



Megaphone Online

October 2019

the voice of Health Sciences' staff and students

Welcome to all new starters!

The Department would like to extend a very warm welcome to all the students who began their studies with us this term. Best of luck to you all, we hope you really enjoy your time here.



Above: BSc/MNurs 2019 nursing cohort
Below: MSc Applied Health Research intake



Above: Midwifery 2019 cohort
Below: Advanced Clinical Practice 2019 cohort



In this issue:

- July graduation ceremony
- YTU take conference by storm
- New online training course
- Staff news

Farewell Mid16 and Nursing September 2016

Good luck to Mid16 cohort and September 2016 nursing cohort who completed their programmes with us at the end of September.

We wish you all the best in your future careers as qualified nurses and midwives.



Left: Mid16 cohort

Below: September 2016 nursing cohort



Graduation date for Mid16 and Nursing September 2016

Just a date for your diaries, the graduation ceremony for Mid16 and September 2016 nursing cohort will take place on Saturday 25th January at 10am.

Graduation July 2019

In July 55 students graduated from the Department including our Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing (adult) students, our first Nursing Associate cohort and PhD students. Staff, graduands and members of their family attended a reception ahead of the ceremony.

Karl Atkin also presented awards to three of our Nursing Associate students, Charlotte Bowman who won outstanding academic progression award, Cally Goodwin for outstanding academic achievement award and Eleanor Inchboard for outstanding practice achievement.



Charlotte Bowman



Cally Goodwin



Eleanor Inchboard



Above left: First cohort of Nursing Associates and above right: PhD graduand Katie Pybus with her family.

Student News

Students take part in Learning Disability Big Picnic Event

Learning disability student nurses Siphelile Williams, Pamela Guzete, Jacqueline Hanson, Pelagia Taruvinga, Daria Mustafa, Winfreda Masekesa and Kit McGowan took part in the Learning Disability Big Picnic Event at Temple Newsam in the summer. Siphelile writes: “The Big Picnic Event at Temple Newsam involves a number of activities. As Learning Disability student nurses we also took the initiative to take part on the day.”

“We promoted healthy eating and healthy living within the Learning Disability service user group. This involved taking blood pressure, explaining the reading and advising on what to do to maintain healthy blood pressure. We also had an Eatwell plate challenge where we asked individuals to place food groups in their appropriate places on the Eatwell plate model. We gave out water and fruits, did exercising and Zumba.”

“It was a great experience meeting with service users and their cares also other Learning Disability service providers who also took part and did activities as well.”



PhD student wins award at Conference

PhD student Serdar Sever made his research count at the recent British Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation conference by winning a prestigious award.

Serdar, a 3rd year PhD student, presented his research “investigating the extent to which comorbidities determine improvement in depression in patients with new onset depressive symptoms following cardiac rehabilitation”.

The award was competitive and based on strict criteria where researchers had to show evidence of originality, robust scientific background and content contributing to patient benefit or service improvement.



Professor Patrick Doherty (PhD supervisor and York Research Group Lead) said: “Serdar’s research, which draws on NHS data from cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation services for patients following a heart attack, gives clinical teams and NHS services greater insight to help optimise managing of new onset depression.”

Student News

Students and staff win awards at Graduate Student's Association 2019 awards

The Department recently picked up three awards at the 2019 GSA awards.

PhD students Sarah Masefield and Francesco Ramponi won the Postgraduate Community Spirit Award and Best Network Award respectively.

Di Stockdale, Student and Academic Support Administrator, won the Great Service Award.



Di said: "It was very special to be nominated by the Health Sciences postgraduate students and a real delight to hear my name called out on the night! We endeavour to provide the best support we can to our students, and it was great to receive recognition for this."

Matthew Jacobs, Student and Academic Support Services Manager said: "Di is a valuable member of the Student and Academic Support Services team who strive, on a daily basis, to help the students we have in the Department succeed in their studies. I am delighted that Di's knowledge and experience has been rewarded."

Student visits the Department

Over the summer we were delighted to welcome Chenyi Roy Njuabe, a student on the MSc in International Humanitarian Affairs programme, to the Department. Chenyi Roy Njuabe is a Cameroonian living in Hong Kong. He is leading an organisation that facilitate social, economic and cultural wellbeing of refugees in Hong Kong.

He was visiting the UK for the wedding of his sister in Birmingham and used that opportunity to visit us.



Student News

Applications are open for the 2020 Student Nursing Times Awards

Applications are now open for the 2020 Student Nursing Times Awards (SNTA). The SNTA awards are the only awards that celebrate student nurses and nurse education.

There are 21 fantastic categories designed to showcase excellent performance. To find out what the judges are looking for and to enter for free visit <https://studentawards.nursingtimes.net/>

You could be following in the footsteps of previous students who have both been nominated and won awards.



Local Trusts and Organisations to visit the Department

During November, a number of local healthcare trust and organisations will have a stand in the Seebohm Rowntree Reception area and provide information to our third year undergraduate nursing students.

Do take the time to visit them and talk about job opportunities once you qualify next year.

Details are:

Monday 4th November - York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Monday 11th November - Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust

Monday 18th November - The Priory Group

Monday 2nd December - Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust

They will be in reception from 10am - 2pm.

Teaching News

Introducing our first MOOC (Massive Open Online Course)

David Graham, Lecturer in Adult Nursing and Undergraduate Admissions Tutor writes: “September saw the launch of a new online course ‘Introduction to Nursing: Bioscience, Psychology, and Sociology.’ Funds were awarded for the department to develop a MOOC and, after initial meetings with interested staff, a plan emerged to develop the introductory course around the main themes of the new nursing curriculum.”

“Individuals who want to know more about nursing are the target audience, from students considering their GCSEs or A-Levels, to people considering a change of career. With practical help from the Centre for Lifelong Learning we developed content, including videos, articles, discussions, and quizzes. Some of our lecturers got to learn how to use an autocue; they found out that news readers make it look extremely easy!”

“Our MOOC is an amazing example of what can be achieved in a limited timeframe. Thanks to Ted Hewitt, Laura Scott and Paul Evans who coordinated the content for each of the three weeks, respectively. To our contributors; Paul Galdas, Gillian Puntun, Sarah Ashelford, Cliff Riordan and Ian Hamilton and thanks to John Blase who completed the technical uploading and formatting of the information into Future Learn and for developing the graphs that were displayed at the end of week 1.”

“Also thanks to our recent graduates Molly Crosland and Megan Cook for their videos and to Morgan Hopkins and Lucy Fielding third year student nurses who have supported the MOOC. The course is still available online through Future Learn.”

Visit <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/nursing-the-application-of-bioscience-psychology-and-sociology>

The course will explore how basic science, psychology, and sociology is applied in the nursing profession to reveal the diverse role nurses play in our society today.



Welcome (back) from the Library

Whether you're just starting at York or you've been here forever, the Library is likely to be a key part of your experience. We want you to feel confident and comfortable using the Library during your time at York - get (re)started with these handy hints:

Read our guide for new students

If you've just arrived or forgotten everything you knew about the Library, our guide for new students (<https://www.york.ac.uk/library/info-for/new-students/>) is a good place to start! It takes you through some of the key things to know and you'll find some useful videos about how to use the Library.

Come and take a look around

The Library is open 24/7, so we're always here when you need us! Come in next time you're passing and explore some of the different study spaces, look for the books you need, or see what's changed since you last visited. Staff are on hand to help when you need it, and you mustn't be embarrassed to ask for help - that's why we're here after all!

Explore what's new

For those who've used the Library before, we've made some exciting changes just for you! We've rolled out a new and improved YorSearch - it's had a facelift, but we've also added some enhanced features to give you even better access to resources. New to Fairhurst is the Living Room, a wellbeing space where you can take a break with some books, games and Lego! We've also updated a number of different areas around the Library - pop in and take a look for yourself.



Ask for help when you need it

We've got loads of ways to get help, from quick queries to more in-depth support. The Health Sciences Subject Guide gives you an overview of the Library and ways to get assistance. You can also come to the Library Help Desk, email, phone, or use our 24/7 chat service. Explore all the options on our website (<https://www.york.ac.uk/library/contact/>).

Welcome once again - you're going to smash it!

New research from York Trials Unit to help children with flat feet

New research, led by Prof David Torgerson at the York Trials Unit, has begun to evaluate the effectiveness of common treatments for children with symptomatic flat feet, adding to the growing portfolio of foot and ankle research at York.

The shape of a child's foot changes as they grow, with most developing an arch. However, when the arch does not fully form or it is flat against the ground, this is called pes planus, or flat feet, which is linked to pain in the feet, ankles, or legs, and is one of the most common conditions seen in paediatric practice.

Common management options for pes planus include orthoses (insoles), which can be custom-made or pre-fabricated, and exercises and advice. There's currently debate about what is the most effective way to manage the condition, or even whether intervention is appropriate because symptoms often resolve on their own.

The OSTRICH trial (Orthotics for Treatment of Symptomatic Flat Feet in Children) will investigate the effectiveness of custom-made and prefabricated orthoses in addition to exercise and advice, compared with exercise and advice alone in children with symptomatic pes planus. It will recruit 1085 children/young people aged six to 16 years of age from approximately 30 sites across England and Wales.

The team successfully obtained the £1.6M funding through a commissioned call from the NIHR HTA programme and also includes researchers from the universities of Leeds, Oxford, Salford, and Brighton as well as a multidisciplinary team of expert NHS clinicians.

This study is funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Health Technology Assessment Programme (Project number: NIHR127510). The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.

Network event focussing on child and adolescent sleep research

The Department will be hosting a networking event focussed on child and adolescent sleep research on Monday 9th December at the University of York. The aim of the meeting is to gather and share information about existing research/projects in this area, expertise and to build new collaborations.

Funding awarded by The White Rose University Consortium will establish a multidisciplinary child and adolescent sleep research network. The aim is to bring together experts and early career researchers from across the University of York, the University of Leeds and the University of Sheffield and other institutions to gather and share information about existing projects, data sets, sleep measurement equipment, facilities and expertise across Yorkshire. The White Rose Child and Adolescent Sleep Research Network aims to build a portfolio of research that explores methods of promoting healthy sleep in young people from a diverse, innovative and multidisciplinary perspective.

Lead academics: Professor Barry Wright (University of York), Dr Anna Weighall (University of Sheffield) and Dr Hannah Nash (University of Leeds). The meeting will be held from 10am – 4pm in ARRC. The meeting is free to attend and lunch will be provided. The meeting will include some short presentations from academics, clinicians and charities working in the field of paediatric sleep research. This will be followed by poster viewing and interactive workshops to facilitate networking.

For more information and to register to attend please email to Dr Jane Blackwell (Jane.Blackwell2@nhs.net). More information about the network can be found here: <https://whiterose.ac.uk/collaborationfunds/the-white-rose-child-adolescent-sleep-research-network/>

Research News

Fab 14 from York Trials Unit (YTU) take International Clinical Trial Methods conference by storm!

Fourteen researchers from York Trials Unit attended and contributed to the success of the 5th International Clinical Trial Methods Conference, ICTMC 2019 held in Brighton in October.

Studies Within a Trial (SWATS)

YTU are actively involved in a range of work relating to SWAT. A number of our associated sessions and presentations across the conference therefore focussed on this work. David Torgerson along with Adwoa Parker and Catherine Arundel ran a workshop on the role of SWATs and helped with the pre-conference Trial Forge meeting on improving the efficiency and conduct of RCTs. At the conference, the Trial Forge Initiative - including York - was awarded the Cochrane-REWARD prize in recognition for innovation in reducing waste in research. This included prize money of £1,500 to support the goals of the initiative.



Catherine Arundel presented findings from the PROMETHEUS programme in relation to the complexities we have experienced in delivering SWATs. The presentation also offered some solutions to dealing with these complexities, which included resource provision and educating the wide range of research stakeholders involved in RCTs

The use of SMS reminders are a simple, inexpensive and easy to implement strategy to encourage trial participant completion of questionnaires. Stephen Brealey's embedded trial found that timing of an SMS reminder did not have an effect on the response rates to a postal questionnaire. There is also no conclusive evidence from a meta-analysis of over 2,000 trial participants that electronic reminders are more effective than no reminders for the return of postal questionnaires.

Adwoa Parker presented initial feasibility findings from a PROMETHEUS SWAT investigating the effectiveness of a training intervention aimed at recruiters. This work has shown it is feasible to test a recruitment training intervention across multiple trials simultaneously, that training is acceptable and can increase confidence in recruiting staff for up to three months post training.

Learning from trials conducted at YTU

Liz Cook presented lessons learned from AVURT, a phase II feasibility trial to determine whether 300mg of daily oral Aspirin, in addition to standard care, is effective for healing chronic Venous Leg Ulcers and to establish feasibility and safety of Aspirin in this patient population. The value of assessing feasibility before going to full trial was shown when sites identified fewer patients than they originally estimated. Reasons patients did not meet the eligibility criteria included: they were already taking aspirin or other prohibited medication; ulcer was too small; or wrong ulcer type. The study team were able to made recommendations to address these issues in a future trial.

Izzy Coleman and Liz Cook presented PRESTO, a feasibility trial, qualitative interviews with patients and surgeons and the survey of health professionals were undertaken in an area lacking in evidence: the treatment of stable thorocolumbar fractures. Their results show that a trial using the current study design would not be feasible but they have provided important information for future research in this area. The rewards and challenges of undertaking trials in the police setting were presented by Alison Booth. Her



Research News

talk highlighted the differences in legal and regulatory requirements, processes and IT systems encountered in the Connect and Gateway trials. The rewards she highlighted were working in a multidisciplinary team to find solutions to problems and proving trials are possible in this complex environment.

Catriona McDaid and Adwoa Parker presented the findings of an examination of data from a systematic review that showed a lack of consistency in the outcome measures used in studies assessing the effectiveness of interventions to manage non-respiratory sleep disturbances in children with neurodisabilities. Establishing an international consensus on a minimum core outcome set that involves parents, children and young people, and those involved in supporting families is the next phase in this important work.

Statistical methods

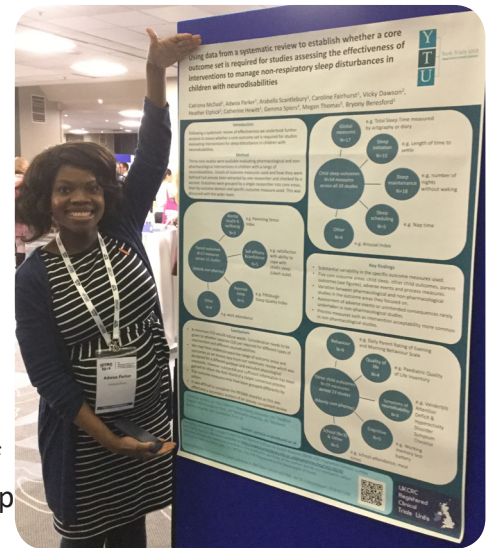
Three YTU trainee statisticians presented posters on methodological issues they had been involved in studying. Charlie Welch presented on incorporating estimated correlation between repeat measurements of continuous outcomes into the sample size calculations of parallel group trials. He felt this went well and he was able to engage in a number of fruitful discussions with statisticians from other institutions, which in turn has helped formulate a number of ideas for inclusion in a paper he and colleagues are currently writing. Alex Mitchell presented two posters; the first was on the use of baseline testing in cluster RCTs, and the second was on the association between poor allocation concealment and measures of bias in trials. Both posters attracted a number of researchers and led to some interesting discussions. Alex, “particularly enjoyed trying to convince them of the merits of the ideas presented in my posters”. The results of a methodological review of evidence of risk of bias in cluster trials was presented by Jenny Roche. The review showed some evidence of bias in trials conducted over the past five years but also a clear improvement in reporting compared to a similar review conducted 16 years previously.

Learning from attending

Michelle Watson attended the conference as part of her NIHR Pre Doctoral Fellowship. She used the opportunity to learn more about the latest advances in research and gather information to inform components of work to support her future Doctoral Fellowship application. Sessions relating to recruitment and retention challenges and strategies, were particularly useful as this is Michelle’s area of interest.

Reflecting on the conference, we all felt the event was well organised and really showcased the wide range of methodological work being undertaken. The enthusiasm of attendees to engage and learn from each other was great and confirmed this is certainly an exciting time in the world of trial methodology. We all came away having our existing knowledge and experience at least confirmed and frequently expanded and with ideas about how we might do things differently, from issues of recruitment and retention to presentation of statistical analyses.

We all clearly acknowledged the team members we work with; both colleagues in the Unit and in the wider collaborations necessary for delivering high quality trials. Following the conference YTU Director Professor David Torgerson said “It was really great to see so many from YTU showcasing the high quality methodological work being carried out across the unit. Sharing advances in trial methods is essential for reducing research waste and improving outcomes for all. YTU showed it continues to make an important contribution in this area.”



Antidepressants may reduce anxiety more than depressive symptoms

Researchers have discovered that a commonly used antidepressant also leads to an early reduction in anxiety symptoms. In clinical trials, sertraline reduced anxiety, which is commonly found alongside depression, several weeks before any improvement in depressive symptoms.

University of York researchers working with colleagues at UCL made the discovery as part of the largest-ever placebo-controlled trial of an antidepressant not funded by the pharmaceutical industry.

By involving a wide range of patients including people with mild to moderate symptoms, the researchers surveyed a much wider group of people than most previous clinical trial samples. Around one third of the participants were recruited in York.

Sertraline did not appear to improve depressive symptoms, which include low mood, loss of pleasure and poor concentration, within six weeks. However, there was weak evidence that sertraline reduced depressive symptoms by 12 weeks.

Participants who took sertraline were twice as likely as those who took a placebo to say their mental health had improved overall. This is an important measure of improvement, from the patient's perspective, and can be used to gauge clinically meaningful treatment effects.

The researchers say their findings support the continued prescription of sertraline and other similar antidepressants for people experiencing depressive symptoms.

The University of York lead for the trial Professor Simon Gilbody, Director of the Mental Health and Addictions Research Group, said: "This is an important study and the first to include people with the types of depression and anxiety seen by GPs. The results support the current use of antidepressants. The main finding is that people become less anxious before the antidepressant effect emerges. They work, just in a different way than we had expected. This evidence is useful in weighing up the benefits against any side effects or the possibility of withdrawal symptoms."

Sertraline is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI), the most common class of antidepressants. The study was conducted in GP surgeries – many of which were in North Yorkshire and around York. It included 653 people, aged 18 to 74, with depressive symptoms of any severity or duration in the past two years. In all cases, there was clinical uncertainty about whether to prescribe an antidepressant.

The researchers say the participants were more representative of the people now receiving antidepressants in the UK than in previous trials and is the largest study of its kind.

Just over half (54%) of participants met a commonly used criteria for depression (from the World Health Organisation), while 46% met the criteria for generalised anxiety (including 30% who met the criteria for both conditions, 15% who had mixed anxiety and depressive disorder while 15% did not meet diagnostic criteria but still had symptoms).

The large majority of people with depression also experience anxiety symptoms, and antidepressants are the standard pharmaceutical treatment for generalised anxiety disorder.

Research News

Half of the participants were given sertraline for 12 weeks, while the other half were randomly assigned to the control group and given placebo pills for 12 weeks.

The researchers found no evidence of a clinically meaningful reduction in depressive symptoms after six weeks, which was the primary outcome of the trial, (this primary outcome was chosen in line with previous studies that have gauged improvement after six or eight weeks).

There was strong evidence that sertraline reduced generalised anxiety symptoms, with continued improvement from six weeks to 12 weeks, and led to better mental health-related quality of life.

The results did not vary by severity (at start of trial) or duration of the depressive symptoms, suggesting that antidepressants may benefit a wider group of people than previously believed, including people who do not meet diagnostic criteria for depression or generalised anxiety disorder. There was no evidence that those on sertraline were more likely to experience side effects or adverse events than those on the placebo.

The researchers say the findings could be useful to health professionals, as clinicians should be aware of which symptoms are likely to be treated by an antidepressant.

Professor Rachel Churchill, Coordinating Editor of Cochrane Common Mental Disorders Group at the University of York – and a world leading expert on evidence in relation to depression added: “Clinical trials are important to allow us to judge benefits and side effects for these medications. Most studies into antidepressants were conducted many years ago in regulatory trials for new drugs, and only included people in secondary care (specialist) mental health services. The management of depression has changed since then and antidepressants are mostly prescribed in primary care (GPs) to a much broader group of patients, including those with milder symptoms.

“This trial represents an important advance and was undertaken independently of drug companies to understand the real-world impact of antidepressants for people in the NHS.”

The study’s lead author, Dr Gemma Lewis from UCL said: “It appears that people taking the drug are feeling less anxious, so they feel better overall, even if their depressive symptoms were less affected.

“We hope that we have cast new light on how antidepressants work, as they may be primarily affecting anxiety symptoms such as nervousness, worry and tension, and taking longer to affect depressive symptoms.”

Majority of people recognise urgency of climate change, research suggests

More than 60% of people recognise that addressing climate change requires a 'high' or 'extremely high' level of urgency, new research involving scientists at the University of York suggests.

The authors of the research, who are all part of a new centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST), surveyed more than two thousand people in August 2019 in order to assess public perceptions of climate change.

Two-thirds of people (67%) also felt that we should limit air travel in order to address climate change, whereas only 22% felt we do not need to do so.

Just over half of the respondents (53%) were of the view that we should reduce the amount of meat in our diets to address climate change, whereas 37% felt we do not need to do so. They found that the majority of people surveyed (61%) supported the UK Parliament's declaration of a 'climate emergency', with only 11% opposing this.

The new research findings were released on 18 September, 2019, to coincide with the launch of the CAST Centre.

The £5 million research centre will explore how we can live differently in order to tackle climate change and is a collaboration between the universities of York, Cardiff, Manchester and East Anglia and the charity Climate Outreach.

The Centre's aims have recently been praised by climate activist Greta Thunberg who described CAST as 'extremely important and essential' to helping achieve the drastic changes in our lifestyles to combat the climate crisis.

Professor Hilary Graham from the Department of Health Sciences said: "Public concern about climate change is growing – and rightly so. This survey shows that most people recognise it as an urgent issue and are willing to make significant lifestyle changes to help find solutions."

"CAST will turn the spotlight on how to mobilise action at every level of society to address the biggest challenge of the 21st century."

CAST is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. Professor Jennifer Rubin, executive chair of the Economic and Social Research Council, said: "This is a really important Centre to be funding because of its strong focus on developing and testing effective approaches to communicating climate change and its effects."

"Despite the urgent need to tackle climate change, researchers know that people rarely talk about it on a day-to-day basis – this means opportunities for meaningful dialogue and practical responses relevant to people's everyday lives are missed."

Study reveals links between extreme weather events and poor mental health

People whose homes are damaged by storms or flooding are significantly more likely to experience mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, according to new research. The study, led by the University of York and the National Centre for Social Research, found that the risk to mental health associated with experiencing weather-damage to your home is similar to the risk to mental health associated with living in a disadvantaged area. People with weather-damaged homes are more likely to experience poor mental health even when the damage is relatively minor and does not force them to leave their homes, the study suggests.

With scientists saying climate change is likely to increase the frequency and intensity of storms and floods in the UK, emergency planning for extreme weather needs to include mental health support for people affected, the researchers conclude. The researchers analysed data from a large national mental health survey called the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS). The APMS is the primary source of information on the mental health of people living in England and assesses mental disorders using diagnostic criteria.

Survey fieldwork took place throughout 2014 and included a question which asked participants if their home had been damaged by wind, rain, snow or flood in the six months prior to interview – this period included December 2013 to March 2014, which saw severe winter storms and extensive flooding in the UK.

Over 4.2 million flood warnings were issued and over 10,000 residential properties were flooded over these months. Taking other factors known to increase the risk of poor mental health into account – such as social disadvantage, debt and poor physical health - the researchers found that people who had experienced storm and flood damage to their homes were about 50% more likely to experience poorer mental health.

Lead author of the study, Professor Hilary Graham, from the Department of Health Sciences, said: “This study shows that exposure to extreme or even moderate weather events may result in ‘psychological casualties’ with significant impacts on mental health.”

“This is reflective of the huge impact storms and flooding have on people’s lives as alongside the physical damage to homes and businesses, there is the emotional damage to the sense of security that many people derive from their home. The number of properties in the UK exposed to at least a 1 in 75-year flood risk is predicted to increase by 41% under a 2°C temperature rise and by 98% under 4°C temperature rise.”

Professor Graham added: “With extreme weather events on the rise due to climate change, environmental and health policies need to be brought much more closely together. This means recognising that flood protection policies are also health protection policies and that better protecting communities from floods is also an investment in protecting their mental health.”

Julie Foley, Director of Flood Risk Strategy & National Adaptation at the Environment Agency, said: “The impact of flooding on people is devastating, and can last long after the flood waters have gone away. People can be out of their homes for months or even years, and the impacts are even wider if businesses, schools and transport routes are affected. This research highlights the how the consequences of flooding can have a significant impact on mental health wellbeing.”

“Our flood defences increase protection to thousands of homes around the country but we can never entirely eliminate the risk of flooding, which is why it’s crucial to know how to protect yourself when it hits.”

Research News

Majority of social media users are happy for their data to be used for research, study reveals

Social media users are generally positive about their personal data being used for research purposes, a study by the Department of Health Sciences has revealed.

Social media platforms have often been used by researchers to gather data on so-called “adverse events” from drugs and medical procedures, with adverse events often being under-reported in studies. Social media users cited the potential benefit for medical research as the most influential factor for them to consent to their data being used for research.

However, the study revealed concerns around regulation and the ethics of using personal data for research purposes. The qualitative study used interviews, virtual discussions and focus groups to explore views and attitudes towards the use of social media to monitor adverse events.

Some of those taking part had suffered adverse reactions to medicines themselves.

Lead author Dr Su Golder, NIHR Postdoctoral Research Fellow from the Department of Health Sciences said: “We found it interesting that social media users were happy for their data to be used for research, but as researchers it’s important to take into account their concerns and make sure we assure people that their data will be used appropriately and safely.”

“It is clear that social media users are in favour of some sort of overarching guidance for all institutions to follow and that further work is required to establish when consent is required for individual’s social media data to be used.”

Dr Golder said researchers were already aware of the huge potential benefits of using social media for research purposes.

“It could be argued that some health scandals of the past could have been averted or discovered earlier if social media was around then as the adverse effects would probably have been highlighted,” she added.

“Social media has a part to play in helping researchers and our study has revealed that people are willing for it to be used under the right circumstances.”

“Our findings will not only help direct future research but will also provide people managing social media websites, universities, ethics boards, pharma companies and policymakers with evidence to inform policy and guidance on the use of social media data for research. “

Staff News

Hello

We wish a very warm welcome to new members of staff who have joined the department recently, these include: Laura Mandefield, Camila Maturana, Jobie Kirkwood, Fiona Ashton, Daniel Pearson, Philip Williamson, Grace O'Carroll, Lauren Walker, Jack Gerry, Hannah Jennings, Katie Pybus, Peter Lampard, Michelle Scaife, Mildred Ajebon, Victoria Fisher, Prof Amar Rangan, Sue Dunkerley and Sue Faulds.

Goodbye

We also wish a very fond farewell to those who have left, including: Steve Ersser, Byron George, Ben Hawkins, Matt Lesch, Becca Smith, James Brooke, Elizabeth McHugh, Helen Tilbrook and Sue Bellas.

Congratulations

To Richard and Hannah Scott (IT) had a baby boy, Samuel, 10lb 14oz.

Congratulations to Hilary Graham, who together with Piran White from Environment and Geography, have won an award from the Public Health Journal for a paper on 'Social determinants and lifestyles: integrating environmental and public health perspectives'.

Finally, congratulations also to Rob Newton, ECSG, who married Mirembi at a ceremony at Birdsall House.



Putting the history of medicine at the heart of the Science Museum: curating the new medicine galleries

The Department is cohosting a public lecture by Selina Hurley, Curator of Medicine and Lead Curator for one of the five new permanent Medicine Galleries at the Science Museum focusing on the theme of medicine and therapeutics.

This lecture will reveal some insight into how one of the biggest projects in the museum's history developed including some of the challenges - the size and scale of the project, its 25-year display life, encountering ethical and sensitive issues such as the history and legacy of the impact of thalidomide, which will be a case study for this lecture.

For more information and to book a place visit <https://www.york.ac.uk/healthsciences/news-and-events/events/2019/history-of-medicine/>

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).