University of Birmingham

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Senior Academic Tutor, ClinPsyD course

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About

I am a Senior Academic Tutor and Admissions Tutor for the ClinPsyD Programme. I supervise research within the area of health psychology, focusing mainly on coeliac disease, cancer and end of life care. I organise the ClinPsyD health psychology teaching module and support the organisation of the MRes Clinical programme.

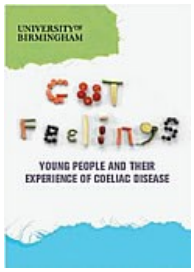
Qualifications

- University of Birmingham ClinPsyD 1996
- University of Birmingham MPhil (Sc) 1993
- University of Aberdeen M.A. (Hons) Psychology 1989

Biography

I qualified as a Clinical Psychologist in 1996 from the University of Birmingham and specialised in cancer and palliative care in both a clinical and academic capacity. In 2000 I took up a part-time post on the ClinPsyD Course at Birmingham as a Clinical Tutor and progressed to the role of Clinical Director in 2005, which I held until 2011. In this role I was responsible for the clinical aspects of the training course, including organising and evaluating clinical placements and running supervisor training events. During my time as Clinical Director, I began to further develop my research interests, particular into the psychosocial aspects of Coeliac Disease, and in May 2011 I moved to the post of Senior Academic Tutor in order to concentrate on research, and curriculum organisation and development.

In 2008 I was awarded a grant by Coeliac UK to carry out a 2-year study into the psychological and social implications of Coeliac Disease across the lifespan – the first study of its kind in the UK. On the strength of this research I was awarded an ESRC Knowledge Transfer grant to produce psychoeducational material for young people with Coeliac Disease. We have produced a film entitled "**Gut Feelings: Young people and their experience of coeliac disease**" which is **available for sale on Amazon (http://tinyurl.com/m4qbj26)** . All proceeds from the sale of the film go directly towards supporting further coeliac disease research.



Gut feelings - DVD on Amazon (http://tinyurl.com/m4qbj26)

We have also formed a working partnership with Warburton's, working closely with the team at Newburn Bakehouse, the dedicated gluten-free bakery. With their support we have produced a second psycho-educational film; this one aims to support parents with a child with coeliac disease. This will be launched in December 2014.

I chair the Coeliac Disease Research Steering Group at the University of Birmingham and we have a number of allied projects on-going in addition to our grant-funded research. We have recently set up collaborations with the Open University, Birmingham Children's Hospital, and the National Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh with the intention of furthering our work in this under-researched area.

I am a member of the Coeliac UK Health Advisory Council.

In addition to my work at the University of Birmingham I work clinically in the field of palliative care, providing clinical supervision to Clinical Nurse Specialists within both NHS and third sector organisations.

Teaching

I teach various sessions within the ClinPsyD and MRes programmes, including:

- Communication Skills Training
- Models of Applied Psychology
- Reflective Practice
- Psychosocial aspects of Coeliac Disease

Postgraduate supervision

I am involved in the supervision of a number of ClinPsyD, PhD and MRes projects in the areas of coeliac disease, cancer, palliative care, and other long-term health conditions. Currently we are developing research in the area of disordered eating and coeliac disease, and being diagnosed with the condition in older age. Palliative care projects include furthering our understanding of support for male carers, and the role of compassion within palliative care.

Research

Research Group

- Applied & Social
- Health Psychology

Research Interests

Previous and ongoing research activity includes the following:

Grant-funded Projects

- Coeliac UK - Psychosocial Factors Associated with Coeliac Disease: A UK-based study. £76,000. 1/2/09-1/2/11
- ESRC Knowledge Transfer Fund. £100k. 1/2/10-31/1/12

ClinPsyD Projects

- The psychosocial impact of Coeliac Disease in Young People.
- Psychosocial impact of Coeliac Disease in a sample of adults attending a clinic.
- Impact of an intervention to reduce stress in women undergoing treatment for vaginal cancers.
- Mindfulness & Self-Compassion in people undergoing stem cell transplant for cancer.
- Psychosocial impact of Coeliac Disease: an adult community sample.
- Am I allowed this? A qualitative study of children's experiences of living with Coeliac Disease.
- Psychological distress and coping in patients undergoing stem cell transplant.
- Post-traumatic growth and coping in firefighters.
- Midwives' perceptions of psychological distress in women post partum.
- Psychosocial factors associated with urinary tract surgery.
- A qualitative study exploring the conversations people facing death have about dying.
- Emotional exhaustion and defense mechanisms in intensive care unit nurses.

Further ClinPsyD projects include staff stress in palliative care nursing, continuing bonds following bereavement, and patients and partner stress in people with heart disease and cancer.

MRes Clinical

- Evaluation of Communication Skills Training fro Cancer Specialists.
- Validation of the Self Compassion Scale with a UK Cancer Sample.

Masters in Health Psychology

- An exploratory study of patients' experience of living with Coeliac Disease.

Undergraduate Projects

- Psychosocial factors in adults with Coeliac Disease and their partners.
- A comparison of psychosocial outcomes in a community and a clinical sample of young people with Coeliac Disease.

Other activities

- I was National Secretary for SIGOPAC (Special Interest Group in Oncology & Palliative Care) between 2003 & 2006.
- I am a member of Coeliac UK Health Advisory Council.
- I work clinically at the Marie Curie Hospice in Solihull, at Heart of England NHS Trust, and as a freelance Clinical Psychologist providing training on the psychological aspects of cancer & palliative care.

Publications

Howard, RA & Harvey PG. (1998). A Longitudinal Study of Psychological Distress in Women with Breast Symptoms. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 3(2), 215 – 226.

Hawkins, A., **Howard, RA**. & Oyebode, J. (2007). Stress and coping in hospice nursing staff. The impact of attachment styles. *Psycho-Oncology*, 16, 563-572.

Larkin M, Rostill H, O'Shea M & **Howard, R.** (2006). Learning from experience about a competency-based placement system for clinical psychology training. *Clinical Psychology Forum*, 67, 14 -19.

Powell T & **Howard R.** (2006). Reflective Practice comes of age in Birmingham. *Clinical Psychology Forum*, 67, 34 – 37.

Regan A, **Howard RA** & Oyebode JR. (2009). Emotional Exhaustion and Defence Mechanisms in Intensive Therapy Unit Nurses. *The Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease*, 197(5), 330-336.

Scullion C, Scott-Heyes G, Nouwen A, & **Howard R.** (2007). Midwives' ability to estimate women's vulnerability to postnatal emotional difficulties in the first three postnatal months. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology, 23(*3), 246-247.

Conference Presentations

Petty, J., **Howard, R**., Law, G. & Oyebode, J. (2011). Research update- Psychosocial factors in coeliac disease. Paper presented at the Annual Coeliac UK conference, University of Derby, July 2011.

Guy H, Oyebode J, **Howard R** & Tolosa I. Conversations people who are dying have about death and dying. PSIGE, Faculty for Old Age Psychology DCP, BPS, Annual Conference – Brighton, 6 -7 July 2006.

Oyebode JR, Dunn A & **Howard, R**. Factors That Impact on Emotional Reactions to Continuing Bonds in Spousal Bereavement . 7th International Conference on Grief and Bereavement in Contemporary Society. Kings College, London. November 2005.

Theodosi E, **Howard RA** & Law G. "Am I allowed that?" A qualitative study of young people's experiences of living with Coeliac Disease. DCP Annual Conference, London

December 2009.

Howard, RA. Psychosocial Aspects of Coeliac Disease. Coeliac UK Scientific Meeting, London. December 2010.

Poster Presentations

Petty, J., **Howard, R**., Law, G. & Oyebode, J. (2011). Predicting health related quality of life and psychological wellbeing in adults with coeliac disease. Poster presented at the 14th Annual International Coeliac Disease Symposium in Oslo, Norway, June 2011.

Theodosi, E., **Howard, R**., Law, G. & Walsh, J. (2011). Children with coeliac disease: A qualitative study of young people and their parents. Poster presented at the 14th Annual International Coeliac Disease Symposium in Oslo, Norway, June 2011.

Guy H, Oyebode J, **Howard R** and Tolosa I, (2006). Conversations people who are dying have about death and dying. 8th World Congress of Psycho-oncology. Venice. October, 2006.

Dunn A, Oyebode J & **Howard R** (2004) Emotional reactions to Continuing Bonds in Spousal Bereavement. *Third National Bereavement Research Forum* conference, St Albans.

Hawkins A, Oyebode J & **Howard R** (2004) Stress and Coping in Hospice Nursing Staff. *Third National Bereavement Research Forum*, St Albans.

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