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Research Fellow

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About

James Sheppard is a research fellow in the department of Primary Care Clinical Sciences. His current research interests lie in the diagnosis and management of chronic disease, in particular cardiovascular disease. He is currently funded by a grant from the National Institute for Health Research studying the optimisation of management of stroke and transient ischemic attack as part of the Birmingham and Black Country, Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (BBC CLAHRC).

Qualifications

Research fellow in Primary Care Clinical Practice:

- PhD in Cardiorespiratory Physiology (2010)
- BSc (Hons) in Sport & Exercise Sciences (2006)

Biography

James' interest in scientific research began during his undergraduate degree where he studied the effects of hypocapnia on baroreflex sensitivity using spontaneous sequence analysis for his final year dissertation project. This led him to do a PhD in studying the effect of hypocapnia on cardiac electrical activity and heart function and its relevance to the early diagnosis of coronary artery disease. His current interest in health related research stemmed from this early work and a desire to be involved with research which makes an impact in the real world.

As part of the BBC CLAHRC optimisation of management of stroke and transient ischemic attack team, James manages the quantitative element of the study. This involves managing data collection within the different NHS trusts participating in the study and analysing this data for publication in peer reviewed journals. In addition, this study aims to initiate practice change within the NHS and evaluate the effectiveness of that change. James is responsible for using the data collected from participating sites to identify these areas that may benefit from change and provide evidence to support this.

Teaching

James currently teaches years 1&2 on the Integrated Problem Communication Skills modules for the **Medicine and Surgery MBChB (/undergraduate/courses/med/medicine.aspx)** degree course.

In addition, he also acts as a marker for the Medicine in Society exams for years 1&2.

Research

James' current research interests centre on the diagnosis and management of chronic disease, in particular cardiovascular disease. In addition to his work studying the optimisation of management of stroke and transient ischemic attack, James has also conducted work looking diagnosis and management of hypertension in the clinic, accuracy of ambulatory blood pressure monitoring and treatment of patients at high risk of cardiovascular disease.

Previously, James studied the effects hypocapnia on cardiac electrical activity and heart function as part of his doctorial thesis. This involved using a novel method of mechanical hyperventilation to manipulate blood gas concentrations in normal and patient populations and studying the effects on the heart. In addition, James studied the effects for modified electrode placement on the diagnostic accuracy of the electrocardiogram.

Other activities

James is currently co-chair of the Early Career Researcher Academic Group (ECRAG) which is a group designed to support early career researchers within the school of health and population sciences. James also sits on the Postdoctorial Training & Career Development (PTCD) committee which helps postdoctorial researchers throughout the college of Medical and Dental Sciences maximise their potential and get the most out of the time at the University of Birmingham. James also acts as a personal mentor to MBChB undergraduate students, offering pastoral support to those in years 1&2.

Publications

Sheppard, J.P., Barker, T.A., Ranasinghe, A.M., Clutton-Brock, T.H., Frenneaux, M.P., Parkes, M.J. (2010). Does modifying electrode placement of the 12 lead ECG matter in healthy subjects? **International Journal of Cardiology**, doi:10.1016/j.ijcard.2010.07.013

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