



Megaphone Online

April 2017

the voice of Health Sciences' staff and students

Memorial unveiled in honour of pioneering York Doctor

A memorial was recently unveiled in the gardens in North Street, York, to honour Dr John Snow, the pioneering York Doctor who identified that cholera is a waterborne disease.

The memorial was an initiative led by York Civic Trust, York Medical Society and Professor Hilary Graham from the Department. The water pump, with its handle removed, signifies the event in London in 1854 when Dr Snow persuaded the authorities to remove the handle from the street pump he was convinced was the source of the cholera epidemic.

Dr Snow was a sceptic of the then dominant theory that diseases such as cholera were caused by "miasma" or a noxious form of "bad air".

By mapping the addresses of those who died and talking to local residents, he identified the source of the outbreak as the public water pump in one of the local streets - and enabled him to persuade the local council to disable the well pump by removing its handle. This action has been commonly credited as ending the outbreak.

The pump was unveiled by Dr Snow's great-great-nephew, Geoff Snow. After the unveiling Dr Stephanie Snow who is married to Geoff Snow's son, presented a public lecture on 'John Snow: from York to London and Beyond' in which she celebrated his achievements in the context of his Yorkshire origins and discussed the legacy of his work.



Picture shows L-R, Dr Stephanie Snow, Dr David Duncan, Geoff Snow, Professor Karl Atkin, and Professor Hilary Graham

In this issue:

- PG Diploma celebration event
- Collaboration with St Leonard's Hospice
- PCMIS update
- Cake sales raise funds for charity

Student News

First cohort of Postgraduate Diploma with Professional Registration in Nursing students complete their studies

Ros Brownlow writes: “In March, the 2015 entry Postgraduate Diploma with Professional Registration in Nursing students celebrated the completion of their programme. The end of programme celebration was attended by students, their personal supervisors and programme leaders.

The guest of honour was Gemma Stacey, Chair of the Graduate Entry Nursing International Network, who gave an inspirational speech exploring the future challenges for Graduate Entry Nurses.



Professor Karl Atkin, Head of Department, congratulated the students on their success and acknowledged the following notable achievements by members of the cohort:

- Alan Brownlee, student editor for the Nursing Times
- Natalie Salt, nominated for the Departmental Annual Student Prize
- Grace Robinson, Head of Department Letter of commendation for outstanding clinical practice
- Angelique Denys organiser of the Cultural Awareness in the Caring Professions Mini Conference in February at University of York.

The programme has a 100% employment rate and the graduands now go off to begin their nursing careers in local, regional and national roles. We wish them every success in their future careers.”

Student in print

Beth Hardy writes: “Congratulations to second year student Libbie Bulmer who has recently had an article printed in the Nursing Times.

Libbie, who is studying to become an adult nurse, talked about her first experience of death which made her question whether or not she was cut out for nursing.”

To read Libbie’s article, visit <https://www.nursingtimes.net/student-nt/my-first-experience-of-death-had-me-questioning-whether-i-was-cut-out-for-nursing/7013449.article>.

How we could make cannabis safer for users

Ian Hamilton, Mental Health lecturer, has written a piece for The Conversation on the topic of making cannabis safer for users.

Ian says: “Most cannabis users find that the effects of occasional use of the drug are pleasurable, but some regular users experience harm. Daily cannabis use can lead to cannabis dependence, and heavy use, over months and years, can lead some users to experience memory impairment and psychotic symptoms – hearing and seeing things that are not there.

Even though problem users are a minority, the number of people who use cannabis means that this minority actually represents a significant number of people. In the UK, about one in 11 people who try cannabis will develop a dependency. This equates to about 200,000 people. So if we could make cannabis safer, thousands of people would benefit.

What makes cannabis risky?

Unlike users in the US, those in Europe and the UK often smoke cannabis and tobacco joints, so one of the risks, along with cannabis dependency, is that the user can also develop a tobacco addiction. Daily or near daily use of cannabis is thought to be related to impaired thinking and reasoning (cognition). And heavy use over months and years can interfere with attending school, completing education and performing well at work.

A novel idea proposed by researchers from the Institute of Psychiatry and University College London is to find a ratio of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD) that minimises the adverse effects of cannabis on health and brain functioning – this would probably involve increasing the levels of CBD.”

Read the full article at <https://theconversation.com/how-we-could-make-cannabis-safer-for-users-73638>.

Last chance to apply for Mary Seacole awards

The closing date is fast approaching for the Mary Seacole Awards (MSA) for nurses, midwives and health visitors in England, inspired by the legacy of Mary Seacole.

These prestigious awards are funded by Health Education England. Successful MSA scholars are funded to undertake specific projects which aim to improve health outcomes for people from black and minority ethnic communities, whilst engaging in significant opportunities for personal development. MSA scholars can be working in practice, education or research capacities.

Please feel free to contact Helen Bedford, MSA Steering Group member for an informal discussion (helen.bedford@york.ac.uk 01904 321649). The closing date for the awards is 5 May 2017.

New therapy focus for depression in young people

A therapy which focuses on finding ways to engage in activities that generate positive emotions and combat negative ones could be an effective way of treating young people with depression.

About 510,000 (11.5 per cent) of young people aged between 11 and 16 years have a mental disorder within the UK. A 2006 review found that 5.7 per cent of young people in mid to late-adolescence had depression over a one year period.

Depression is already the leading cause of disability in young people and by 2030 will be the leading cause of disease burden globally.

However, despite high rates of depressive disorders, researchers say few young people seek help. This reluctance to seek help may be influenced by a number of factors, including stigma, accessibility and unwillingness to engage one-to-one with a therapist.

New evidence suggests that behavioural activation therapy (BA), a talking therapy focused on increasing adaptive/pleasurable activities could be an effective way of helping young people overcome low mood and depression.

Lucy Tindall, a PHD student in the Department reviewed more than 5,000 studies to find ones that had examined BA therapy in young people aged 11 – 16; 10 studies were deemed relevant.

Lucy said: “The preliminary evidence suggests BA could help young people suffering depression but because there are so few studies in the area more research is needed.”

Computerised therapy

She said delivering BA through “computerised therapy” could be an effective way of helping young people who are reluctant to seek help otherwise.

“We are looking to develop a BA programme that is computerised. We have got large numbers of young people with depression in the UK but don’t always have the necessary support available to help them.

Often young people don’t want to sit down face-to-face with a therapist, they find it quite daunting and you end up with a lot of missed appointments.

Young people are increasingly tech savvy and a computerised BA therapy could be an effective way of reaching young people who need help.”

Researchers say the next step is to develop a computerised BA program and pilot it with young people experiencing depression.

The study is published in the journal *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*.

It was funded by the Economic Social Research Council.

New project to help children from deprived areas brush up on oral health

Hannah Ainsworth, Trial Manager, writes; “I am pleased to say that the York Trials Unit will be working with the Universities of Dundee and Sheffield on a £2million project to investigate ways of improving the oral health of young people living in deprived areas.

The project will run for four years and researchers will work with 48 schools and nearly 6000 young people in Scotland, England and Wales. The BRIGHT initiative

(Brushing Reminder 4 Good Oral Health) is funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and will investigate whether a classroom-based lesson about dental health followed by a series of text messages could increase how often and how well children aged 11-16 brush their teeth, with the aim to reduce levels of tooth decay.

In each of the schools taking part, one class will receive the talk and a series of text messages, while another will not. Researchers will collect information on tooth decay, frequency of brushing, and the impact decay has on the children’s lives to determine whether those in the programme develop better oral health habits than those who don’t participate.”

New research will address the palliative care needs of people with motor neurone disease

Dr Kate Flemming from the Department has, along with St Leonard’s Hospice York, secured funding to undertake research into the palliative care needs of people with motor neurone disease (MND) and their informal care givers. The funding for the research comes as a result of a new partnership between Marie Curie and the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA).

The research will address a crucial research gap in terms of identifying and addressing the palliative care needs of people with MND. There is currently no cure for MND and more than half of those with the condition will die within two years of diagnosis. There is a growing recognition that palliative care for people with MND should begin as early as possible. The research stands to improve the lives of the 5,000 adults affected by MND in the UK at any one time. The study, aims to develop a more complete picture of the needs of patients and carers in addition to identifying gaps in existing research.

Kate said: “It is a great opportunity for the Department and St Leonard’s Hospice to work together on one of only three projects funded by the new research collaboration between Marie Curie and MNDA. The results will tell us more comprehensively from the perspective of people with MND and their carers what helps them most. This will inform and improve current palliative care services, while also highlighting future policy and research priorities so that people with MND and their families can get the best support possible.”

Dr Bill Hulme, Medical Director at St Leonard’s, said; “St Leonard’s Hospice is delighted to be working in collaboration with the University of York and Dr Flemming on this important area of research. We recognise the need to develop further the care we provide for patients with MND and their carers, and hope that this joint project will have a direct impact on patients across the Vale of York.”

Mrs Samantha Bolsher, who is one of the lay members of the project team stated “Caring for my husband who had MND was a steep and difficult learning curve. This research will help identify the palliative care needs of current and future individuals with MND and their carers and I am delighted to be a part of this work.”

Innovative treatment for depression in older people is effective

An innovative psychological treatment can help older people who are suffering from lower-severity depression, say researchers in the Department. It can also prevent more severe depression from developing.

Depression is common amongst older people, with one in seven meeting the criteria for full-blown depression. Older people at the greatest risk of depression are those who suffer from loneliness and long-term illnesses, both of which affect this age group disproportionately.

Being depressed can also make health problems worse and older people with depression are at an increased risk of dying. The CASPER clinical trial focussed on older people with lower-severity symptoms who are at the highest risk of becoming clinically depressed.

CASPER is the largest-ever study of its kind and is reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Health Sciences based researchers showed that a simple and low-cost intervention reduced the symptoms of depression in older people (aged 65 and over).

Those who received the intervention were also less likely to be more severely depressed after a year. Older people were also less anxious and had improved quality of life compared to people who just received care from their GP.

Study manager Kate Bosanquet says “We developed our Collaborative Care intervention after consulting with older people and considering evidence about effective treatments for depression.”

“We used a simple psychological approach known as behavioural activation. Older people were encouraged to re-engage with social activity and to find alternative ways of being mentally or physically active. This is important since people with depression commonly withdraw from these types of activities and this makes things worse.”

“Older people found Collaborative Care to be an acceptable way of accessing help,” said Della Bailey, one of the therapists working on the study.

“We mostly worked with people over the telephone and found that participants appreciated this approach. This also meant that older people did not have to travel to hospital to receive psychological care.”

New guidance issued on sexually transmitted infections: condom distribution schemes

Dr Amanda Mason-Jones from the Department has been involved in producing new National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines to cover condom distribution schemes. The aim of the scheme is to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). In addition, the scheme can provide a good introduction to broader sexual and reproductive health services, especially for younger people.

Amanda said: “Sexually transmitted infections continue to be a significant public health problem with some infections such as gonorrhoea having the potential to become untreatable in the UK. Using condoms consistently and correctly can really help to reduce this risk. The NICE guidance will provide local authorities, and others who are involved in distributing condoms, with guidance and tools to support local schemes. It has also highlighted gaps in the research evidence in the UK which means that we can really begin to make a difference.”

PCMIS update

Mark Wall, Marketing and Communications Manager for PCMIS, writes “Welcome to the PCMIS news update - a regular spot where we’ll share exciting innovations, achievements, digital health news, and hopefully enlighten any colleagues that aren’t too sure what PCMIS is all about...although with only eight weeks in the job, I should probably keep quiet!”

“PCMIS (Patient Case Management Information System) is a web-based system created in partnership with mental health researchers here at the University of York. The first evidence-based case management system in the UK, PCMIS now supports a wide range of mental health services across the UK and Australia in collecting and analysing their patient data.”

Medipex Awards Finalist 2017

In partnership with Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust, PCMIS was named as a finalist in the Mental Health and Wellbeing category of the prestigious Medipex Innovation Awards and Showcase 2017, for our work as part of the Leeds Outcome Feedback Study.

Led by Dr Jaime Delgado during his time with MHARG (Mental Health and Addiction Research Group), the study looked at improving the efficiency of psychological care by utilising computer-based technology to assist therapists in monitoring how their patients are responding to treatment.

Working closely alongside clinical researchers

at the Leeds IAPT service, PCMIS was able to develop technology to support the study.

The research group, led by Dr Delgado, is currently carrying out a national randomised controlled trial of Outcome Feedback across several IAPT services. Results of the trial are expected this summer.



Picture shows L-R, Richard Clark (Director of Medipex), Byron George, Dr Jaime Delgado and BBC Look North presenter, Harry Gratton.

Staff News

PebblePad team relocate

Jonathan Ayto and Danielle Simpson from the PebblePad Eportfolio Learning and Support Team have relocated into the Student Services Office.

Danielle can be contacted on 01904 321928 and Jonathan can be contacted on 01904 321540. Please note that Danielle provides support for PebblePad between 12.30pm and 4.30pm each day.

Hello

We wish a very warm welcome to new members of staff who have joined the department recently, these include: Jodie Coulson, Moe Byrne and Steve Todd.

Goodbye

We also wish a very fond farewell to those who have left the department over the last few months, including: Helen Lewis, Jane O'Sullivan, Fiona Powling, Moniek Van Hoppe and Hugh MacPherson.

Congratulations

to Professor Tracey Bywater who has been awarded an Honorary Chair in the School of Psychology at Bangor University.

Calling all quiz fans

Staff and PhD students within the Department have been invited to take part in a departmental pub quiz competition taking place on Thursday 18th May in The Kitchen@ Alcuin, from 6pm - 8pm.

There will be a cash bar and snacks provided. Other academic departments such as HYMS, Economics, Chemistry and Social Policy and Social Work will also be in attendance.

Tickets are free but donations are requested to College RAG charity.

Team of up to a maximum of six and please try to ensure that everyone in the team is registered to attend.

To register please visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/alcuin-college-department-pub-quiz-tickets-33519313168>

Come on - our departmental reputation is at stake.

We do like a slice of cake

Daneille Simpson writes: "A big thank you to everyone who donated cakes, baked cakes, bought cakes, ate cakes and laughed at me dressed up.

Thank you if you guessed the number of sweets, bought raffle tickets and showed your fantastic support for Comic Relief.

We raised a grand total of £312.

Congratulations to Ann Hewison who correctly guessed the number of sweets in the jar and to our raffle hamper winners: Sarah Thompson, Ann Hewison, Debra Howell and Shanie Young."

Finally, congratulations to our Red Velvet Cake Bake competition winner Simon Appleton.

Thank you to everyone for taking part.



BLISS

Charlotte Boyce writes: "Thank you to everyone who supported the Bring and Buy and Cake sale in aid of BLISS (Babies Born Premature or Sick).

There were some excellent entries in the cake competition and the winner was Danielle Simpson for her fantastic Easter cake.

In total £206 was raised.



If you would like to make a submission to future editions of Megaphone, please contact Jane Milsom (jane.milsom@york.ac.uk or tel 01904 321392).