

News from the MHRN East Midlands Hub in
Partnership with the South Yorkshire CLRN

March 2011



Nottingham eating disorder conference well received

We're delighted to report that our conference *Recent developments in eating disorders* was a great success. The event, which took place on 22 February at the University of Nottingham's Dearing Building, brought together over forty healthcare and education professionals from across the East Midlands and South Yorkshire, highlighting the growing importance of research into anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and related conditions.

Sheetal Dandgey, joint event organiser said, "This was our first conference where we looked specifically at research into eating disorders and it was an extremely worthwhile experience. We really enjoyed showcasing our work assisting researchers to improve the quantity and quality of mental health studies in England. We were really encouraged to see so many experienced professionals coming together to find out about our work and hear about the latest research and service developments."



Sheetal Dandgey

The conference got under way with an introduction to our services given by our Hub Executive Board member Professor Justine Schneider from the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Nottingham.

Next, Lynne Addicott, Eating Disorder Clinical Development Lead at Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, walked the audience through the successful establishment of the county's Eating Disorders Service. Elaine Todd, the Trust's Clinical Lead in Eating Disorders, followed with a talk on the service's carers strategy.

Afterwards, Debbie Butler, our Clinical Studies Assistant and Patient and Public Involvement Officer gave a deeply personal talk about her hard-won battle to overcome her own eating-related difficulties.

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The day was concluded by Elizabeth Goddard from the Eating Disorders Unit at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London. Liz talked about an exciting new study looking at the effectiveness of a new way of helping carers of young people with Anorexia Nervosa deal with stress. *Expert Carers Helping Others* is a pilot randomised control trial of a package of self-help materials.

Sheetal Dandgey can be contacted on 0115 823 1282 or sheetal.dandgey@nhs.net

Free conference in Sheffield

Our close colleagues at the South Yorkshire Mental Health Priority Group will be holding a one day conference in the next few weeks. *New approaches for treatment of mental illness* is taking place on Friday 18 March at The Edge Conference Centre in Sheffield.

This conference will be of real interest to professionals in all fields of mental health, especially researchers interested in undertaking research projects or recruiting participants to a research project in the South Yorkshire area.

To register please visit <http://clrn2011.com>

Free training in research ethics

Good Clinical Practice training is available free to everyone working with us on research within the NHS.

Book your place at www.crncc.nihr.ac.uk/training/booking

Nottingham study looks at diagnostic tools for autistic spectrum disorders

If you live in Nottingham and have a developmental disorder on the autistic spectrum, you might be invited to take part in a new study. As part of a programme known as *Crossing the divide*, this research project aims to improve the way developmental difficulties are assessed and diagnosed.

The team wants to look at how well current ways of determining autistic spectrum disorders work and look at a potential new, quicker and easier to administer diagnostic tool.



The study will involve people with autism and Asperger's Syndrome

As well as this, the team wants to improve the way common mental health difficulties (such as depression and anxiety) are assessed and diagnosed in people with developmental disorders. The results will be used to inform the development of services for adults with autism and Asperger's Syndrome.

We are inviting people who have been assessed for a developmental disorder and their parents too. Clinicians use information about current behaviours and feelings, but importantly they also use information about behaviours and feelings in early childhood to make diagnoses. Often parents are the best people to offer this type of information.

The research is being carried out by staff from the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London. The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) funds this research. This is government funding for improving clinical diagnosis, treatment and health provision in the United Kingdom.

As a thank you for your time you will be given a £10 gift voucher.

If you would like to know more about this study, please contact Jo Almeida on 0115 823 1282 or joanne.almeida@nhs.net

New way of working is proving successful

A new way of working with nurses in clinical settings is boosting the number of people participating in the studies we help with. Our two Research Liaison Nurses are sharing a post within Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust and maintaining a clinical presence within their original teams. Jon Lander and Veronica French are both Community Psychiatric Nurses (CPNs) within the Recovery Team at the Stonebridge Centre.

Veronica French says, "Our role was introduced to see if having research specialists based within the clinical teams could increase the numbers of people participating in studies. We hope that our work will raise awareness of the work of the Network and promote the role of research within the clinical setting."

The Research Liaison Nurses have had notable success working with clinicians to put forward potential recruits for particular studies. Due to their positions within the team, Jon and Veronica are already known to many staff members and are familiar with work practices and the clinical environment.

Veronica continues, "Having dual roles has proved difficult at times. There is often an expectation (probably rightly so) that client issues and team issues, such as covering clinics, should take precedence over ongoing research work. Our biggest challenge is ring-fencing our research time in a busy, reconfiguring team."

Veronica goes on to say, "Both of us are really enjoying the role – the chance to do something different as we have been CPNs for several years. I've enjoyed learning about our local research and the research field, and getting to work with another team of people, many of whom come from non-nursing backgrounds and have a range of experiences to share. In the future we are hoping to raise awareness of the MHRN still further, particularly with clients who work with the Recovery Team and visit the Stonebridge Centre. Also, we want to make sure we share the findings from studies with clients and clinicians so that this can influence practice and help to create an environment where research is part of the normal service experience."

Our first Research Liaison Nurse Martin Bartlett, has just returned full time to his clinical role at the Rowan One acute treatment ward at Highbury Hospital.

Veronica French can be contacted on 0115 823 1282 or veronica.french@nottshc.nhs.uk

Social media hits the Hub

Twitter us and visit our blog and Facebook page

twitter.com/NIHR_MHRN EMSY
mhrnemsy.wordpress.com
Facebook: search for NIHR

Upcoming drug combination trial for unresponsive schizophrenia

Around a third of people with schizophrenia show a poor response to antipsychotic medications. A new research trial wants to find out if combining two well-known antipsychotic drugs will mean more people can be treated successfully. Clozapine is often used with success where other antipsychotics have not resulted in improvement. Where individuals fail to respond to clozapine, the amisulpride augmentation in clozapine-unresponsive schizophrenia (AMICUS) trial will assess the efficacy of adding in amisulpride to the existing clozapine regimen.

AMICUS is a 12-week, placebo-controlled randomised control trial. Eligible individuals that wish to take part will be either given amisulpride or a placebo alongside their usual medication. Each research participant receives 400mg of amisulpride or a matching placebo capsule initially. If there is a clinical need the dose of amisulpride may be titrated up to 800mg (or two matching placebo capsules) for the remaining weeks. As a double-blind study, the psychiatrist will not know if the individual is receiving the second antipsychotic or a dummy capsule.

Whether the treatment benefits and costs of the combined antipsychotics outweigh the side-effects of the drugs will be the measure of success of this trial.

We will soon need referring psychiatrists in Nottinghamshire. To find out more please contact David Kelly on 0115 823 1332 or david.kelly1@nhs.net

Study searches for the genetic causes of mental illness

We are looking for psychiatrists to help us run a project that aims to identify the genetic links to mental illnesses and their differing treatment responses.

We all have variations of the chemical sequences within our DNA which we have inherited from our parents. Research suggests that some of these variations, or *polymorphisms*, may increase the risks of developing certain conditions or effect on how we respond to specific diseases. The **DNA polymorphisms in mental illness (DPIM)** study is looking at the genetic variations of people with bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and alcoholism, to find a link to these conditions.

This study, funded by the NIHR Health Technology Assessment Programme, is being run by Professor Hugh Gurling of University College London. The research team have had great success finding people to participate in other regions and wish to expand into our area. We are looking for a local collaborator in our region.

Participants will be interviewed and asked to provide a blood sample for analysis. To simplify the identification of potentially relevant changes on candidate genes, only people with a specific racial background will be asked to participate. Analysis of these samples will help usher in the next generation of personalised mental health treatments and diagnostic tools.

To find out how to get involved, please contact Joanne Higman on 0115 823 1333 or jo.higman@nottshc.nhs.uk

Workshop to spotlight new local forensics research

If you work in forensics, and you want to increase your knowledge of current trends in forensic research and practice, come to our next event. *A Snapshot of Forensic Studies within the East Midlands* will showcase select examples of new research underway in the region. Our free one day networking event will be valuable for all staff, clinicians and healthcare professionals, both in the NHS and the private sector.

Tuesday 24 May
9.30am - 3pm
The Mike Harris Learning and Development Centre
Rampton Hospital
Retford
Nottinghamshire
DN22 0PD



Richard Morriss

The agenda for the day is:

- Welcome: Dr John Milton
- Insight into the Mental Health Research Network: Professor Richard Morriss
- The ***Evaluation of Women's Enhanced Medium Secure Services*** project: Hannah Wilson
- Local forensic research: Professor Conor Duggan
- CLAHRC forensic research: Dr Amanda Tetley
- The ***NALoxone InVEstigation (N-ALIVE) Pilot Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT)***: Dr Nicola Muirhead

To book your place contact Jo Greenwood on 0115 823 1282 or joanne.greenwood@nottshc.nhs.uk

National Scientific Meeting

The MHRN's 2011 annual three-day Scientific Meeting takes place in Cambridge from 6 to 8 April.

Our Scientific Meeting gives researchers and mental health professionals the chance to meet together and find out about some of the pioneering studies we support. This is the only multidisciplinary meeting about mental health research in England and this year focuses on research in the field of developmental and youth mental health.

To book your place visit our web site (www.mhrn.info)

Research meeting for service users and carers in Derbyshire

Our group of service users and carers meet every few weeks to learn about how research works and discuss what this means for you. Come along and join us at the next meeting in Chesterfield.

Friday 25 March
1.30pm until 3.30pm
Parish Centre
Stonegravels
91 Sheffield Road
Chesterfield
S41 7JH



Rosie Dobel-Ober

This meeting will feature:

- The Derbyshire project 'Coming off the meds' with Laurence Baldwin, Corinne Gale and Dave Waldram.
- Mental health research studies running in Derbyshire and how to get involved.
- New studies into bipolar disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and stigma.

As always, our experts by experience will be on hand too. Booking is essential and refreshments will be provided.

For more information or to book a place please contact **Rosie Dobel-Ober** or **Martin Clarke** on 01332 623 579. Alternatively email rosie.dobel-ober@derbyshcft.nhs.uk or martin.clarke@derbyshcft.nhs.uk

Nottingham delirium and dementia in hospital conference

What are the major issues facing hospitals helping elderly people with dementia and delirium? This one day conference in June will examine these problems and look at how the latest research is being applied to solve them. On hand will be international expert on delirium and Consultant Geriatrician Dr Shaun O'Keeffe as the event's keynote speaker.

This event is organized by the *Medical Crises in Older People* research team led by Professor John Gladman, and will disseminate findings of the Medical and Mental Health Unit cohort study completed last year at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust.

Wednesday 8 June
9am – 4pm
B03, Sir Colin Campbell Building, University of Nottingham
Innovation Park, Nottingham, NG7 2TU

Aims and Objectives of the day are:

- Describe the problems of dementia and delirium
- Explore the patient, carer and workforce perspectives
- Discuss service developments emerging from research
- Focus on the key issues in research and the implications for clinical practice

This conference promises to be a thought-provoking day for all healthcare professionals involved with care of older people, and we are pleased to be supporting the research team.

The cost is £75, with refreshments and lunch provided. CPD points have been applied for.

To book your place contact MCOP administrator Gail Arnold on 0115 823 0239 or gail.arnold@nottingham.ac.uk



Who we are and what we do

The Mental Health Research Network is part of the National Institute for Health Research and our mission is to help make research about mental health happen within the NHS in England.

We work with everyone who needs to be involved in research projects – researchers, mental health professionals, people with experience of mental health problems, their families, and research and development staff based in NHS trusts.

We support studies that are based within mental health services, within social care services and within primary care services.

We support randomised controlled trials, service evaluations, qualitative studies, epidemiological research, genetic research and e-science studies. We support multi-centre and multi-site projects as well as small single-site pilot studies.

We support both publicly-funded research studies and projects that are sponsored by industry.

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The Mental Health Research Network is part of the National Institute for Health Research and supports studies in England