

Centre for Health and Clinical Research (CHCR)

Newsletter, January 2024

Introduction from the Director

Drawing together these newsletters provides me with a great opportunity to reflect on what we have achieved in recent months. Towards the end of 2023, we held a successful Digital Health Research Seminar at Glenside Campus with 40 people in attendance. The presentations covered a range of topics including preferences of people with rheumatoid arthritis for digital interventions to promote physical activity; community-based interventions to reduce the impact of digital exclusion on people's health and wellbeing; and 'Health Marketing' for digital resources. The seminar provided an excellent networking opportunity and was well received by attendees.

Future CHCR events include a doctoral showcase on 6 March 2024 and the annual CHCR showcase conference on 1 July 2024. Please do save these dates and look out for further information that will be sent out via email. If you are not already on our email distribution list and would like to join, please do get in touch using the contact details below.



Members of the Emergency Care theme at the CHCR Digital Health seminar

The Centre now hosts over 30 doctoral students who are an important part of our research community. I am delighted that we have had a further five new doctoral students joining us in January 2024 alone. Details of our new starters and other doctoral student's activities can be found in the theme reports.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate **Natasha Woodstoke** on the arrival of her baby girl, Eleri Mattie Woodstoke, who arrived in December.

Finally, many Centre members and other colleagues were saddened to hear of the passing of our wonderful colleague, **Dr Nicky Harris**, in November 2023. I had the pleasure of working with Nicky as the Research Fellow in Realist Evaluation and held her in high regard. Nicky worked across several themes within CHCR and some tributes to her have been included in this newsletter. Nicky will be greatly missed as a Research Fellow, colleague and friend to many at UWE Bristol.

Read on for further updates from each of the Centre themes. To find out more about our research, please visit [our website](#) and follow us via Twitter [@CHCR_UWE](#). For additional queries, please contact me by email (Fiona.Cramp@uwe.ac.uk) or telephone 0117 3288501.

Fiona Cramp

Professor of Long Term Conditions and Director of CHCR

News from the Emergency Care theme

Theme Lead: Professor Jonathan Benger

Preparing for a platform trial of point of care testing in the ambulance service

In February 2023, members of the Emergency Care theme were awarded a National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Accelerator Award to prepare for the submission of a platform trial grant application in an area considered a strategic priority. The team developed a reliable and reproducible methodology to screen and select point of care (POC) tests to include in a platform trial of POC testing in UK ambulance services.

The NIHR HTA Accelerator Award comprised four work streams:

(1) evidence review

(2) stakeholder engagement to map current and aspirational POC test-driven care pathways and to explore facilitators and barriers to adoption

(3) development of a transparent, reliable and reproducible method to identify and prioritise POC tests for inclusion in the platform trial using multiple criteria decision analysis (MCDA)

(4) early economic modelling to inform the health economic analysis plan within the proposed platform trial.

Three tests were identified as suitable for evaluation in the first phase of the platform trial. A stage 1 platform trial funding application to the NIHR HTA programme was submitted in November 2023, and the team are hoping to be invited to submit a stage 2 application in the early part of 2024.

Impact

Dr Laura Goodwin's work on [temperature management of babies born in the prehospital setting](#) has had important local and national impact.

The South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) has applied the learning from the research to improve neonatal temperature measurement and management by ambulance staff. This has included: a staff-facing 'winter campaign' around neonatal hypothermia with a poster displayed at all SWASFT ambulance stations; carrying out an audit of axillary thermometers and replacing lost or broken equipment; reviewing the content of clinician education days to ensure that neonatal thermoregulation is highlighted; and creating a new record page for newborns within the electronic patient care system which highlights the need for neonatal temperature measurement and management.

Advice given during 999 calls has also been updated as a direct result of the findings from Laura's work; all providers of 999 call handling systems in the UK (NHS Pathways and the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED)) have agreed to update their advice algorithms surrounding prehospital birth. These changes were implemented in NHS Pathways

from September 2023, and are currently being finalised for IAED. Changes to the IAED advice will be implemented internationally – spanning more than 50 countries.

Events

REACH Annual Showcase

Members of the Emergency Care theme are active members of the ‘Research in Urgent and Emergency Care, Avon Collaborative Hub’ (REACH), and we organised the hub’s third Annual Showcase on 1 November 2023. The event took place in the centre of Bristol, at the newly renovated Bristol Beacon. We were delighted to welcome over 40 attendees interested in hearing about our research in urgent and emergency care. Read [a summary of the event](#) on the new REACH website.

The final presentation in the showcase, a conversation with one of the REACH public contributors was particularly well received. [Watch the video of the discussion](#) which detailed how public contributors have guided three REACH studies this year.



Photo of attendees at the start of the REACH Annual Showcase at the Bristol Beacon.

Empowering excellence in emergency care research: The 2nd NIHR Emergency Care Incubator Symposium

The 2nd NIHR Emergency Care Incubator Symposium took place on 1 and 2 November 2023 at Bristol Beacon. The event brought together 40 emerging and aspiring researchers from different professions in Emergency Care (doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, paramedics and other research staff) with a faculty of 15 academic leaders and experts in the field.

The programme was delegate-led and faculty-facilitated. It included 19 small group interactive workshops aimed at stimulating and refining research ideas, developing a range of research skills (some seldom taught), and fostering emergency care research in a supportive and non-intimidating environment. The workshops focused on developing core research skills including using the right methods, applying for grants, and choosing the right outcomes (view [the symposium programme](#) for further details).

Delegates were asked to bring along short PowerPoint presentations of their current projects or research ideas to discuss with peers and faculty members. The symposium was extremely successful and received highly positive feedback from both delegates and faculty members.

Staff news

Cathy Liddiard and **Jess Coggins** have been awarded UWE Bristol PhD studentships and, from January, will be moving onto their studies within CHCR. Also, **Laura Goodwin** and **Alyesha Proctor** will be going on maternity leave in January, due to return December/January 2025.

News from the ACTIoN (Assessment, Care, Treatment In Neurology) theme

Theme Lead: Professor Richard Cheston

Research awards

Dr Emily Dodd, **Dr Natasha Woodstoke** and **Professor Rik Cheston** have been awarded funding of £60,000 from the ARC Accelerate ESRC/AHRC SHAPE Catalyst programme to develop the LivDem facilitator training programme. The funding will allow the team to explore potential solutions that will enable more health and community workers to be trained to deliver the LivDem course.

Dr Emily Dodd, **Dr Mary Cramp** and **Dr Jo White** have received over £180k from the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit scheme for their project on inclusivity in self-management support. The aim of the project is to find out what would improve 'self-management' by black African and Afro-Caribbean communities living with stroke in Bristol and London, and co-design new approaches and resources to improve self-management.

Dr Chloe Place was successful with an internal application to the New Starter fund to develop a number of projects relating to her research on dementia care in care homes.

Dr Praveen Kumar, Associate Professor in Stroke Rehabilitation, was co-investigator on a successful Emergence Network Funding application from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council that was led by colleagues from University College, London and relates to wearable robotics for frailty. In addition, **Praveen** and **Alex Pearce** were successful with an application to BNSSG ICB to support development work that will lead to an NIHR grant application to develop a training package to support people with stroke and carers/family members engage in self-directed practice using technology-based interventions (GripAble gaming device) to improve adherence to rehabilitation and enhance upper limb function.

Presentations

Professor Nikki Cotterill presented a paper (titled: *Pharmacy Role In the proMotion of continence – PRIME*) at the International Continence Society Annual meeting in Toronto in September. She was awarded the Best in Category prize for Prevention and Public Health.

New PhD students

Soghra Jokar commenced their PhD in January with **Dr Praveen Kumar** (DoS), **Dr Michael Loizou**, **Dr Vincent Singh**. The PhD is funded via a UWE Bristol PhD partnership scheme with

Medigarments Pvt Ltd, UK and titled: *'The role of a panelled sport compression garment on performance and movement control in women's hockey.'*

Reagan Shakya also commenced in January with **Dr Praveen Kumar** (DoS), **Dr Michael Loizou**, **Dr Vincent Singh**, **Dr Alison Llewellyn**. The PhD is funded via a UWE Bristol PhD partnership scheme with ExtraCare Charitable Trust, UK and titled: *'Impact of physical impairments on psychological wellbeing, and interventions to improve quality of life of older peoples living in retirement village.'*

In other news



Dr Praveen Kumar has a space on the UWE Bristol Cultural Hall of Fame for Cultural Excellence in recognition of the work he has been doing to support staff, students, and local communities.

News from the MAMBO (Musculoskeletal Management, Measurement, Behaviour change and Outcomes) theme

Theme Lead: [Dr Emma Dures](#)

Novel research in chronic regional pain

An undergrad physiotherapy research project led by **Dr Jenny Lewis**, Associate Professor in Clinical Research, which analysed data from patients participating in rehabilitation has resulted in a challenge to an established clinical assumption. Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) is a complex and disabling pain condition that is life changing for people and for a long time has been the subject of study by clinical researchers at UWE Bristol and the National Service for Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, Royal United Hospitals (RUH) NHS Trust, Bath.



There is a worldwide established assumption that those who participate in rehabilitation soon after developing CRPS have better clinical outcomes. Together with a UWE Bristol physiotherapy student group, Jenny analysed data from a large group of over two hundred patients with CRPS who attended the RUH CRPS functional rehabilitation programme and tracked their progress over an extended period. Strikingly, results from the data analysis revealed that the opposite was true. Those with CRPS for a year or more did better in

rehabilitation and demonstrated the ability to maintain their gains at three months, unlike those with early CRPS of under a year in duration.

This research serves as a crucial milestone in better understanding and treating CRPS ultimately to enhance the lives of people living with this condition. [Read more about Jenny's research.](#)

MAMBO and men's health

On 4 October 2023, **Dr Caroline Flurey**, Associate Professor of Men's Health & Long-Term Conditions, featured on BBC Points West during a segment about the work of A Band of Brothers UK. [Caroline's written evidence to the government inquiry into men's health](#) has, along with others, been published on the Parliament website. Caroline specialises in men's health in rheumatic diseases, with a focus on understanding their experiences, coping styles and support needs.



EULAR – European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology

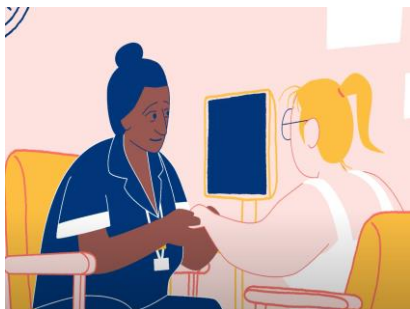
In November 2023, the National Presidents of Rheumatology Health Professional Associations convened in Zurich to strengthen pan-European collaboration and share best practice. The meeting was the first of its kind and was led by the EULAR Health Professionals. The leadership team includes MAMBO's **Dr Mwdimi Ndos**, Associate Professor in Rheumatology Nursing, plus Professor Jette Primdahl (from Denmark) and Dr Erika Mosor (from Austria).

Mwidiimi also chaired the EULAR Health Professionals Committee's Winter Meeting in Zurich to focus on implementing the new EULAR HPR strategy. The committee aims to decrease the impact of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases at an individual and societal level.



Fatigue research

Dr Alice Berry, Jen Orme and Professor Emma Dures have collaborated with patient partners and Picl Animation to create an animation on the impact and self-management of fatigue in inflammatory arthritis. The idea was to report the findings of our NIHR-funded FREE-IA study (Fatigue - Reducing its Effects through individualised support Episodes in Inflammatory Arthritis), to describe the current state of knowledge in relation to fatigue management in inflammatory arthritis and to highlight our ongoing research.



Three patient partners, Caroline Swales, Terence Brady and Marie Urban, were integral to the production of the animation, from script development to recording the voiceover. Together, they brought the research findings to life, conveying the far-reaching impact of living with fatigue and strategies for managing the symptom. Find out more about this research from the [webpage](#) and [blog post](#).

As part of her Adjunct Professor role at the University of Southern Denmark, **Emma Dures** is delighted to be joining Astrid Damgaard's PhD supervision team. Astrid is undertaking a PhD to develop a fatigue intervention called COMFI (COMBined Fatigue Intervention for people with inflammatory arthritis) that can be delivered both face to face and remotely. Astrid plans to combine a psychoeducational approach that draws on cognitive-behavioural approaches and Focused and Acceptance Commitment Therapy (FACT), with sessions on physical activity. The study will take place in Denmark and Sweden.

News from the Knowledge Mobilisation and Evaluation Theme

Theme Lead: [Professor Nicola Walsh](#)

Impact Accelerator Unit

In this issue, we put the spotlight on the Impact Accelerator Unit (IAU), a collaborative venture between NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB), with UWE Bristol and the University of Bristol.

The purpose of the IAU is to support the rapid integration of best available evidence into the NHS, in particular locally led studies. IAUs exist elsewhere but are generally hosted within universities, sitting outside the system they are seeking to influence. Our IAU is located within the ICB itself, so is better placed to get evidence to the right people, facilitate its integration, and monitor the impact of evidence into practice. Both Universities have provided pump-priming funds for the IAU, but additional current and future funding will come from NIHR

hosted grants which cost the IAU into their studies, costs are approximately £3500 per project year. This money is spent flexibly depending on the project requirements but may include making changes to IT systems; training staff in new ways of working; or obtaining system data to demonstrate the impact new ways of working have on clinical or cost outcomes.

The IAU benefits the local health and care system by introducing the best available evidence to influence decision making, and ultimately improving patient outcomes, staff satisfaction and potentially making cost savings.

From a university perspective, it provides rapid access to the systems that researcher teams are seeking to influence, but often find challenging to engage with. Not only does the IAU support implementation at the end of the project but also ensures research teams are supported throughout the project by linking them up with local NHS system staff to help with project delivery.

If you would like to know more about the IAU, please contact **Professor Nicola Walsh** (nicola.walsh@uwe.ac.uk) or Paul Roy (paul.roy1@nhs.net).

Dr Nicky Harris (18 June 1961 – 3 November 2023)

It is with great sadness that we reflect on the passing of our wonderful colleague, **Dr Nicky Harris**, who many of you had the privilege of working with, either within her clinical role in Paediatric Palliative Care, or as a Research Fellow on a variety of health services projects.



Whilst working within her clinical roles, Nicky developed a passion for research resulting in several published papers, and was eventually inspired to undertake a PhD at UWE Bristol, to investigate how patients and healthcare professionals might use [MyQuality](#), a research tool she had developed to help patients monitor their symptoms, and share them effectively with those managing their care. In spite of setbacks with illness, Nicky was awarded her PhD in October 2022.

Her doctoral studies really sparked an interest in realist methodology, and she took up the post of Research Fellow in UWE Bristol in the summer of 2021 to explore this area further, generously and enthusiastically supporting many colleagues with her expertise.

Sadly, Nicky lost her battle with illness on 3 November 2023, leaving behind her husband Andy, three children, Tim, Simon and Max, and her cockerpoo, Ruby. Many UWE Bristol colleagues and friends attended Nicky's funeral, which was a real celebration of her life, and demonstrated the huge impact she had on so many. We are all saddened by the loss of a friend and colleague.

News from the Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) theme

Theme lead: Dr Toity Deave

Two small grants have been awarded to **Dr Sam Burr**; one from the University of Bristol, School of Education, Staff Research and Scholarship Fund and the other, the NBT Research Capability Fund.

CYPF colleagues have had papers published in a wide variety of different journals, for example, Journal of Research in Nursing (**Menzies**), Children in Society (**Deave**), Maternal & Child Nutrition (**Spurlock**), OSF Preprints (**Burr**), and Health Technology Assessment (**Menzies**).



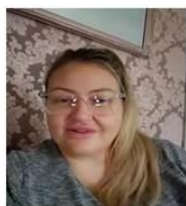
There have also been many conference presentations, both poster and oral, local and nationally. **Dr Laura Goodwin** has been busy presenting at the Prehospital Academic Forum, Perinatal Excellence to Reduce Injury in Premature Birth, REACH annual showcase (title: Temperature management of babies born in the prehospital setting).

Dr Julie Menzies has also been presenting her work at various conferences, including Celebrating and Developing a Research Skilled Workforce Conference, Paediatric Critical Care Society Annual Conference, and at the Royal College of Nursing International Research Conference where she undertook three oral presentations! Julie was also invited to talk three times at the European Society of Paediatric and Neonatal Intensive Care on topics such the evidence-base behind her work in paediatric intensive care, workforce recruitment and retention and tips for publishing.

Dr Sam Burr presented at the International Clinical Phonetics and Linguistics Association and was interviewed on the Voice of Islam Radio Breakfast Show in November 2023 to talk about early child speech and language development.

The NIHR HTA funded GASTRIC-PICU trial (**Menzies** is a co-applicant) is opening in 22 UK paediatric intensive care units. A meeting was held in London for all sites and the feedback was extremely positive about the trial, the education resources and strategies and the responsiveness of the trial team to issues and questions. The patient and public involvement and engagement PPIE was also praised.

Sam



Dad Aaron also contributing to PPIE
Mum and dad of Tehyah, multiple admissions to PICU, has carer support at home for complex needs. NG fed, problems absorbing her feed

Sam – one of the parent advisory group members who recorded feedback for the event.

New PhD students

Alina Lynden started her PhD with **Professor Nikki Cotterill (DoS)**, **Dr Stuart Mclean**, **Dr Toity Deave** and Juliette Rayner from ERIC. Alina's PhD will explore toileting health promotion in the very early years.



The Centre for Academic Child Health held their 20th anniversary celebration at the Watershed in Bristol on 21 September 2023. The event was well attended; the morning was spent looking back at work undertaken over the past 20 years and the afternoon considered the future with PhD students (including Kelly Spurlock) and early career researchers presenting.

Last but not least, we were very shocked to be told that **Nicky Harris** died peacefully on 3 November 2023 at home with her family around her. She really made her mark in UWE Bristol in a short time and this was seen in the number of us from UWE Bristol who attended her funeral near Taunton. She will be greatly missed by all those who she worked with in the University over the past few years. She was an absolute joy to work alongside. Our thoughts are with her family and her many friends and colleagues.



Nicky Harris at the CHCR conference July 2023

News from the End of Life and Palliative Care theme (EoL&PC)

Theme Lead: Dr Alison Llewellyn

The first meeting of the new End of Life and Palliative Care (EoL&PC) research theme was held in November. We were delighted that it was attended by colleagues from across UWE Bristol and our wider networks. Using a MIRO board (most ably facilitated by Boud from RBI), we shared our research interests and connections, provided input to a draft set of theme objectives, and worked together on a SWOT analysis to inform the theme's future direction and focus.

Since the first meeting of the EoL&PC theme, its membership has continued to expand, and its scope has recently extended to include those working in other areas of supportive care. We are delighted to say that we now have over 30 members, with colleagues from the across UWE Bristol's networks, including the RUH, Dorothy House Hospice, St Peter's Hospice, University Hospitals Bristol and Weston and North Bristol Trust.

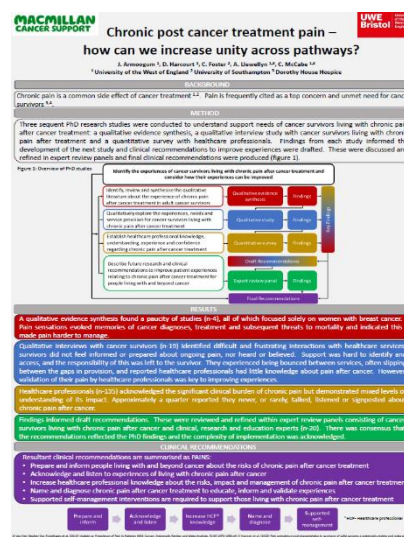
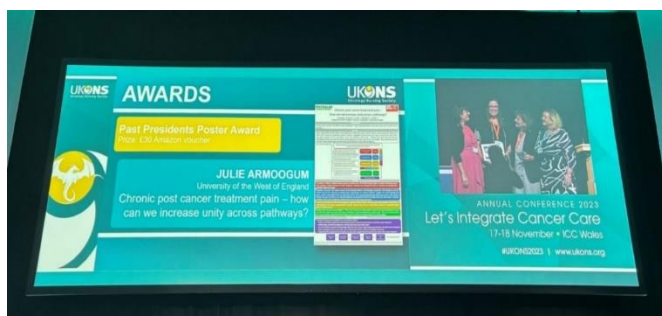
Given the short time the theme has been up and running, we are still in the process of capturing the full breadth of the excellent research our members are involved with, but some recent key successes have included:

Dr Ali Llewellyn, Associate Professor – Clinical Research, and EoL&PC theme lead, was invited to present in a main session of the Hospice UK conference in Liverpool in November, to showcase the work conducted by Dorothy House Hospice on Death Literacy across the neighbourhoods it serves in Bath and North-East Somerset and parts of Wiltshire and Somerset.

Annie Bellamy (Lecturer in Architecture) was invited to be a speaker at a [workshop hosted by Nordic Network of Gender, Body and Health](#), held at Tampere University in Finland. Her presentation: 'Designing dying well: Architectural reflections on the dying patient and co-production as a new approach to environments of palliative care' is an excellent example of the interdisciplinary nature of end-of-life care research.

Dr Julie Armoogum, Senior Lecturer - Adult Nursing, has had hugely busy few months.

Following her PhD viva success in the summer, her poster describing her PhD findings on chronic post-cancer pain, was presented at the UK Oncology Nursing Society (UKONS), and we were thrilled that it won the inaugural UKONS Past Presidents Prize for Best Poster.



The last few months have also seen two publications from Julie's work, and many congratulations must also go to her on being awarded a highly competitive BNSSG Launching Fellowship to carry on and extended her research.

Another notable achievement has been the promotion of our colleague, **Clare Wilkinson**, to full Professor. Clare is Co-Director of the [Science Communication Unit](#) at UWE Bristol and a collaborator in our research activities. Her paper "Is there a role for Citizen Science in Death and Dying Research?" was published in *Frontiers in Public Health* in September with **Dr Ali Llewellyn** and **Professor Candy McCabe** as co-authors.

With such a strong start, we are very hopeful that this new research theme will go from strength to strength over the coming months. If you are interested in joining or finding out more, please contact Dr Alison Llewellyn: Alison.Llewellyn@uwe.ac.uk.