.



2

There were service users, their families and carers who work directly with people living with dementia. It was fascinating to hear some of the themes being discussed.

A World Café is a conversational format where people discuss a topic in groups at several tables. Individuals switch tables periodically and get introduced by a 'table host' to the previous discussion at their new table.

James was delighted with the turnout and the response to the event: 'Everyone participated fully, the coffee and tea flowed and the world café format worked fantastically well. We were privileged to be joined by graphic recorder Juli Dosad, who has been working hard on producing a visual summary of our event. She will capture main themes and key quotes from the day's discussions.'



3

'A huge thank you to everyone who participated, the venue staff and all at CHSS who made the day possible. Thanks also to the NIHR (National Institute for Health Research) for funding this event'.

The full report of the day (including the final visual summary) is planned over the coming months. James will also be presenting to national policy and research stakeholders as part of the Darzi Fellowship Programme.

More information on Twitter – search #TeaTechAndMe

Research news

Increasing access to health services among Kent migrant communities

Professor Sally Kendall leads a CHSS evaluation of an innovative three-year project by Kent Community Health Foundation Trust (KCHFT), focusing on migrant health among communities in Dover, Folkestone and Margate. It aims to reduce barriers and increase access to health services for local migrant families.



In particular, there is low knowledge and awareness amongst Kent Roma around accessing general practice, family planning, screening and dental services.

This project is designed to increase public health awareness, raise uptake of health prevention initiatives, and strengthen capacity at community and service level.

The CHSS research team are using realist evaluation and social justice frameworks to find what works, for whom and in what context for this migrant health project. KCHFT will employ and train new staff drawn primarily from Roma communities.

Migrants to the UK often have poorer health outcomes overall than the majority population. A Kent County Council Public Health needs analysis revealed low take-up of preventative health services by migrant communities.

The process will be supported by staff of Roma in the Lead, a project managed by Red Zebra, who are developing strong and trusting working relationships with local Roma communities.

In the first evaluation year, CHSS will co-develop a logic model and research methodology with migrant community representatives and other key partners in line with the programme's commitment to partnership and social justice. Plain English updates, academic papers and a public engagement event are planned to develop the project's profile and build the knowledge base.

Look out for more news from the project on our website and Twitter.

New video to promote breastfeeding among Roma community

Linking to her work on the Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly Project, Darzi Fellow Philippa Burden is co-producing a breastfeeding promotion film with Slovakian Roma mothers living in Kent for her Darzi project.



The film reflects entirely the women's own views and experiences and is mostly shot in Slovak, with English subtitles, to allow free expression. Philippa said, 'The film will be shown widely to the Roma community locally. It should have relevance and resonance with other Slovakian Roma communities nationally, as well as being a useful resource for health professionals and breastfeeding support services.'

Keep an eye on our website for news of the finished video!



Save the date!



National Institute for Health Research

NIHR Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) and Programme Grants for Applied Research (PGfAR) half day information event

Wed 8 May 2019 (approx 13.00-16.30, London, time and venue tbc)

The NIHR Research Design Service South East is hosting a FREE half day event to provide key information about applying for NIHR funding.

The afternoon will include key speakers from the funding programmes and successful grant holders, as well as interactive workshops.

This event aims to create opportunities for budding and/or experienced researchers in medical/health, social care and public health to discuss and develop research ideas to help increase their chances of developing a fundable research proposal.

A great opportunity to network with other research and support colleagues in the region. Places limited.

Email for more details: rds.se@nihr.ac.uk

New CHSS projects

Connect for Wellbeing Helping GPs to offer social solutions to patients

CHSS is leading the local evaluation of an exciting new project across west Kent working with GPs to develop 'social prescribing'. 'Involve Connect for Wellbeing' will allow selected GP practices to refer patients with social, emotional or practical needs – which often affect their health – to non-clinical support and services.

Involve Kent, in partnership with NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), is one of 23 organisations in England to receive a share of £4.5 million government funding of a nationwide evaluation of local projects to find what works best to improve outcomes and reduce the need for health and social care support.

Involve Kent work with older, marginalised and vulnerable people to improve health and wellbeing through community cohesion and bringing people together. The funding enables recruitment and training of specialist Involve Connect for Wellbeing coordinators for the GP practices. Supported by volunteers, they will help patients to get involved in community activities and access non-clinical services that can help them in many ways – from boosting mental health to meeting people and making friends.

Dr Sarah Hotham leads the CHSS evaluation. She said: 'I am really excited about this project, it's a great opportunity to show how social prescribing can work to help patients tackle issues and problems which may be causing them ill health and stress, especially if they are socially isolated. The evaluation will take an implementation science approach, so as well as capturing patient outcomes, we will also focus on exploring wider factors influencing the success of social prescribing programmes'.

CHSS design training package to help boost physical activity

London Sport training and evaluation for social prescribers



1

London Sport have commissioned CHSS, led by Research Fellow Dr Sarah Hotham, to design and deliver a training programme focusing on sport and physical activity for social prescribers.

The aim is to improve prescribers' knowledge and understanding of how physical activity affects health. London Sport – a County Sports Partnership funded by Sport England – believes that upskilling people who are not traditionally from a fitness background is an ideal way to target efforts to boost physical activity among people referred by their GP with non-medical problems, to social prescribers within the community.

This is a potentially inactive population with problems requiring help through voluntary sector providers. The training programme aims to build confidence among social prescribers when discussing health and physical activity with these clients.

CHSS delivered the training in January, and Research Fellow Dr Rowena Merritt will conduct an evaluation of the programme in spring. London Sport hope to obtain funding to enable roll-out of the training across all London boroughs, and possibly nationwide in future.

About social prescribing

Social prescribing has been in place for a number of years, although on a relatively small scale. It began with a scheme developed at Bromley-by-Bow in Tower Hamlets, one of London's most deprived Boroughs.

It is defined as 'enabling healthcare professionals to refer patients to a link worker, to co-design a non-clinical social prescription to improve their health and wellbeing.' (Social Prescribing Network, 2016).

It aims to expand the options available in a primary care patient consultation.

General Practice team climate – what works best?

How team composition relates to quality, effectiveness and costs

Central to the NHS, General Practice is where people seek non-emergency health advice. GPs deal with a range of health and social care issues. They usually employ professional teams including nurses, care assistants and managers and liaise with community services such as midwives and health visitors. Staffing varies but practices have tended to become larger with a wider range of staff (eg physiotherapists, pharmacists). Some are 'super-practices'.

NHS primary care is under pressure with many GPs retiring or leaving. More newly-trained doctors work in hospitals and there is a practice nurse shortage. More people with long-term conditions need regular care from GP teams. Tasks once undertaken in hospital are transferring to general practice. GPs must ensure they organise teams efficiently.

There is little evidence showing GPs and service commissioners what practice size or structure, and mix of professional staff, works best.

A significant new NIHR-funded project led by the University of Surrey in collaboration with CHSS, aims to fill this evidence gap. The research will explore how GP team composition and relationships ('climate') affect care quality, patient outcomes and practice costs. A service-user group will contribute at all stages of the three year project.

The research team will:

- review literature from countries with healthcare systems similar to our NHS
- analyse relationships in England between practice organisation and care quality
- conduct a GP practice staff survey of wellbeing/job satisfaction

- interview staff to see how team climate affects patient experience
- review project findings with GPs and commissioners to create guidelines on teamworking and optimum staff mix
- share results with GPs, NHS managers, government organisations, academics, patients and the public.



Improving diagnosis and treatment of depression using novel digital assessment technologies

In the UK over a million people seek or receive treatment for depression at any given time. Finding the right treatment can be difficult and for many, it can take weeks or months to work.



Professor Jenny Billings¹ leads the evaluation of a digitally-enabled precision medicine approach to diagnosing and treating depression more accurately and quickly.

The aim of this two year project is to reduce referrals to scarce secondary and crisis care services, and free up GP time. Care from GPs, specialist professionals and charities 'wrapping' around the patient will help them return to healthy, productive lives.

A specially designed web-based App; 'i-SPERO' helps patients to assess their response to treatment and monitor their depression using validated questionnaires and assessments including facial expression recognition testing. Developed by Oxford-based P1vital Products Ltd, i-SPERO will be piloted at selected GP practices in Canterbury and Coastal CCG.

An improved patient pathway adopted alongside the technology, based on a triage system, will give greater choice and quicker access to quality care. If symptoms escalate, patients can have their treatment efficiently and effectively switched to a more a beneficial one.

Mental health charity MIND is supporting crucial patient involvement in this project, so that people seeking help have their concerns heard and addressed.

Keep an eye on our website and Twitter for updates on the project.

CHSS people

Planes, Trains and Avocados?!

Dr Sarah Hotham, Research Fellow

Chartered Psychologist and Research Fellow Sarah has been with CHSS since 2011. As a health psychologist her main expertise lies in behavioural medicine in public health, particularly around obesity and physical activity.



Where did you grow up?

I was born and grew up in the mining town Chesterfield in Derbyshire. My Dad was a Lab Chemist at Staveley Chemicals and Mum was a former hairdresser-turned-librarian. I went to the local comprehensive school. Whilst not great academically, I was sporty and I became Head Girl. I ran for the County and running was my life then. It's been a constant ever since. After sixth-form I took a year out and went out to Australia alone, travelling up the East Coast. I was first in our family to go to University and did my undergraduate degree in American Studies at King Alfred's College, Winchester.

Where was your first job?

I was a waitress at Pizza Hut, Chesterfield which was fun. I did that throughout my years of studying. During my Australia trip I went fruit picking but sadly was fired as I wasn't speedy enough at picking avocados!

Any other adventures?

In my second summer of uni I travelled with a friend in a greyhound bus all over the US. We covered New York, Toronto, the Midwest, Seattle, California and Mexico. Dallas was a must as I have a bit of an obsession with JFK and the grassy knoll. My undergrad thesis was on conspiracy theories around his death.

What came after your first degree?

In 1998 I graduated and worked in Winchester for two years at Waterstones. I've always loved books. John Steinbeck is my favourite author. I love *East of Eden*. I got married and we moved to San Francisco for three years. It was a good experience and it's a fantastic city. I loved to go running along the ocean shore. I worked as an office manager for Extreme Pizza for the three years before deciding to return to settle in the UK and come back into academic life. I did a fascinating extension course at UC Berkeley in abnormal psychology. That began my thirst for psychology. I applied while still in America, and was accepted, for a second undergraduate degree at the School of Psychology here at Kent, starting in 2004.



How was your experience there?

It was a supportive, enjoyable environment. I was very lucky to be recommended by Kate (Dr Kate Hamilton-West, see p8) for a Pfizer MSc scholarship with a three month work placement in their Outcomes Research Unit at Sandwich. In 2008 I won a Psychology School Scholarship and began my PhD on eating behaviours and self-control. I taught various cognitive psychology modules at the same time. PhD was a rewarding and enjoyable experience but challenging. It is unique in that you're on your own. Fortunately, I had great supervisors but I will never do anything as difficult again.

Why did you leave Psychology for CHSS?

I got a part-time Research Associate post in CHSS working on a project developing a training programme for adults looking after children with postural care needs. I then worked on a succession of projects before becoming a permanent CHSS researcher.

What do you enjoy most about your working life?

As most of my work focuses around public health and primary care, I enjoy meeting lots of different professionals and working with a wide range of organisations. It's great to be involved in making research useful and practical for public health teams, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the voluntary sector. I love being in a multidisciplinary environment and part of a team with such diverse knowledge and expertise.

At CHSS there's always more to learn and new ways to approach research. My Research Design Service adviser role is a chance to watch people's research develop and it's great to add a health psychology dimension. I'm really enjoying current projects around social prescribing with London Sport and Involve Kent (see p4). Part of that involves supervising PhD student Susan Potter through Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

What's a favourite project you've been involved with?

I have to say the award-winning Ageless Thanet project. It's so interesting, accessible and you can see it's having impact and making a big difference locally. I think it's so important to recognise the health impact of social isolation and the benefits of keeping engaged with the community.

Any hobbies besides running?

Reading, being a helper at Brownies, a volunteer coach at Invicta East Kent Athletics Club – oh, and cats!

Any unusual facts about you?

Despite enjoying travelling and adventure, I hate planes and use alternative transport wherever possible. I've been to Italy by train and recently avoided flying to Ireland by taking a ferry to Dublin then driving to Galway! Also, I really love lighthouses!

Public engagement and publications

Post-Soviet Union happiness lag between east and west Europe

Does past unemployment experience explain the 'transition happiness gap'?

Mass unemployment after the fall of the Soviet Union may have had a far longer-term impact than previously thought, on the health and happiness of people living in Eastern Europe.



Collapse of the Soviet Union caused upheaval, leaving millions unemployed for long periods, and could explain a sizeable 'transition happiness gap' existing for many years between east and western European nations, according to new research by CHSS/PSSRU Senior Research Fellow Dr Olena Nizalova and partners from the University of Michigan and Drexel University, Philadelphia.

Many Eastern European nations' populations reported lower happiness levels than Western ones, despite economic growth and quality of life improvements for several years before the Great Recession began in 2008. The researchers analysed Ukraine data from 2003-2012 to establish causes. They examined life satisfaction of men and women in relation to unemployment experience during the 1990s, a particularly turbulent period for post-Soviet nations.

As expected, they found that overall, people still affected by unemployment were notably unhappier than those in work.

However, they also found a small but significant impact of past unemployment – 'scarring' – on current happiness levels.

Under communism, unemployment was meant to be impossible, so the collapse of the Soviet Union and the impact of job losses was likely to be particularly acute for workers in nations such as Ukraine. The researchers believe it likely to be a contributing factor to the 'transition happiness gap' between Eastern European nations and those in the West, even with the gap declining since 2010.

Dr Nizalova said: 'Despite the use of historic data on one country, our research is very policy-relevant for many nations. Unhappy citizens provide a prolific ground for populist politicians, and if unemployment experience leaves such a profound scar in terms of happiness, it cannot be ignored even after people get re-employed.'

The paper is published in the *Journal of Comparative Economics*. Dr Nizalova is joint Senior Research Fellow in Health Economics in CHSS and the Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU). She also lectures in the School of Economics.

Norton E, Nizalova O & Murtazashvili I (2018) Does past unemployment experience explain the transition happiness gap? *Journal of Comparative Economics* ISSN 021457-5967.

Recent CHSS publications

Bailey S (2018) Not all public sectors are fields: an examination of the post-2012 English NHS. *Public Management Review*. ISSN 1471-9037. (In press)

Rees-Roberts M et al (2018) Prognostic value of interferon- γ release assays and tuberculin skin test in predicting the development of active tuberculosis (UK PREDICT TB): a prospective cohort study. *Lancet Infectious Diseases* 18 pp 1077-1087 ISSN 1473-3099

Hamilton-West K E (2018) Behavioural and social sciences should be part of medical education. *Times Higher Education*, ISSN 0049-3929

Merritt R K (2018) *Breastfeeding and breast milk – From biochemistry to impact*. In: *Breastfeeding and breast milk – From biochemistry to impact*. Georg Thieme Verlag KG. ISBN 978-3-13-220411-9.

Kaushal A, McCormick K, Warburton F, Burton C, Ramirez A J and **Forbes L J L** (2018) Promoting early presentation of breast cancer in older women during the seasonal influenza vaccination campaign. *British Journal of Nursing* 28 (1) pp. 48-49. ISSN 0966-0461

Hamilton-West K E, Pellatt-Higgins T and Sharief F (2018) Evaluation of a Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) based breath intervention for patients with mild-to-moderate depression and anxiety disorders. *Primary Health Care Research and Development*. ISSN 1463-4236 (In press)

Hamilton-West K E, Gadsby E W, Zaremba N and **Jaswal S K** (2018) Evaluability Assessments as an Approach to Examining Social Prescribing. *Health and Social Care in the Community*. ISSN 0966-0410. (In press)

Billings J R, White G and **Mikelyte R** (2018) *Evaluation of the Kent & Medway One Care Pilot*. CHSS project report

Details of all CHSS current and past research is available on our website: www.kent.ac.uk/chss/research/current.html



CHSS staff news

Information about all CHSS staff is available on our website: www.kent.ac.uk/chss/staff

Congratulations to...

Dr Kate Hamilton-West
CHSS Reader in Health
Psychology



Kate has been appointed Faculty Director of Medical Social Sciences – a new role within the Kent and Medway Medical School.

Kate will work across the Faculty to develop a strong medical social sciences curriculum for KMMS bringing together colleagues to develop research and innovation. She took up the part-time post early in January, while continuing in her current CHSS role.

Kate has wide experience of working with the NHS and considerable medical education experience. She said: 'the new Medical School is a really important development for the region.'

I am very much looking forward to this new role, building on my background as an academic and practitioner health psychologist with a passion for translating research evidence into practice.

'As Kent Academic Lead for the NIHR Research Design Service South East, I am aware that we need to develop clinicians with an appetite for improving healthcare through research. My vision for the role is to develop teaching, research and innovation. Many people interested in contributing to this have contacted me. It is really encouraging to see such enthusiasm for medical social sciences'.

Also see Kate's recent blog: www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/behavioural-and-social-sciences-should-be-part-medical-education

Welcome to...

Mariia Vasiakina

Mariia is visiting us from the University of Insubria, Italy. She will be working with Dr Olena Nizalova while completing her PhD dissertation. Mariia's research interests are mainly in Health Economics, Labour Economics and Economics of Education.



Farewell!

We sadly said goodbye recently to Research Associate Gregory White.

We wish him all the best for the future.



A new form of 'stroke' research for CHSS wellbeing?



There was a feline feelgood factor during the winter break, when the CHSS 'Cat Collective' (pictured with furry friend) visited a local cat café.

The festive outing was to enhance wellbeing, discuss research ideas and of course drink coffee and tea!

Another visit is planned for February – all are welcome!

The 'Cat Collective' – CHSS researchers (l-r) Catherine Marchand, Vanessa Abrahamson, Sabrena Jaswal and Rasa Mikelyte.

About CHSS

CHSS is a centre of research excellence which undertakes high quality research into a wide range of health systems and health services issues at local, national and international levels. CHSS also supports and advises health care staff to develop and undertake research projects. CHSS collaborates with a wide range of partners in Kent, the UK and in other countries to improve the links between research, policy and practice.

Please see the CHSS website for details of current and previous research and publications.

Details of current CHSS vacancies and studentships can be found at: www.kent.ac.uk/chss/vacancies.html

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**Athena
SWAN
Bronze Award**

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