

June 2025

**UWE  
Bristol****Centre for  
Appearance  
Research****Newsletter**

**Happy Spring from the Centre of Appearance  
Research!**



## **Who we are and what we do**

The Centre for Appearance Research (CAR) is changing how the world sees bodies through science. We are on a mission to conduct and use research to help people and society accept and appreciate all bodies.

Our vision is to expand our impact beyond academia, creating a world where diversity in appearance is fully valued. Our work is grounded in excellence, leadership, social impact, community, equity and belonging.

## Research spotlight



CAR recently celebrated the completion of a five-year grant funded by the National Institutes of Health in the US into the psychosocial impacts of craniofacial microsomnia (CFM), a congenital condition affecting the appearance and function of the ears and jaw.

The 'Craniofacial microsomnia: Accelerating Research and Education (CARE)' programme achieved four key aims:

1. To understand the lived experience and treatment journey of US adolescents and young adults with CFM and their families.
2. To identify the factors contributing to psychological distress and resiliency.
3. To determine the extent to which current healthcare provision meets individuals' needs.
4. To establish a US-wide patient and family CFM registry.





The CARE programme has been pivotal in informing person-centred care delivery and creating opportunities for future research. The CARE team included patient/parent advocates, researchers and healthcare professionals from seven countries, led by [Dr Nicola Stock](#) (UWE Bristol) and Professor Carrie Heike (Seattle, USA).

**Visit CARE website**







Recent publications from the CARE team include:

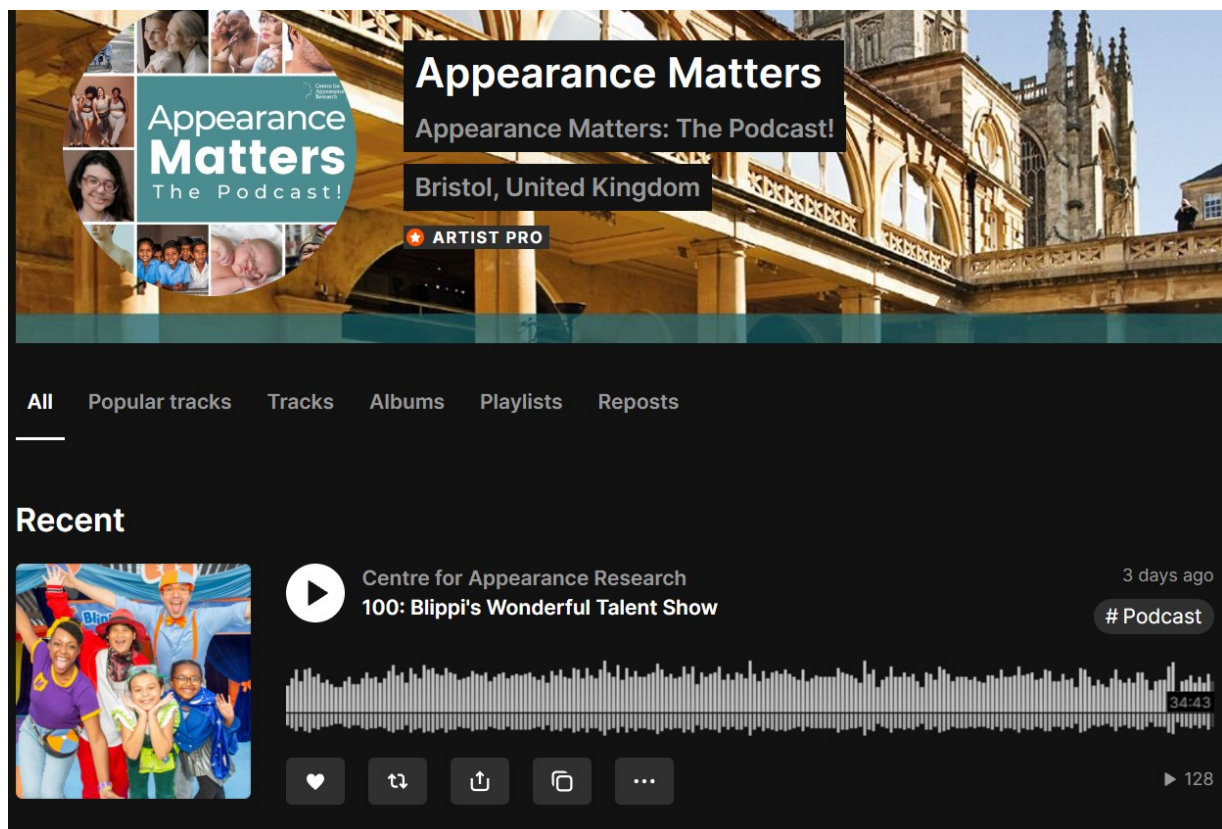
- Stock, N.M., Herring, B., Magee, L., Johns, A.L., Crerand, C.E., Heike, C.L., Schefer, A., Drake, A.F., Tumblin, M. & Feragen, K.B. (2025). Surgical decision-making regarding hearing and ear reconstruction in craniofacial microsomia: Exploring caregiver narratives. *Journal of Craniomaxillofacial Surgery*, 53(5): 642-650. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcms.2025.01.019>
- Stock, N.M., Costa, B., Parnell, J., Johns, A.L., Crerand, C.E., Feragen, K.B., Stueckle, L.P., Mills, A., Magee, L., Hotton, M., Tumblin, M., Schefer, A., Drake, A.F. & Heike, C.L. (2024). A conceptual thematic framework of psychological adjustment in caregivers of children with craniofacial microsomia. *The Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10556656241245284>
- Johns, A.L., McWilliams, D., Costa, B., Heike, C.L., Feragen, K.B., Hotton, M., Crerand, C.E., Drake, A.F., Schefer, A., Tumblin, M. & Stock, N.M. (2024). Early experiences of parents of children with craniofacial microsomia. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecological & Neonatal Nursing*, 53(3): 296-307. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jogn.2024.01.001>
- Costa, B., Stock, N.M., Johns, A.L., McKinney, C.M., Drake, A.F., Schefer, A. & Heike, C.L. (2024). "I can't provide what my child needs": Early feeding experiences of caregivers of children with craniofacial microsomia. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 77: e366-e374. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedn.2024.04.053>

## Appearance Matters: The podcast!

CAR has released the 100th episode of Appearance Matters: The podcast! Big congratulations to the podcast team – past and present – who have created this invaluable resource for anyone interested in appearance research.

[Stream 100: Blippi's Wonderful Talent Show by Appearance Matters.](#)

You can access past episodes here: [Stream Appearance Matters music.](#)



The podcast was featured in *The Psychologist*, the official publication of the British Psychological Society. You can [read the coverage here](#) and learn a bit more about the history and aims of the podcast.

## Spotlight on PhD students









Two of our PhD students have successfully passed their vivas! 🎉

Join us in celebrating Christia Huntington and Christine Ramsey-Wade on this incredible achievement!

📖 Christia's PhD explored patient-centered health research, focusing on individuals affected by burn injuries.

📖 Christine's PhD examined mindful eating, evaluating an existing program and testing a new micro-intervention.



## **Sharing knowledge**





Dr Kerry Montgomery gave an invited presentation about her work with Professor Diana Harcourt exploring reproductive decision-making for individuals with genetic conditions affecting appearance at the National Craniofacial Audit Meeting in Oxford.



Dr Kirsty Garbett gave an invited presentation titled 'Managing patient expectations, motivations and mental health: How can psychologists, researchers and aesthetic practitioners work together?' at the British Association of Medical Aesthetics Nurses Spring Symposium at the King's Fund in London.

PhD student, Emmanuel (Mani) Toni, also gave an invited presentation titled 'Dermatology – Psychological concerns with psoriasis and eczema' at the same event.



**Hot off the presses – selected recent publications from CAR members**





Cowley, E. S., & Schneider, J. (2025). "I sometimes feel like I can't win!": An exploratory mixed-methods study of women's body image and experiences of exercising in gym settings. *PLOS One*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0316756>

Harcourt, D., Krauter, M. A., Guest, E., & Bogart, K. R. (2025). Moving beyond the individual: The impact and importance of sociocultural influences on visible difference. *Body Image*, 53. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2025.101900>.

Lewis-Smith, H., Jones, A., White, P., Byford, S., Fairbrother, P., Potter, S., & Harcourt, D. (2025). Accepting your Body after Cancer (ABC), a group-based online intervention for women treated for breast cancer: Study protocol for a feasibility randomised controlled trial. *BMJ Open*, 15, e097817. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2024-097817>

**Save the date!**

We are delighted to announce the return of our international Appearance Matters conference (AM11), which will feature a vibrant programme of keynote speakers, oral and poster presentations, networking opportunities, workshops and more.

Stay tuned for the call for abstracts in the Autumn.



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