



# Megaphone Online

October 2020

## the voice of Health Sciences' staff and students

### Welcome from the Head of Department

"Welcome to all of our nursing and midwifery undergraduate and our postgraduate students who have started their studies with us."

"We appreciate that due to the current circumstances, we are not able to welcome you all in person but I believe staff in the Department are doing a good job of getting to know you all virtually. The important thing is that we all stay safe (<https://coronavirus.york.ac.uk/>)."

"We are delighted you have chosen to study with us. Whatever course you have chosen, our aim is to provide a supportive learning environment to enable each of you to fulfil your potential. We have a dedicated group of staff, with years of experience between them, who are here to guide and support you through your studies."

"I truly believe we offer some of the best UK educational programmes in health and social care and I hope you thoroughly enjoy your experience of studying in the Department of Health Sciences at the University of York."

"It is different this year and we are especially concerned to support your wellbeing. If you have any difficulties please do contact us."

Professor Karl Atkin,  
Head of Department



#### In this issue:

- Meet our Student EDI Champions
- Research news
- SUCI forum update
- Staff news

## Student News

### Hello MID20

Helen Recchia, Stage One Lead writes: "The Midwifery Education Team would like to give a warm welcome to all 32 student midwives in MID20 who have commenced the BA (Hons) Midwifery Practice Programme."

"We are thoroughly looking forward to getting to know you all and supporting you with your studies. We hope that despite a rather unusual way to start a university degree you will all settle in quickly and enjoy your first module focusing on the body systems and antenatal care."

"Midwifery is an amazing profession and community to be part of and we are privileged to be on this journey with you."



### Graduation August 2020

40 students graduated from Health Sciences at the University's first virtual online graduation ceremony held in August.

Although it we were not able to hold a reception on campus, several graduates, families and staff attended a virtual graduation reception.

Congratulations to our prize winners:

Oliver Taylor - Academic Achievement, Postgraduate Diploma leading towards Professional Registration

Tinotenda Motsi, Practice Achievement, Postgraduate Diploma leading towards Professional Registration

Congratulations to you all and we hope to hold a graduation reception for you all on campus in 2021.

### Student Nursing Times Awards

Bethany McLaine, 4th year MNursing mental health and Felix Manders-Wilde, newly qualified mental health nurse, were shortlisted for the Student Nursing Times Awards 2020. Bethany was nominated as a finalist in the Most Inspirational Student Nurse of the Year and Felix in the category of Student Nurse of the Year: Mental Health at the Student Nursing Times Awards, which was held virtually this week.

Although Bethany and Felix did not win in their categories, it is a fantastic achievement to be shortlisted, so well done both of them.

### Students fundraising initiative for free school meals

First year adult nursing student, Katy Chapman writes: "I am currently in isolation due to catching the Coronavirus and have therefore been paying close attention to the news. When my housemate and I found out about the void of free school meals over the Christmas period for children, we were disgusted. Thus, we have decided to set up a project to raise money so we can make food packages ourselves for schools in York."

"So far we have raised over £1100 pounds. We are so touched by the generosity of all the other University of York students who are taking part in the project. It really is a beautiful thing seeing students, who aren't the wealthiest of individuals, being the first to help other students in moments of need."

If you would like to help Katy fund this activity, please visit:

[https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/feedyorkthischristmas?utm\\_term=eVwX47e2Q&fbclid=IwAR1Q5idfwHM9yU0-yMLSWKSE1RqsnyoTUGGQQ57jkWvQ7bf9kNNwc-Q8ynU](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/feedyorkthischristmas?utm_term=eVwX47e2Q&fbclid=IwAR1Q5idfwHM9yU0-yMLSWKSE1RqsnyoTUGGQQ57jkWvQ7bf9kNNwc-Q8ynU)

### Student Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Champions

The Department of Health Sciences has appointed five EDI champions: Nishathri Reynolds, Betty Owino, Kheira Haffiane, Aguet Ajang and Rahul Krishnakumar to work with the EDI Committee. Here we meet Nisha and Kheira.

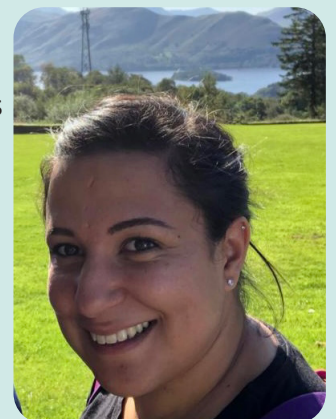
"Hi, Nisha Reynolds, a third year student in Adult Nursing (MNurs)."

"Why I'm interested in EDI? Like many millions of people around the world, I was both shocked and heartbroken at the murder of George Floyd and felt that I should do something. Every individual has the capacity to make a positive change in the world if we strive for it. I wrote to both Karl Atkin and Paul Galdas that we should do something as a department to support our Black students and show solidarity. Since, then I have been involved in discussions around EDI in the department; notably the forum we held in July and the talk by Beverley Brathwaite. As someone from an ethnic minority background, I have experienced racism (particularly structural racism) and I feel that the only way I could combat that is through raising awareness and being an ally for others facing discrimination for any reason."



"I'm Kheira Haffiane, third year MNurs student."

"I am passionate about people's individuality, and strongly believe that encouraging, promoting and advocating for equality, diversity and inclusion is primordial in all settings, including at University. I am from a minority ethnic background and have a keen interest in diversity and cultural awareness, and wish for all minority groups to feel inclusive. I have recently enjoyed getting involved in some EDI discussions, and look forward to being part of the student wing of the department's EDI committee. I believe that students' feedback and involvement is crucial in making positive changes, especially in such an important matter."



## Teaching News

### Service User and Carer Involvement

Beth Hardy, Academic Lead for Service User and Carer involvement in health professions education, writes: “Our next Service User and Carer forum is on the 8th December.”

“If you use health or social care services and are interested in being involved with the education of health professionals please come along.”

“This meeting will be held online and everyone is welcome. Please get in touch with [suci-forum@york.ac.uk](mailto:suci-forum@york.ac.uk) for more information and share this with others who you think may be interested. “



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## Research News

### New research from the York Trials Unit to help prevent falls and improve the quality of life in older adults

The FIREFLI study is a new research, led by Sarah Cockayne at the York Trials Unit. The aim of the study is to assess the effectiveness of Safe and Wellness Visits delivered by Fire and Rescue Service in reducing falls and improving quality of life in older adults.

Falls are highly prevalent and can have serious consequences in older people, leading to fractures and loss of confidence and independence. Approximately a third of people over the age of 65 years and half of those over 80 will fall each year costing the NHS more than £2.3 billion per year to treat. The Fire and Rescue Services routinely carry out around 670,000 Safe and Well Visits (SWVs) each year in people's homes.

The FIREFLI study (Safe and well visits by the Fire and Rescue Service to prevent falls and improve quality of life in the elderly population) is a large pragmatic, individually randomised, controlled trial with embedded economic and qualitative evaluations.

The study will recruit 1156 participants from the Fire and Rescue Service database in Kent and Humberside. They will be randomly allocated to receive the SWV at the beginning or end of the study. It will measure the number of falls people have using monthly falls calendars and follow up other outcomes by questionnaires 4, 8 and 12 months. They will also undertake interviews with some participants and with Fire and Rescue Service staff to explore experiences around the SWVs. The team will also carry out two studies within a trial (SWAT) to investigate more efficient ways of running trials.

The team successfully obtained £1.1M funding through a commissioned call from the NIHR Public Health Research (PHR) programme and has collaborators from Humberside and Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, University of Nottingham and Queensland Health/James Cook University.

This study is funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Public Health Research (PHR) Programme (Grant Reference Number 18/70-Public Health Research reference 128341). The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.



### BASIL Study addresses mental health impact of COVID 19 in pilot study



**BASIL**  
Behavioural Activation  
in Social Isolation

The BASIL (Behavioural Activation in Social IsoLation) pilot study commenced in April 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and was one of the first mental health studies to receive Urgent Public Health status by the UK's Chief Medical Officers.

The aim of the BASIL study is to prevent and mitigate depression and loneliness among older adults (65 and over) with long term health conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This population is a particularly vulnerable group due to the enforced isolation, disruption of daily routine and loss of social contact associated with Covid-19 restrictions (including shielding), which may in turn impact on mental health.

Study participants are randomly allocated to one of two groups - the BASIL intervention (a brief psychological intervention) or usual care (with signposting information about maintaining physical and mental wellbeing).

The BASIL intervention consists of a support package based on Behavioural Activation (BA). BA is a type of talking therapy that supports people to maintain or introduce activities that are important to them, and that help them to remain connected with their world, which can be of benefit

to physical and mental health. The intervention has been designed to be delivered over the telephone by a range of health and social care professionals ('BASIL support workers') and involves supporting older adults to stay active within their homes, basic monitoring of depressive symptoms, and facilitating communication with the older adults' healthcare team as part of a collaborative care framework. Intervention participants are provided with a bespoke booklet (co-designed by the study team and a range of key stakeholders) that they work through over up to 8 sessions with support from a BASIL support worker. BASIL support workers have been trained to deliver the intervention by clinical members of the BASIL study team.



The pilot study is progressing really well. Over 90 participants have been recruited since June, engagement with the intervention sessions is encouraging and follow-up rates are over 90%. Qualitative work is also ongoing with intervention participants and BASIL support workers taking part in semi-structured interviews to discuss their views and experiences of the study and BASIL intervention.

The BASIL main trial is due to start later this year and will evaluate the clinical and cost effectiveness of the BASIL intervention. The trial will recruit 590 people and will be conducted within primary care, secondary care and third sector organisations across the country and devolved nations. The trial is being led by Professor Simon Gilbody, Director of the Mental Health & Addiction Research Group (MHARG), and Professor David Ekers, Honorary Visiting Professor, MHARG & Clinical Director of Research and Development, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust.

Professor Ekers said: "BASIL is a great example of the partnership between TEWV NHS FT and the University of York, responding to the immediate and real problem of isolation and low mood linked to the Covid pandemic. This is of particular note in people over 65 who are significantly impacted by self-isolation and shielding guidance. We are delighted to have been working closely with our PPI and academic partners to rapidly deliver the first stage of this project."

## Research News

### Can surgery be avoided for patients with common orthopaedic problems?

York Trials Unit has published in *The Lancet* two NIHR funded, UK-wide randomised trials that compared surgery with non-surgical treatments for common orthopaedic problems.

A study led by Professor Joseph Dias at University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust found that plaster casts are as effective at healing scaphoid waist fractures in the wrist as surgery. The SWIFFT trial concluded in *The Lancet* that for a scaphoid waist fracture in the wrist a plaster cast should be used in the first instance, with surgery only considered if the bone doesn't heal.

Fracture of the scaphoid bone (one of eight small bones in the wrist) is common in young, active people, caused by a fall on the hand or the hand being suddenly forced backward. The research that included 439 adult patients suggests that by opting for a plaster cast, patients can avoid the risk of surgery, while hospitals can keep service delivery simple and cost effective, without compromising patient outcomes.

To assess their wrist pain and function, patients completed a questionnaire which had a total score of between 0 and 100, where a higher score indicated worse pain and function. At one year, patients in the surgery group had a score of 12, compared to a score of 14 in the plaster group, showing no significant difference in patient-reported outcomes. Days of work lost were comparable between the two groups (17 days for surgical patients, and 18 days for plaster cast patients). There was also no significant difference in the number of fractures that did not heal properly (2% for the surgical group; 4% for the plaster cast group). However, patients who had surgery had more complications (12%) than the plaster cast group (2%).

UK FROST led by Professor Amar Rangan at the University of York and Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at South Tees NHSFT concluded in *The Lancet* that keyhole surgery is no better at treating frozen shoulder than two alternative therapies. This is illustrated in an animation for patients.

Frozen shoulder is a common and painful condition in which movements in the shoulder become restricted. It affects around 10% of people of working age and can last years. A common surgical treatment is Arthroscopic Capsular Release (ACR), a keyhole procedure under general anaesthetic where a probe is inserted into the shoulder, along with a camera and the joint capsule is released, stretched and manipulated to regain a range of movement. This is a costly and invasive treatment.

The research that included 503 adult patients concluded at one year that ACR was no more effective than two other less costly and invasive treatments using a patient-reported questionnaire about shoulder pain and function. One was Manipulation Under Anaesthesia (MUA) - a minimally invasive procedure where surgeons move the shoulder joint to a full range of motion. The other was early structured physiotherapy (ESP) with a steroid injection.

Although ACR resulted in the least number of further treatments: 4%, compared to 7% for MUA and 15% for ESP, it carried relatively higher risks, and had longer waiting times to access. ESP with a steroid injection could be accessed quickly, had relatively fewer risks than ACR and was cheaper, but more patients required further treatment. Overall MUA was found to be the most cost-effective option to the NHS.

Dr Stephen Brealey, Trial Manager in York Trials Unit, commented that at "At a time when NHS resources are stretched, the two trials provide important evidence to help surgeons save valuable theatre time and limit the need for people to undergo unnecessary lengthy procedures."

### The NHS commits to 'net zero'

Hilary Graham is a member of the Expert Panel that helped guide the report. She writes here in a personal capacity. "This month, the NHS became the world's first health system to commit to reducing its environmental footprint to zero. Delivering a 'Net Zero' National Health Service (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2020/10/delivering-a-net-zero-national-health-service.pdf>) details how the NHS plans to be 'net zero' with respect to carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions – the major driver of climate change – and other greenhouse gases (GHGs). This means being as close as possible to zero for all its emissions and offsetting the rest, for example by planting forests and investing in technologies to remove emissions."

"The Net Zero NHS report sets out a two-stage target: for emissions under its direct control and for indirect emissions, for example those linked to goods and services provided by outside suppliers. Indirect emissions make up over 50% of the NHS' total carbon footprint."

"Why is an NHS commitment to net zero important? For me, three reasons stand out."

"Firstly, the NHS is an organisation that seeks to protect people's health. It should therefore not be contributing to health-damaging changes in the climate. As an example, medicines and medical equipment are essential for health – but account for 30% of NHS emissions. The report highlights the emissions released by anaesthetic gases used in surgery. One bottle of desflurane, a widely-used anaesthetic gas, is equivalent to burning 440kg of coal – and low-carbon alternatives are available."

"Secondly, the NHS is a values-based organisation. It is a publicly-funded health system that enshrines the values of public service. Nurses and midwives, like doctors and other health practitioners, are bound by a duty of care. As the COVID-19 epidemic has made clear, NHS staff are respected and valued by the public in ways no other occupations are. It may come as no surprise that nurses – a largely female workforce – are the UK's most trusted occupational group. They have a trust score of 97% (followed by local pharmacists and doctors). Politicians (along with estate agents and advertising executives) are clustered at the bottom of the league table of public trust ([https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2020-06/veracity\\_index\\_2020.pdf](https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2020-06/veracity_index_2020.pdf))."

"Thirdly, the NHS is a people-based organisation. The NHS reaches into most people's lives. Over 1.5 million people work for the NHS, making it the largest UK employer (and one of the largest in the world). Over 60m people are NHS patients. The NHS handles over 25 million calls a year from the public seeking advice and emergency care."

For these three reasons, the NHS is uniquely placed to be the standard-bearer for climate action. The Net Zero vision could be incorporated into education and training (for example, into nursing curricula and competences), as well as into patient care and management. As one of the UK's major purchasers, the NHS can reset supply chains for electricity, construction, medicines, equipment, catering and business services. On all these fronts, patients, staff and the wider public will benefit. By laying out a route map to minimising the NHS' carbon footprint, the report can enable the NHS to protect the health of both current and future generations.

## Research News

### Global deaths due to smokeless tobacco are up by a third, according to new study

The number of deaths globally due to smokeless tobacco has gone up by a third in 7 years to an estimated 350,000 people, a new study suggests. The research, from the University of York, comes at a time when there are concerns that spitting - a behaviour common among those who chew tobacco - is likely to transmit the COVID-19 virus.

The researchers - who are part of an international group called ASTRA - are calling for governments and public health bodies to regulate the production and sale of smokeless tobacco. They say a ban on spitting in public places will also discourage smokeless tobacco use and may reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

Dr Kamran Siddiqi, from the Department of Health Sciences and Hull York Medical School, said: "The study has come at a time when COVID-19 is affecting almost all aspects of our lives. Chewing tobacco increases saliva production and leads to compulsive spitting."

"There are concerns that spitting – a behaviour common among those who chew tobacco- is likely to transmit the virus to others. "In acknowledgement of this, India for example, has already taken a positive step by banning spitting in public places to reduce the transmission of COVID-19."

The study, which was funded by the National Institute of Health Research, estimates that in 2017 alone smokeless tobacco resulted in more than 90,000 deaths due to cancers of the mouth, pharynx and oesophagus and accounted for more than 258,000 deaths from heart disease. Millions more have their lives shortened by ill health due to the effects of chewing tobacco-based products, the study reveals.

Researchers compiled the figures using data from 127 countries and extracted from the 2017 Global Burden of Disease Study and surveys such as Global Adult Tobacco Survey. The results are published in BMC Medicine.

Dr Siddiqi said South and South-East Asia continues to be a hotspot with India accounting for 70%, Pakistan for 7% and Bangladesh for 5% of the global disease burden due to smokeless tobacco.

Dr Siddiqi added: "Smokeless tobacco is used by almost a quarter of tobacco users and most of them live in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In the UK, South Asian communities also consume smokeless tobacco products which too needs to be regulated just like cigarettes."

"We have an international policy in the form of the World Health Organisation's Framework Convention for Tobacco Control, to regulate the supply and demand of tobacco products. We need to apply this framework to smokeless tobacco with the same rigor as it is applied to cigarettes."



## Research News

### Increase in alcohol-industry funded research is a cause for concern, study suggests

The alcohol industry is increasingly funding academic research into the impacts of alcohol consumption – with some studies making claims about the health benefits of alcohol, new research suggests.

The study found that since 2009, there has been a 56% increase in research funded by alcohol companies or affiliated organisations. The scale of alcohol industry sponsorship of scientific research raises concerns over the potential for bias, conflicts of interest and selective reporting of outcomes, the researchers say.

The research team from the University of York found just under 13,500 studies are directly or indirectly funded by the alcohol industry.

Co-author of the study, Dr Su Golder from the Department of Health Sciences, said: “Our study identified a worrying trend - While there has been a steep decline in the alcohol industry conducting its own research on health at the same time there has been an increase in the alcohol industry funding such research, by providing financial support to researchers or via alcohol related organisations. This allows alcohol companies to exploit a ‘transparency loophole’ as many people assume these organisations are charities and don’t realise the connection to the industry.”

“While there are many legitimate fields for research funded by the alcohol industry – such as studies into ingredients and environmental impacts – their involvement in health research is particular cause for concern. Many of these studies make claims about the protective cardiovascular effects of alcohol and suggest that substance abuse problems are down to individual choices rather than industry behaviours.”

The researchers believe that the level of alcohol industry involvement in research they uncovered is likely to be just the tip of the iceberg.

Co-author of the study, Professor Jim McCambridge from the Department of Health Sciences, added: “While researchers are meant to declare funders in peer reviewed research publications this often doesn’t happen and we don’t get the level of transparency we should have.”

“It is well known that by sponsoring research pharmaceutical and tobacco companies successfully conspired to subvert the scientific evidence-base in order to influence policy for decades and so, while more research is needed, the scale, nature and breadth of the alcohol industry’s influence on scientific research provides cause for concern.”

“While alcohol companies may claim they are carrying out a civic duty through their funding of research, these are studies that independent academics would be much better placed to conduct.”

### Cardiac rehabilitation programme wins BMJ award

A home-based rehabilitation programme currently rolling out across the NHS for patients with heart failure to achieve a better quality of life has won a prestigious BMJ award.

The Rehabilitation Enablement in Chronic Heart Failure (REACH-HF) project was delivered in a research collaboration led by the University of Exeter and the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust in partnership with clinical and academic teams in York, Dundee, Glasgow, Birmingham and Gwent.

The BMJ Awards are the UK's leading medical awards promoting excellence in healthcare and recognising the inspirational work of healthcare teams across the UK.

Professor Patrick Doherty of the Department of Health Sciences developed the chair-based exercise intervention and exercise prescription used in REACH-HF. The intervention creates a new tailored approach for patients with heart failure to exercise safely at home.

Professor Doherty said: "Even before COVID-19 struck the NHS, many patients with heart failure felt isolated from the benefits of exercise-based cardiac rehabilitation as they were unable to access conventional hospital-based rehabilitation."

"REACH-HF has changed that. By using a facilitated self-managed approach, proven to enhance quality of life, REACH-HF has enabled patients to take control of their condition and to maintain their fitness levels safely and effectively at home."

Dr Hasnain Dalal of the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust and the University of Exeter Medical School said: "We're delighted to receive the 2020 BMJ Award. We would like to thank the judging panel for recognising the dedication of our hard-working REACH-HF team in developing and evaluating a novel home-based rehabilitation programme for people with heart failure and their caregivers over the last decade."

The project was funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).



### University of York academic to head up Greater Manchester inequalities task force

A University of York expert in social inequalities is to lead a new independent commission to explore the root causes and drivers of inequality and offer solutions to tackle these issues across Greater Manchester.

Kate Pickett, Professor of Epidemiology and Deputy Director of the Centre for Future Health at the University, will chair the new Independent Inequalities Commission. The group will draw upon evidence of the existing and emerging inequalities in the city-region and make specific, hard-hitting and deliverable recommendations for action to improve the lives of residents across Greater Manchester.

The group held its first meeting in October to set out a roadmap for its work over the next six months, before publishing its findings in March 2021.

Acting in an independent capacity, the Commission will report back to Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, and the leaders of the ten local authorities in the area. It will initiate a conversation with and draw upon the work of existing groups and equalities programmes across Greater Manchester, as well as reaching out across communities to help produce its recommendations.

Kate said: "I'm honoured to be appointed as Chair to the Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission. Greater Manchester has a proud history of political, economic and social leadership for equality, and the Commission is committed to building on that tradition to give policymakers and communities solutions for addressing inequalities and creating a strong and sustainable future for everyone within the region."

The evidence-based recommendations it develops will influence the Greater Manchester Strategy, the comprehensive plan for the future of the city-region covering economic growth, health, wellbeing, jobs, housing, transport, skills and training. Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham said: "Throughout the coronavirus pandemic it's become painfully clear that the worst off in our society have been hit hardest. As we respond to the impact of this crisis and begin to plot our recovery, we have to ask what we can do to address the shocking levels of inequality in our society."

"The Independent Inequalities Commission will be asking those tough questions. They will engage with residents and organisations across Greater Manchester, and the work they do will feed directly into our plans for the future of our city-region."

"COVID-19 is reshaping our economy, but we all now have a chance to do things differently. If we don't, the devastating economic impact of the pandemic will echo for years to come."

CIlr Brenda Warrington, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Lead for Equalities, said: "We know that this crisis has exploited the deep inequalities that exist in our country, and there's a real risk that these gaps could only grow if we don't recover in the right way. We cannot simply return to business as usual."

"The Independent Inequalities Commission will provide the expertise and insight to help us tackle these inequalities across Greater Manchester and, we hope, the country as a whole. The work that they will do over the next six months will be a key contribution to our ongoing efforts to create a fairer society."

### York to lead a national study on the impact of Covid-19 on mental ill-health under £2M funding announcement

The impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on people with severe mental health illnesses is now being studied by researchers at the University of York in partnership with mental health provider, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV).

The York-led research project - Optimising Wellbeing in Self-isolation study (OWLS) - explores how people with severe mental ill health have experienced the pandemic restrictions and how they dealt with the social consequences of lockdown. It will also investigate the impact of coronavirus on their physical health.

The OWLS study is one of six funded under a £2million initiative by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). These national studies will investigate and reduce the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of at-risk groups. Working in partnership with people who use mental health services, OWLS will be carried out by researchers from York's Mental Health and Addiction Research Group (MHARG) and colleagues from TEWV.

The work is led by Dr Emily Peckham, a senior researcher in MHARG. The research has already begun recruiting and will deliver rapid insights to help some of the most vulnerable in society.

Professor Simon Gilbody, Director of MHARG, said the University had studied the drivers of poor physical health and inequalities for people who use mental health services over a number of years. He said: "While the NHS has been world-beating in using research to understand and mitigate the physical consequences of Covid, people who use mental health services have not really been included. We are using our expertise to redress this balance."

Professor Dave Ekers, Clinical Director of Research and Development at TEWV said: "The findings of the OWLS study will make timely recommendations about how best to support people with severe mental illness in the next stages of the pandemic. We are proud to work with Dr Peckham, Professor Gilbody and their team and will ensure people who use our NHS services are given the opportunity to be included in this groundbreaking study."

Professor Charlie Jeffery, Vice-Chancellor of the University of York, said anticipating the immediate and longer-term impacts of global pandemic is an area where universities and the NHS can show leadership.

"York has always made an important contribution by ensuring the most vulnerable sections of society are included in research activity. I know that this partnership between people with lived experience, our local NHS partners and our team at the University of York is a strong one. I am delighted to hear that this research will be led from Yorkshire."

Brent Kilmurray, TEWV Chief Executive added: "COVID-19 has had far reaching consequences for so many people and it is vital that we understand the impact it has had on people living with mental ill health and the interventions needed to further support them. The partnership between the Trust and The University of York is very important and the expertise of both organisations will provide valuable insights for national and international healthcare systems."

The study is one of a number of projects in a 15-year research partnership between The University of York and TEWV, using the strengths of both institutions to create a transformed environment for mental health research.

### DIAMONDS project runner-up in service users and carers award

A mental health research project at the University of York is runner-up in a national competition to highlight the best examples of service user and carer involvement in mental health research studies.

The Diabetes and Mental Illness, Improving Outcomes and Self-management (DIAMONDS) programme was recognised in the National Institute for Health Research Clinical Research Network (NIHR CRN) User and Carer Involvement Awards 2020 for its role in involving service users through its DIAMONDS Voice initiative.

The DIAMONDS programme, based in the University's Department of Health Sciences, aims to improve the support available for people living with severe mental illness and type-2 diabetes.

The awards, organised by the NIHR in partnership with mental health research charities the McPin Foundation and MQ, highlight the achievements of researchers who involve service users, carers and the public in each stage of the research process.

The application for the award was led by a long-standing member of DIAMONDS Voice who has been part of the group since its launch.

DIAMONDS programme manager Jennifer Brown said: "I am delighted that we have finished runner-up in this national competition. It's wonderful to see the close collaboration between DIAMONDS Voice and the research team recognised and celebrated in this way. Of course, we would have loved to attend an awards ceremony as a special treat but this year we will put our newly acquired Zoom skills to good use and celebrate virtually. I have learned a lot from working with DIAMONDS Voice and can't wait to see what the next year will bring."

One member of the DIAMONDS Voice group said: "I'm proud of what I have achieved. If I was not involved I would have been stuck at first base."

"I have grown in confidence since being part of DIAMONDS. I started with completing a questionnaire, got involved in Voice group meetings - setting up events stalls, then chairing the meetings, I became a research champion and now I am a governor of my NHS trust."

People with severe mental illness (SMI) are two to three times more likely than the general population to have type-2 diabetes (T2D) and their life expectancy is reduced by around ten to fifteen years.

Self-management is an important and effective way to control T2D. There are several diabetes education programmes available on the NHS but these don't always address the particular needs of people living with SMI.

Working with service users, the DIAMONDS project has developed a new management programme, including a mobile phone app, to improve the long term management of the condition.

The team and DIAMONDS Voice are also re-developing the project website with a focus on accessibility and presenting research in an easy to understand and accessible way. This work is supported by the Mentally Fit York fund.



## Research News

### Spotlight on Research - Wednesdays 3pm - 3.30pm online

HYMS are holding weekly online seminars aim to raise awareness of the scope and breadth of health research underway at Hull York Medical School and, in doing so, help to facilitate collaboration between researchers across different disciplines.

- Dr Marjan Van Der Woude, 4 November Bacterial pathogenesis: diversity matters (<https://bit.ly/3mOCcio>)
- Prof Tim Palmer, 11 November Targeting vascular inflammation to manage cardiovascular disease (<https://bit.ly/33U7Fae>)
- Dr Lina Gega, 18 November Digital health interventions: blowing hot and cold with the same breath (<https://bit.ly/36gDBsf>)
- Dr Harshal Deshmukh, 25 November Precision medicine in diabetes (<https://bit.ly/3hZt075>)
- Dr Najma Siddiqi, 2 December Improving the physical health of people with mental illness....and the mental health of people with chronic physical disorders (<https://bit.ly/3i0OaSn>)
- Dr Laura Sadofsky, 9 December Title to be confirmed

To join the online events simply click on the relevant link on the scheduled date and time.

The links can be used to access the recorded seminars.

View the seminar's public calendar (HYMS Spotlight on Research)

(<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=Y18zY25mOWZjbzMzZjI3NjhtaTFIMm9ycmtzNEBncm91cC5jYWxlbmRhci5nb29nbGUuY29t>)

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### Online event on Human-Animal Interaction and COVID-19

Elena Ratschen writes: "As part of this year's ESCR online Festival of Social Science, we are hosting an event on human-animal interaction and COVID-19 on 11th November 2020. The purpose is to take stock of research, practice and policy developments in the area, and discuss implications and priorities for the field."

"You can register for free here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/human-animal-interaction-before-and-since-covid-19-lessons-priorities-tickets-124246008155> (note the number of places is limited)."

"Amongst other things, we will present findings from our recent human-animal interaction study (INTACT) that some of you took part in earlier this year. Main results from this study have now also been published here: <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0239397>."

# Staff News

## Hello

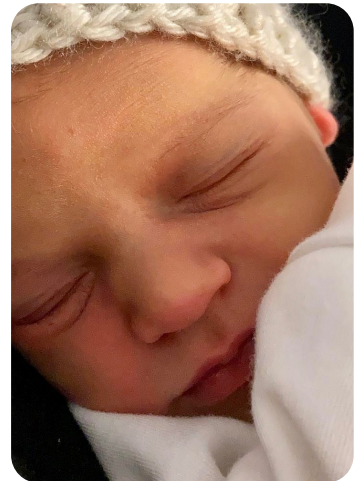
We wish a very warm welcome to new members of staff who have joined the department recently, these include: Claire Carswell, Alexander Jarde, Maria Bryant, Stephanie Bramley, Joyti Panesar, Yassaman Vafau, Zohaib Akhter, Jake Ward, Jess Bogue, Danielle Podmore, Rebecca Beggan.

## Goodbye

We also wish a very fond farewell to those who have left, including: Sarwat Shah, Radha Shukla, Zainab Kidwai, and Philip Williamson.

## Congratulations to:

Alex Harrison who has welcomed his daughter, Freya Helen Harrison into the world. Freya weighed 6lb 15oz.



## Remembering:

The Department was sad to report the death of Professor Hugh MacPherson, an Emeritus Professor in the Department, following his retirement in 2016.

He joined the Department in 2003 and established one of the first UK research groupings, dedicated to exploring the effectiveness of acupuncture. The group was highly successful and influential. In recognition of this, Hugh became one of the first professors of Acupuncture Research in the UK.

Those of us who knew Hugh, understood his great passion for acupuncture, but also his commitment to evidence based practice. His pioneering work, for example, has ensured that acupuncture is used to treat various forms of musculoskeletal pain in the NHS.

Hugh leaves a great legacy and will be missed by his many friends in Health Sciences.

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