



Welcome to the North East Hub

Welcome to our first North East Hub Newsletter.

The UK Mental Health Research Network (MHRN) has been established with funding from the Department of Health to provide the infrastructure to support mental health and social care research in England.

The Network supports vital 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 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.

Further information about the network is available at www.ukmhrn.info

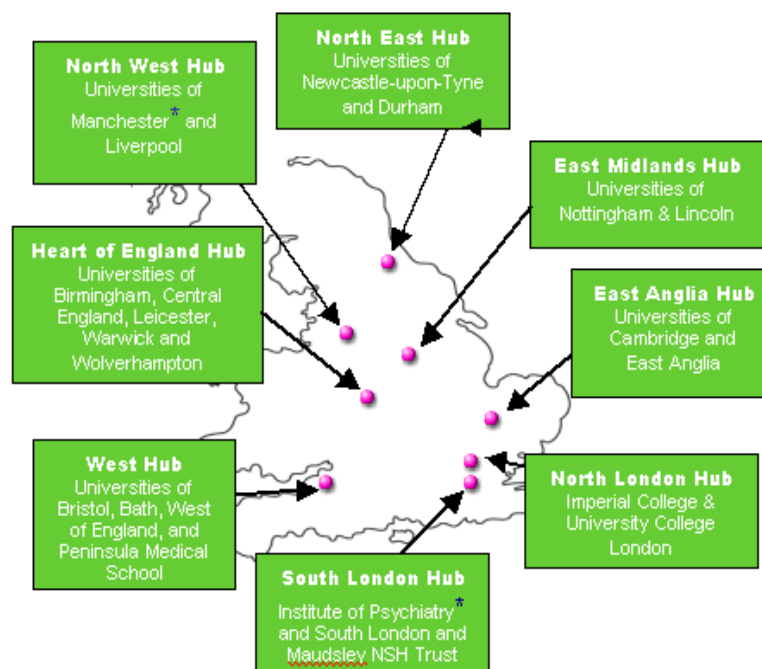
The North East Hub is the last of eight regional hubs, which make up the MHRN (being only 1 year old) and covers the area between North Yorkshire and the Scottish Border.

The Hub is a partnership between the School of Psychiatry at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, the School of Social Sciences at the University of Durham and 4 NHS Trusts in the North East Region; Newcastle, Northumberland and North Tyneside Mental Health Trust, South of Tyne and Wearside Mental Health Trust, Tees and North East Yorkshire NHS Trust, and County Durham and Darlington Priority Services. The North East Hub of the Mental Health Research Network is based at the Department of Psychiatry at the RVI in Newcastle. The Network as a whole is managed by a coordinating centre based between the Institute of Psychiatry and the University of Manchester.

For those of you who have had some involvement already you will know that Professor Allan Young has stepped down as Hub Lead due to his impending move to pastures new in Canada. We would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all of his efforts to get the hub off the ground and wish him well for his future. Nicol Ferrier, Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Newcastle, has now taken up the position of Hub lead; working alongside him is Dr Jill Thompson as Hub Coordinator. Also welcome to Di Bailey, Reader in Social Work at the University of Durham, who has recently been appointed as Social Care Lead. Anna Massey is in post as Clinical Studies Officer and further Officers will join the team as the hub develops. We hope to be up to full complement soon with the appointment of a Primary Care Lead, Deputy Lead, Service User representation and a secretary.

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* Location of joint UK MHRN Coordinating Centre

MHRN

Aims:

- To organise and deliver large-scale research projects to inform policy and practice as it develops.
- To broaden the scope and capacity of research including involvement of service users and carers in commissioning and delivering research.
- To help identify the research needs of mental health working with frontline staff, service users and carers.
- To develop research capacity through a range of initiatives carers at a local, regional and national level.

What projects does the MHRN adopt?

In order to run a project on the MHRN an application must be submitted to the Adoptions Committee, who will then determine if the project will be adopted to run on the network. Adoptions application forms, criteria and submission dates can be obtained from www.ukmhrn.info or alternatively by telephoning the MHRN Coordinating Centre on 020 7848 0699 Proposed projects are assessed against the following criteria

- In line with national mental health policy
- Evidence of service user input to proposal development
- Free of ethical or design flaws
- Feasibility to run on the network

Proposal should also meet one of the following criteria

- The proposal requires multiple-centres because of the need for large sample size or recruitment of participants with a rare condition, or recruitment of participants from a particular group or lifestyle
- The proposal is a cluster randomized trial, requiring multiple sites or units of randomization
- The proposal requires multiple centres in order to establish whether a finding or intervention is valid generalization across different settings or whether setting-specific

If you have a project which you would like to run on the MHRN then please visit the website to download an application form. Forthcoming deadlines for applications: December 29th 2005, February 21st 2006

Benefits of participating:

- The MHRN provides coordinated, efficient access to a large and diverse patient population across a range of clinical services and demographics
- It has extensive knowledge and experience in mental health research
- It adds value for both researchers and funders, ensuring projects are set up quickly and removing the administrative burden for financial, ethics and governance arrangements
- It monitors participant recruitment objectives throughout a project
- Clinical Studies Officers are in place in each of the hubs to ensure streamlined recruitment for participants
- Online Data entry System with support
- Support for financial and R& D administration

MHRN application forms can be downloaded from

www.ukmhrn.info

Frequently Asked Questions

Can the Hub adopt research?

The Network, not the Hubs, adopts research projects. However, anyone may put forward a project for adoption and Hubs are there to support and coordinate research proposals, as well as to deliver projects.

Can MHRN projects take place within a single Hub?

Yes. A hub such as the North East Hub is large and varied enough to deliver truly multi-centre studies when appropriate. Pilot projects with demonstrable potential to lead to a large scale study might also run within a single hub.

Does the MHRN fund research?

The Network hosts but does not fund individual projects. Researchers seeking funding for projects should apply through the usual channels such as MRC, Wellcome Trust, SDO and HTA.

What the Hub *cannot* provide:

- Commission research
- Research funding
- Peer Review Research

Projects Adopted by the Network

There are currently 34 projects running on the MHRN. Below is a list of all MHRN adopted projects that are currently in the North East Hub, although further projects are due to come online soon. For further details of these, and other MHRN projects, visit the website at www.ukmhrn.info

Current Projects in the North East Hub

Efficacy of Mifepristone (RU-486) in the Treatment of Bipolar Depression

Chief UK Investigator: Allan Young (Newcastle)

Funder: The Medical Research Council (MRC)

The aim of this project is to fully determine the potential therapeutic efficacy of mifepristone in bipolar depression using a large parallel group design. This will be done by assessing the effects of the progesterone receptor and glucocorticoid receptor antagonist, mifepristone on clinical symptoms and neurocognitive performance. The secondary aim is to elucidate the pathophysiology of bipolar disorder and to determine the therapeutic mechanism of action of mifepristone. Administration will be adjuvant and no changes to current medications are necessary.

GAN (Genetics of Anorexia Nervosa)

Anorexia Nervosa in Relatives Project

Chief UK investigator: Janet Treasure (Institute of Psychiatry, London)

Funder: National Institutes of Mental Health (USA)

Research suggests that anorexia nervosa may be a partially inherited condition. The aim of this study is therefore to create an international archival database for anorexia nervosa in order to learn more about how genes effect the development of anorexia nervosa. The study seeks to recruit men and women with anorexia nervosa, their biological parents and other family members who may have anorexia nervosa. In addition to the collection of DNA best-estimate diagnoses will be completed on review of participants medical history, medical interviews and questionnaires. For further information and contact details for self referral visit the BBC website link to the study: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4215298.stm> or contact Frankie Bishopp at email: f.bishopp@iop.kcl.ac.uk

NACHBID (Neuroleptics in Adults with Aggressive Challenging Behaviour and Intellectual Disability)

Chief investigator: Peter Tyrer (Imperial College, London)

Funder: National Coordinating Centre for Health Technology Assessment

Prevalence figures available indicate that the use of antipsychotic medication is very high in people with learning disabilities, despite the fact that the proportion suffering from a mental illness is relatively small. If antipsychotic drugs are to be used in treating challenging behaviour, clear evidence is needed of their efficiency.

This project is a three-arm parallel design randomized controlled trial of a typical neuroleptic drug, haloperidol, an atypical neuroleptic of drug, risperidone, and placebo in non-psychotic patients presenting with aggressive challenging behaviour among those under treatment from learning disability services. It aims to compare short and long term outcomes in terms of reduction in aggressive challenging behaviour (primary outcome), improved quality of life, reduction in burden of carers, and cost of care (secondary outcomes), in the three arms of the trial and assess any adverse effects of the three interventions.

BALANCE

International randomized trial of maintenance treatment for bipolar disorder.

Chief UK Investigator: John Geddes(Oxford)

Funder: The Stanley Medical Research Institute (USA)

Drugs which are effective in the acute phase of bipolar disorder are commonly continued in remission to prevent or delay another relapse. However there is uncertainty surrounding the evidence of their relative safety and efficacy. Balance is an international randomized trial aiming to establish the relative effectiveness of combination therapy with lithium and valproate semisodium compared to lithium or valproate semisodium monotherapy as a maintenance therapy for bipolar disorder. The primary outcome will be admission to hospital and the need for additional treatment for a mood episode. Other outcomes include Global Assessment of Functioning Scale, deliberate self harm and participant-rated quality of life. Participants will remain under the care of their existing psychiatrists and the trial has been designed to create the minimum of extra work for both participating investigators and patients.

For more information visit the BALANCE website <http://www.psychiatry.ox.ac.uk/balance/>

Register of Research Interests

Please use the form below to register your interests with the network. With your permission we can facilitate networking amongst people with similar interests to your own and contact you should research in these subjects become available on the network.

If you do *not* want your contact details to be made available without your prior consent, please tick this box

Contact Details

Full Name:

Telephone:

Fax:

Contact Address:

Email:

Employer

Profession: Psychiatrist Social Worker
 GP OT Psychologist
 Other (please specify) _____

Are you a: Service User Carer Clinician Researcher

Research Interests

Primary Care Old Age Social Care
 Adult CAMHS Other (please specify) _____

Special Interests

Please tick as many as apply

Rehabilitation Learning Disability Primary Care Psychiatry
 General Psychiatry Eating Disorders Substance Misuse
 Personality Disorders Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Creative Therapies
 Forensic Psychiatry Old Age Psychiatry Service Models
 Other (please specify) _____

Preferred Level of Involvement

Receiving the Newsletter Hub Research Interest Groups Research Participation
 Other (please specify) _____

When completed please send to Dr Jill Thompson at the following address:

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 Room W1418
 Dept of Psychiatry
 Leazes Wing, RVI
 Queen Victoria Road
 Newcastle upon Tyne
 NE1 4LP

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North East Hub
 UK Mental Health Research Network

MHRN National Scientific Conference:

The latest and best in UK research

Manchester Conference Centre—17th & 18th November 2005

The conference aims to be multidisciplinary bringing basic clinical science through to public mental health. The focus will be to showcase high quality international research; the key to better understanding of causes and treatments of individual disorders in real life settings. The format will be plenary sessions and two strands of parallel sessions.

To register contact:

Patricia Smith
Secretary to Professor Shon Lewis
2nd Floor, Education & Research Centre
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Southmoor Road
Manchester M23 9LT

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The full conference programme can be viewed at <https://www.meeting.co.uk/confercare/ukmhrn2005/>

Official Launch of the North East Hub

We are currently organising the official launch of the North East Hub of the MHRN, which will be held at the Centre for Life in Newcastle upon Tyne on the afternoon of 27th January. Please tick this box if you would like to express an interest in receiving further details and an invitation. **NB places are limited. Completing this part of the form is expressing an interest and is not a guarantee.**

Please send me further details of the launch

Further Information

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