



North London Hub
Mental Health Research Network



**National Institute for
Health Research**

NORTH LONDON HUB

NEWSLETTER: DECEMBER 2010



The UK MHRN is a network designed to provide a research infrastructure. The network supports large-scale research which will help to raise the standard of mental health and social care research throughout the UK. In addition, it acts as a central point of information and reference, connecting service users and carers to researchers and mental health professionals. The UK MHRN research will not only respond to government policy but will help guide practice and contribute to the understanding of mental illness and the increase of mental health in the UK.

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Who's Who in the NL Hub:

We have 1 full time Hub Manager **Sandra O'Sullivan** and 1 full time Deputy Manager **Jessica Nagar**. The team administrator is **Jemma Reilly-Ayton** and we currently employ 14 Clinical Studies Officers: **Jo Hart, Helen Blake, Rachel Evered, Gemma Loebenberg, Charlotte Watson, Lorraine O'Connell, Emily Dixon, Antoinette McNulty, Lara Davidson, Shreena Ghelani, Amy Murphy, Rosie Evans, Anna Piasecka and William Morgan.**

The Hub Lead is **Professor Peter Tyrer**, Deputy Hub Lead, **Dr David Osborn** . We also have a Primary Care Lead, **Dr. Marta Buszewicz** .

The Hub also has an Executive Committee that meets every 8 weeks. The members of the committee are:

Professor Peter Tyrer, Sandra O'Sullivan, Jessica Nagar, Dr David Osborn, Professor Stefan Priebe, Dr Lawrence Ratna, Professor Tom Burns, Sylvia Warwick, Dr Helen Killaspy, Dr Marta Buszewicz, Dr John Green and Lynis Lewis.

The North London Hub contact details are on the back page of this newsletter.

Recruitment to NIHR Portfolio Studies in 2009-2010

The North London Hub was the top recruiting MHRN Hub in 2009-2010 with 20,325 research participants recruited to studies. A big thank you to all our member trusts and universities (listed below) for their support!



Mental Health Trusts

Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust
Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
East London NHS Foundation Trust
Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
North East London NHS Foundation Trust
North Essex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Oxford and Buckinghamshire NHS Foundation Trust
South Essex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust
West London Mental Health NHS Trust

Universities

Centre for Psychiatry, Barts and the London School of Medicine and
Dentistry
Imperial College London
University College London



Overview of some of our current studies

Financial Incentives to Improve Adherence to Medication (FIAT) - Chief Investigator: Professor Stefan Priebe.

Some patients who are likely to benefit from anti-psychotic maintenance medication, do not regularly take it despite the best efforts of mental health services. An assertive outreach team in East London tried and offered financial incentives to five such patients to encourage them to take their depot medication. Four of them accepted the scheme. All of them had improved adherence and three remained without hospital admissions throughout the observation period although they had been frequently admitted before (Claassen et al, Psychiatric Bulletin, 2007).



The idea of offering financial incentives to non-adherent patients in psychiatry is controversial. The study team conducted a focus group study with patients, clinicians and other stakeholders about their concerns (supported by a grant from the Wellcome Trust). Most groups raised similar concerns, and the views were rarely black or white. Practically, all groups emphasised the importance of having more evidence on whether the practice of offering financial incentives would really work. The study team have now received funding from the Health Technology Assessment of the National Institute of Health Research to conduct a randomised controlled trial to provide such evidence.

The randomised controlled trial will be carried out over a 12 month period with patients in assertive outreach teams and community mental health teams. Patients will be identified from the caseloads of the teams who have problems adhering to their medication and with whom all conventional methods to achieve adherence have failed. The teams will then be randomly allocated to either the experimental group or the control group. The teams in the experimental group will offer the participating patients £15 for every depot injection (the money will be covered by the research budget). Teams in the control group will continue with treatment as usual. After 12 months a comparison will be made between adherence and clinical and social outcomes of the patients in the two conditions.

Recruitment to date is 47 patients, 25 teams randomised. The study teams have only recently commenced recruitment from CMHTs in September 2010 and are presently in the process of screening for eligible patients. This looks much more promising, with teams having an average of 6 eligible patients per team, compared to 1 per team from the AOTs.

The use of financial incentives in mental health is a somewhat contentious issue and naturally this trial raises an interesting debate about different methods of practice. However, from the teams allocated to the financial incentives condition, there have been many accounts of considerable success. One of the key points mentioned by teams has been that previously very disengaged clients are now engaging well, even calling and texting to check in and confirm depot dates. Clinicians have also mentioned that, for some clients, the benefit of their medication is becoming much more apparent, as previous poor adherence had prevented the medication from taking full effect. Better engagement and clinical improvement is allowing teams to work more therapeutically with their clients and FIAT appears to be having a positive effect.

*IF YOU WOULD LIKE FURTHER INFORMATION OR INTERESTED IN COLLABORATING
WITH THIS STUDY OUTLINED ABOVE PLEASE CONTACT: SANDRA
O'SULLIVAN .OSULLIVAN@IMPERIAL.AC.UK*



OPTIMA 1

Dr Maxine Patel (Chief Investigator from Institute of Psychiatry) aims to explore how and on what basis psychiatrists currently titrate antipsychotic dose for patients with acute psychosis, and investigate clinicians' perspectives on plasma level therapeutic drug monitoring (TDM) for antipsychotics.

This investigation is made in the light of findings that patients often receive doses which exceed the recommended doses. High doses represent greater risk of dose-related side effects and additional costs to the NHS.

One approach for achieving the minimum effective dose is TDM. As drug concentration is a function of both administered dose and drug metabolism, TDM offers the promise of individualised optimal prescribing. While psychiatrists routinely work with TDM for an array of drugs, including lithium, it is rarely used for antipsychotics such as olanzapine and risperidone.

The current study will run for 12 months and aims to recruit 155 psychiatrists within the South London & Maudsley, Central & North West London, and West London Mental Health NHS Trusts. Data collection will be via questionnaires, which are being developed in conjunction with two focus groups of service users and one of psychiatrists. Items will be generated from emerging key themes from focus groups and a review of the literature on TDM use for antipsychotics.

In summary, the study will outline the current state-of-play regarding clinician perspectives and knowledge of antipsychotic prescribing, optimum dose choice, individualised prescribing and use of TDM. Findings will be used to spearhead an improvement in the quality of antipsychotic prescribing.



OPTIMA 2

Dr Maxine Patel aims to develop and test clinically acceptable methods for therapeutic drug monitoring (TDM) of olanzapine and risperidone.

Potential participants will be service users who are prescribed olanzapine and risperidone and currently on an inpatient ward. They will undertake a clinical interview regarding their current mental and physical health and medication, followed by a blood test to measure individual levels of antipsychotic medication. They will also be asked to provide an optional saliva sample in order to identify whether this is as accurate as a blood sample when measuring antipsychotic levels. This study will be conducted in the same NHS Trusts as OPTIMA 1.

In summary, the study will explore clinicians' understanding of TDM and individualised dose management, the accuracy of saliva samples for TDM and the logistics of sending samples from hospital sites to the laboratory.

***If you would like further information or interested in collaborating with this study outlined above please contact: Sandra O'Sullivan
s.osullivan@imperial.ac.uk***



If you would like to find out more about running a project on the NIHR MHRN, then please get in touch with the Hub who will be able to offer advice and guidance on :

Contracts & Finances, Project set-up, Progressing Mapping, Honorary Contracts & Research Passports, LREC approval and R&D approval, Recruitment—Clinical Studies Officers, Data Entry and IT advice, Communications—Publicity, Recruitment Social Care and Primary Care Services and more.

Hub Contacts

**MHRN North London Hub
Imperial College London
Division of Neuroscience and Mental Health
The Claybrook Centre
Charing Cross Campus
St. Dunstan's Road
London W6 8RP**

Hub Office: 020 7386 1145 / 1219

The new website has now been launched:

www.mhrn.info



If you are interested in being added to our database to receive future newsletters and information, please complete this form. Once we have your details we will circulate information about potential trials of interest to you as and when they are adopted by the Mental Health Research Network. Please return your form by post or email (details at the bottom of the form).

Please complete and return this form to:

Jemma Reilly-Ayton
North London Hub Administrator
MHRN
Imperial College London
Charing Cross Campus
Department of Medicine, Centre for Mental Health
St Dunstan's Road
London W6 8RP

Email: j.reilly-ayton@imperial.ac.uk
Fax: 020 7386 1216

Name	
Address	
E-mail	
Telephone	
Principal Employer	
Profession	
Specialty (If applicable)	



Please indicate which broad areas link to your research interests:

Addiction: Substance Misuse		Adult Mental Health	
Assertive Outreach		Community Care	
Dementia: OPMH		Eating Disorders	
Forensic		Learning Disability: ASD	
Mother-Baby		Primary Care	
Psychosis		Psychosomatic Illness	
Risk		Social; Cultural; Gender	
Trauma			
Other (please specify):			

NB– if you want to say more about your own particular research interests or experience, please do so below or attach a separate sheet.

Access to Information:

The main purpose of the register is to enable networking between people with similar research interests in the North London Hub areas. If you **DO NOT** want your contact details to be available without prior consent, please indicate with a 'NO'.

The information provided will be stored on our systems in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.



We wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year and we look forward to collaborating with you in 2011!!