

# RSF Training 2005

The Research Support Facility is pleased to announce the Spring/Summer research skills training programme. All sessions are provided by PC-CRTU free of charge and are designed for primary care healthcare professionals interested in research.

## Literature Searching

11 May 2005 (1300 – 1630hrs)  
Venue: University of Birmingham  
This session will provide primary care researchers with information on useful databases, how to conduct a literature search and accessing resources. This programme will include how to identify resources, construct search strategies and exploit database features. Hands-on practice will be an integral part of this session and by the end of the session individuals should be able to perform a search.

## Developing a Research Proposal

7 June 2005 (1300 – 1630hrs)  
Venue: University of Birmingham  
Before embarking on any research study it is vitally important to set out a proposal for the project. Students undertaking research for a degree will need to write a proposal for their supervisor; the researcher seeking funding will definitely have to write a proposal to accompany the request for money. But for every researcher, it is simply good practice as it encourages the researcher to carefully think through the research process before embarking on a study. It increases the chances that the project will be properly thought through, feasible and likely to succeed and decreases the likelihood of unexpected problems cropping up. This session will provide a guide to developing a research proposal, describing the features of a good proposal and the pitfalls to avoid.

## Evaluation Research

Venue: University of Birmingham  
A series of five workshops providing an introduction to the various methods of undertaking evaluation research.  
 Trials and Experimental Designs  
14 April (1300 – 1630 hrs)  
 Surveys and Satisfaction Studies  
12 May (1000 – 1630 hrs)  
 Economic Evaluation  
9 June (1300 – 1630 hrs)  
 Qualitative Methods and User Participation  
7 July (1300 – 1630 hrs)

**RSF TRAINING PLANS FOR THE AUTUMN**  
**Successful Surveys and Introduction to Qualitative Research**  
Following the popularity of these courses last year, we are planning another series of programmes to run between September and November. Contact us for further information and to register your interest in these courses.

## What To Do With Data

### Venue: University of Birmingham

A programme of short courses on managing and analysing quantitative data. **What To Do With Data** has been designed for people with little or no previous experience or training in how to deal with quantitative data. By this, we mean the kind of information typically collected through surveys, questionnaires, evaluations or trials. The aim of the programme is to increase the quality of research findings produced by these methods by explaining how to code data properly, check the data for mistakes, design a spreadsheet, summarise and explore the data for results, carry out basic statistical measures and how to report results. This programme is designed as a complete series although applications to attend individual sessions are also invited.

Managing data  
18 May (1300 – 1630 hrs)

Using Excel for research  
15 June (1300 – 1630 hrs)

Turning data into results  
6 July (1300 – 1630 hrs)

## AsPIRE – Assisted Programme of Integrated Research Education

### Venue: University of Birmingham

This is a training and support programme for new researchers wishing to undertake a research project. The programme commences with four afternoon sessions which will guide participants through the initial stages of developing a research project. After this, participants will receive support with their projects and undertake further training applicable to their research, selecting from the menu of training provided by the Research Support Facility (RSF) and the Birmingham Research Training Collaboration (BRTC).

Overview of the research process  
Identifying a research question  
Tuesday 26 April  
 Searching the literature  
Wednesday 11 May  
 Developing a research proposal  
Tuesday 7 June  
 Research governance and applying for ethical approval  
Tuesday 5 July

## RSF TRAINING PLANS FOR THE AUTUMN

## Successful Surveys and Introduction to Qualitative Research

Following the popularity of these courses last year, we are planning another series of programmes to run between September and November. Contact us for further information and to register your interest in these courses.

## RESEARCH METHODS COURSE

The course aims to provide an introduction to both quantitative and qualitative research methods, comprising a mixture of lectures and practical sessions. In order to provide a comprehensive introduction to research, a lot is packed into the three days and some pre-course preparation work is required. This course will be of particular relevance and interest to those primary care practitioners who wish to either undertake their own research or would like to be better equipped to incorporate research findings into their practice.

**Dates: 30 August – 1 September 2005**

### Venue: Lucas House, University Conference Park

If you are a practitioner (including GPs, Practice Nurses, Practice Managers) working within the primary care setting and based in the West Midlands, the PC-CRTU will consider funding your place on this course provided you are able to commit to the three days.

For all enquiries relating to any of these courses, please contact Sheila Bailey on 0121 414 2845 alternatively you can email: [s.m.bailey.20@bham.ac.uk](mailto:s.m.bailey.20@bham.ac.uk).

## Introductory Practitioner Course in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

This course is aimed at those who wish to gain knowledge of the basic principles of using some specific Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) methods to help people with mental health/psychological problems and to provide some general consultation opportunities to help individuals use such methods in their routine work.

The course runs three times a year (January, April and September). Prior qualification is required in a health or social care profession and/or a degree in a relevant subject. Attendance fee is £600.

For further information and application form please contact Siobhan Conroy on [s.conroy@bham.ac.uk](mailto:s.conroy@bham.ac.uk) or 0121 414 3763

# Completed Recruitment

## BAFTA

### Birmingham Atrial Fibrillation Treatment of the Aged Study



BAFTA aims to determine whether Aspirin or Warfarin is the best form of stroke prevention in people aged 75 years and over who have atrial fibrillation. There are over 400 practices taking part throughout England and Wales and 973 patients have been recruited into the study. Recruitment ended on 23rd December 2004 and follow up will continue until the end of September 2006. It is vital that we follow up as many patients as possible, so please remember to keep sending us the data on randomised patients.

Once again we would like to thank all the staff in the BAFTA practices for your hard work. Without your tremendous effort we would not have been able to recruit this amazing number of patients.

**Thank you!**  
Kate Fletcher 0121 414 8091

## PRACTICE MANAGERS GROUP

We haven't had a Practice Managers meeting for a while and would like to resurrect the group. This is an opportunity for you to feed back to us, often to help with managerial aspects of studies and also take forward the research we started some time ago.

If you are interested in coming along to a meeting, please email to let me know if there is a certain time of the week or part of the month you are free. I will try to organise something and send out the details to you via email...so, if you don't email, you won't be on the list!

**Email to Ros Salter (R&D Manager)**  
[r.asalter@bham.ac.uk](mailto:r.asalter@bham.ac.uk)



# PC-CRTU in Contact

Issue 12 – Spring 2005

Welcome to the Spring 2005 PC-CRTU *In-Contact* newsletter. We've had a hectic few months with preparations for the Department of Health coming to review the activities of the Research Support Facility (we hope for a favourable report...) and, almost at the same time, our first annual research day to be held in collaboration with the Birmingham R&D Consortium.

The annual research day ('Research Culture and Collaboration: Researching together to improve patient care') was held on the 15th February, at the Queen Elizabeth Postgraduate Centre. In keeping with the title for the day – there were a large number of presentations that demonstrated how the Consortium R&D Department and MidReC have been working together and producing high quality research that benefits patient care. The day was split into oral presentations and workshops that covered topics ranging from developing a research culture to recent cardiovascular research in Primary Care. In addition there were a large number of posters, from both the PCTs and University, which illustrated work that could not be squeezed into the parallel presentation sessions.

The feedback from the conference was that the participants felt it had been a great success with almost a hundred people attending from all areas of research community within Birmingham and Solihull (49% NHS Staff, 27% University Staff, 14% Other). We would like to thank all the speakers on the day as well as the organising team. Having such a successful event as our first joint venture really has set a standard that will be hard to follow.

As usual the newsletter has information about a range of research projects being undertaken through PC-CRTU. We would draw your attention to three new studies coming up

AGM of Primary Care Research Trust & MidReC (PCRT & MidReC) – the Charity that manages the Support for Science funding from the Department of Health.

The AGM took place following the PCT and Consortium Research day in February.

Two MidReC practitioners put their names forward for the vacancy of GP member of the Management Committee. Members approved the motion that both be asked to join the committee. Dr Isabel Draper (Rugby) and Dr Karim Ladha, (Birmingham/Sandwell border) were both voted onto the MidReC Management Group.

Report and Accounts were tabled and accepted. There has been a modest historical annual underspend on MidReC due to the DoH paying the costs of two of our three year studies in advance. This will be reduced by the end of 2005-6 as the studies have now been completed.

The full list of MidReC Management Group members are:

Professor Richard Hobbs,  
MidReC Director  
Dr Richard McManus,  
MidReC Clinical Director  
Ros Salter, MidReC Manager  
Professor Brendan Delaney,  
GP & Senior Lecturer  
Rev Barry Clark, Lay Member  
Dr Haj Dau, GP Member  
Dr Isabel Draper, GP Member  
Ms Angela Hargun, Practice Manager Member  
Dr Karim Ladha, GP Member  
Mrs Sue Shortland, Practice Nurse Member  
Dr Nita Varman, GP Member  
Dr Martin Wilkinson, GP Member

If you would like to know anything more about the management of MidReC please contact the Manager, Ros Salter on 0121 414 6505 or [r.asalter@bham.ac.uk](mailto:r.asalter@bham.ac.uk)

All equipment is in working order and less than 4 years old. Although the warranties have now expired, replacement parts can be purchased from Numed.

For further information contact  
Rachel Hare 0121 414 2691  
or Ros Salter 0121 414 6505

## ECG machines for sale

Two large studies in general practice are now complete, and consequently machines have become available as they are currently not being used. If you are about to update your ECG machine this is a great opportunity. To see the specification visit: [www.numed.co.uk/products.html](http://www.numed.co.uk/products.html)

The pocketview currently retails at £1,995 and The Biolog at £1,495.

The ECG's are being sold at £500 per Biolog Unit, and £600 per Pocketview Unit (a newer and more computerised version of Biolog).

## PC-CRTU CONTACTS

Richard Hobbs Director  
Richard McManus Clinical Director  
Sue Wilson Trials Director  
Ros Salter R&D Manager  
Andrea Roalfe Statistician

Miren Jones Research Fellow

Beverley Hancock

Research and Training Facilitator

Jo-Anne Lacey Research Co-ordinator

Darren Douglas IT Co-ordinator

Sheila Bailey Administrator

Vanessa Currie and Vivienne Tsimbili

Secretaries

The Department of Primary Care and General Practice

University of Birmingham

Primary Care Clinical Sciences Building

Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT

Tel: 0121 414 2845

Fax: 0121 414 2282

Email: [pcrcrtu-gp@bham.ac.uk](mailto:pcrcrtu-gp@bham.ac.uk)

## New Studies

### Variability in response to warfarin: a prospective analysis of pharmacogenetic and environmental factors

Some people require very low daily doses of warfarin (about 1mg/day), while others require much higher doses (10mg/day). Age, weight, diet, alcohol intake and any other medications can all have an effect on the amount of warfarin required. There is now also increasing evidence that genes can affect how the body handles and responds to warfarin. The purpose of this prospective study is to identify the genetic markers and environmental factors that determine variability in response to warfarin, and through this provide better ways of predicting the dose of warfarin required.

The proposed outcome would be the development of a clinically useful algorithm that will help clinicians individualise anticoagulant therapy. Patients will have blood tests and questionnaires before being started on Warfarin and at 1, 8 and 26 weeks.

We aim to recruit 400 patients in primary care into this study, 4 patients in 100 practices and hope to start recruitment in September this year.

If your practice would like to take part in this new study, please contact Debbie McCahon on 0121 414 2954 or [d.mccahon@bham.ac.uk](mailto:d.mccahon@bham.ac.uk)

## MMP9 Studies

The Department of Primary Care and General Practice at the University of Birmingham is currently coordinating two studies involving a new blood test for a substance called MMP9. Increased levels of this substance have been found in the blood of people with colorectal cancer and polyps.

Both studies are collaborations between the University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, the Department of Primary Care and General Practice and the Institute for Cancer Studies at the University of Birmingham, and the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

**Study to see if measuring MMP9 could improve referrals to colorectal clinics**  
This study will compare the MMP9 level of people who have been referred to a colorectal clinic, with the results of examinations and investigations done at, or shortly after the clinic visit. If a high MMP9 level does identify people with colorectal cancer or polyps, it is envisaged that the test could assist General Practitioners in deciding which patients should be referred urgently.

Recruitment is taking place at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Selly Oak Hospital. We are writing to people who have been sent appointments for the colorectal clinics at these hospitals to ask them to consider taking part in the study. People who think that they may want to take part are asked to speak with a researcher before seeing the doctor at the hospital clinic. The researcher goes over the

### Quality Assurance and Audit

The Research Governance Framework (DH, 2001) requires that a minimum of 10% of projects be monitored to ensure adherence to the protocol, Good Clinical Practice and Research Governance. With this in mind, the MidReC office has recently undertaken an audit of practices who participated in the WARM study.

We randomly selected 9 practices and visited them individually, reviewing up to 10% of participants' notes. The practices had all worked hard to recruit patients and on the whole, the quality of the data was good. There were a few minor errors (like dates of birth and patient initial errors) at each practice but that is not surprising when there were hundreds of patients enrolled in the study! We would like to thank all the practices involved; you were all very accommodating and helpful.

This is a learning process for us all and we hope that the practices will see it this way, with written feedback being provided. When taking part in research don't forget to document everything in the patients' notes.

We will be auditing further studies in the future, so we may be visiting you soon!

We will be approaching general practices in the near future to ask them to take part in the study. General practices who agree to take part will be asked to provide a list of patients aged 50 to 69 years, excluding people already under investigation or treatment for colorectal cancer or unable to give informed consent. We will write to these patients to ask them to complete a questionnaire. People who report one or more lower gastrointestinal symptoms and who are interested in taking part in the study will be asked to attend a clinic at the practice to discuss the study with a researcher from the Department of Primary Care and General Practice. Patients who give informed consent will then have a blood sample taken and a colonoscopy.

If your practice is served by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and you are interested in collaborating with this research, please contact either Sue Wilson, [s.wilson@bham.ac.uk](mailto:s.wilson@bham.ac.uk) or Val Redman, [v.redman@bham.ac.uk](mailto:v.redman@bham.ac.uk) on 0121 414 2688.

## New Studies continued

### Use of medical self-tests by members of the public

The Department of Primary Care at the University of Birmingham is about to start work on a study about 'self-testing' that is being funded by Cancer Research UK.

Self-testing is where a member of the public buys a test from a chemist, supermarket or over the internet to see if they may have a medical condition, without involving a health professional. A wide range of these tests have become available as technologies to design and manufacture them have increased in number and sophistication. Examples include tests for cholesterol, chlamydia, prostate specific antigen and faecal occult blood. This study aims to determine the prevalence of self-testing, the reasons for using self-test kits and the results of using these kits.

The first stage of the study will involve sending a short questionnaire to a sample of adults. This will collect basic sociodemographic information and whether the person has used or would use currently available self-tests. A small number of people will then be invited to attend focus groups to discuss self-tests.

Having carried out qualitative research with health professionals last year, we have been using the findings to develop the resource. This consists of a DVD, a workbook and a website. The DVD includes video scenarios, based on health care interactions, interviews, powerpoint presentations and learning activities, while the workbook contains learning activities

It is hoped that the results will assist with identifying changes to conventional services that may be needed to ensure that all people are enabled to use NHS services rather than private resources, and where educational interventions may facilitate more appropriate use of self-tests or assist health professionals to understand and react to self-test use.

We will be approaching general practices in the near future to ask them to take part in this study. We would send the initial questionnaire to samples of adults randomly selected from practice lists, excluding people who it would be inappropriate for us to approach, for example because of a terminal illness, severe mental illness or recent bereavement.

The study is funded by the Department of Health. It aims to identify how diagnostic expertise develops with years in General Practice. We will recruit GPs at different stages in their career (years in practice) from small and large practices to take part in scenario-based studies. The scenarios will represent different types of diagnostic

## Ongoing Studies

### CUBE (C13 Urea Breath Test and Eradication) MRC-CUBE Study



on these patients will continue for the next 12 months.

We would like to express our thanks to all those practices who worked so hard recruiting patients to the study.

For further information, please contact the Trial Administrator, Beth Hinks on 0121 414 8545 or [e.hinks@bham.ac.uk](mailto:e.hinks@bham.ac.uk).

### Exercise and menopausal symptoms study (EAMS)

In the last newsletter we reported a new study that aims to investigate the relationship between exercise and menopausal symptoms in women aged 46–55 years. Six practices have agreed to send a brief questionnaire that asks eligible patients about their climacteric symptoms, quality of life, exercise participation, menstrual status and HRT use. To date we have had a very good response rate with over 800 questionnaires returned. We hope to have all completed questionnaires returned by April 2005. The findings from this survey should be available by September 2005.

If you would like more information about this study please contact: Dr Amanda Daley Email: [a.daley@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.daley@bham.ac.uk) Telephone: 0121 414 3762

### UK B-Type Natriuretic Peptide Pilot Study



The REDIRECT trial, an evaluation of the effect of GP education on diagnosis and referral of young people with first episode psychosis, is now entering its second year of data collection. We have just recruited a further 6 practices into the study making a total of 84 practices overall involved in REDIRECT! The results of the educational intervention are about to be published in *Medical Education* for anybody interested in seeing the nuts and bolts of the process. Dr Amrit Khera is currently busy interviewing some of the GPs who kindly participated in the educational sessions to try and explore how the educational process works at an individual level. Any GPs who would like to contribute to this aspect of REDIRECT, please contact Amrit on 0121 414 2533, [khera@medgp3.bham.ac.uk](mailto:khera@medgp3.bham.ac.uk) There has also been considerable international interest in this study and we may extend the study into practices in The Netherlands.

We have now screened over 250 patients at 9 East Birmingham practices, resulting in recruitment of 25 eligible patients to date. This piloting stage needs to recruit 50 patients.

Thank you to the practices who have taken part. Rachel Hare, Study Coordinator – [r.hare@bham.ac.uk](mailto:r.hare@bham.ac.uk)

## News from the Mental Health Team

### Primary care for people with serious mental illness

### PCMH Primary Care Mental Health Workers Study

We have now completed the primary care mental health workers study! This randomised controlled trial involved 16 practices across the Heart of Birmingham PCT, 5 primary care mental health workers and 368 patients. As this newsletter goes to press we are in the middle of the primary outcome analysis and hope to be able to tell you more about the findings in the next newsletter. Thanks again to all the practices that participated, to the patients who filled in questionnaires for us and to the many research staff who were involved in this three-year project

Contact details: Dr Helen Lester, 0121 414 2684, [h.lester@bham.ac.uk](mailto:h.lester@bham.ac.uk)

**The EDEN family continues to grow!**

### REDIRECT – biRmingham Early Detection In untreated psychosis Trial

The SDO funded EDEN study, which is evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of early intervention teams across the West Midlands, has now entered its second year of data collection. In light of the success of the study so far, the SDO have granted us an extra £164,000 to explore partnership working with the voluntary sector (EDEN plus) and Helen Lester and Max Birchwood were recently awarded a grant of £1.7m by the Department of Health to extend EDEN nationally. This extra funding creates an exciting opportunity to evaluate every aspect of services provided for young people with first episode psychosis across England and will help to shape policy in this area for some time to come. Dr Elizabeth England is currently interviewing PCT Chief Executives, CAMHS leads and Strategic Health Authority leads to explore issues around commissioning services in this area of health care, adding an interesting additional dimension to EDEN.

Contact details: Dr Helen Lester, 0121 414 2684, [h.lester@bham.ac.uk](mailto:h.lester@bham.ac.uk) or Dr Helen Rogers [h.j.rogers@bham.ac.uk](mailto:h.j.rogers@bham.ac.uk)