

# Health Economics Unit

Welcome to the Autumn 2012 edition of HEUnews!



In this issue we focus on family and friends by taking a closer look at two of our Unit's research studies that explicitly acknowledge the role of social networks and family members who are affected by, or contribute to, the care received by patients. As part of his MRC fellowship, Hareth Al-Janabi's research collaboration with the Meningitis Research Foundation is exploring the potential effect that such health conditions can have on family and friends, while Emma Frew is looking more directly at the converse effect of how Social Behaviour Network Therapy (for heroin users) can support patients treatment (see page 2).

Meanwhile, we are very pleased to announce the success of our staff recruitment drive with 5 new additions to our own HEU 'social' (albeit staff) network! In October, 5 new researchers, all working on NIHR related projects, joined our team of health economic researchers, and 3 other existing HEU colleagues (including two doctoral researchers at the completion stage) have been awarded new staff contracts (see page 3). Finally, we are delighted to have the opportunity

in this issue to pay tribute to our fantastic admin team who collectively provide the rest of us with crucial administrative support underpinned with professionalism and most essentially a sense of humour!

Tracy Roberts  
Head of Unit

## What's new in HEU...?

### New intake of MSc students

With the new academic year we are delighted to welcome our new cohort of students to the MSc in Health Economics and Health Policy. 9 new full-time students and 19 new part-time students will join 17 part-time students who began their studies in September 2011 and will complete in 2013. These new students will join our well-established programme, which this year offers a new alternative pathway focusing on econometrics rather than statistical methods for those students who come to us with an economics background.



Graduating students in Summer 2012 with Director of Teaching Pelham Barton, and other staff.

We wish all our students an enjoyable and intellectually challenging time during their studies, and look forward to seeing them at one of our graduation ceremonies in the next two years.

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## Family impact of meningitis

People who develop illnesses are not isolated individuals. They are usually surrounded by a network of people, including family members. This means that healthcare interventions, aimed at people directly affected by illness, are also likely to impact on the lives of others. In order to measure (and value) the aggregate health gains from intervention, one must consider these 'health externalities' – generated by illness and intervention – in addition to the impact on the person directly affected.

With funding from his MRC fellowship, **Hareth Al-Janabi** is investigating the scope and scale of 'health externality' in family members of individuals who have after-effects of meningitis. Meningitis remains a problem, with a large proportion of individuals who contract meningitis going on to develop major physical and psychological after-effects. Preventing meningitis, or dealing with the after-effects of meningitis, may not only improve the health of people directly affected, but may also have benefits for their network members' health. In this project Hareth is working with the Meningitis Research Foundation as well as researchers from Erasmus University and Bristol University. He is supervised in this fellowship by Jo Coast and mentored by Cam Donaldson.



Hareth Al-Janabi

The work involves the conduct and analysis of a survey of the health impact of meningitis. To date, data have been collected on the health status of around 1600 network members of people affected by meningitis, of whom around 1000 are close to someone with physical or psychological after effects of meningitis. By studying the association between the health status of the network members and the severity of the after effects for the people affected, Hareth hopes to start to build a picture of the degree to which health conditions have an externality effect on those close to the patient. Next year, Hareth will collect follow-up data from network members to better understand the causal relationships involved. Ultimately Hareth hopes this research will enable us to better understand both the cost-effectiveness of intervening to prevent and treat meningitis, and, more generally, the scope and scale of health externality effects within the family.

## Social network interventions for heroin users

**Emma Frew** is delighted to report that recruitment has just started for this 3-year study that is about measuring the cost-effectiveness of social behaviour network therapy (SBNT) for heroin users in opiate substitution treatment. Heroin addiction causes a huge burden on society, with a treatment budget of £400 million/year. Opiate substitution treatment is an effective harm reduction measure, but more emphasis needs to be given to moving people away from drug use and into healthy and productive lives. NICE has highlighted the evidence for psychosocial treatments for heroin dependence, and family/social networks are promising for two reasons: (1) by involving family and friends in the treatment process there are opportunities for generalisation of the effects beyond an episode of treatment and (2) treatment may reduce the considerable physical and psychological health burden of drug misuse on family and friends.



Emma Frew

This study is about measuring the feasibility of SBNT that involves family members/friends directly in the treatment programme. The health economic analysis has multiple objectives. The feasibility of broadening the evaluative space for outcomes will be explored with the use of the ICECAP measure alongside EQ5D. EQ5D is the conventional choice of outcome measure for a health economic evaluation and has a focus on one dimension (health) whereas the ICECAP has a much broader evaluative space and focuses on general wellbeing. Both instruments will be completed by the patients (clients) and the network (family and friends) members within this study and so outcomes will be elicited from multiple perspectives. The methodology of collecting resource use information will also be explored with the use of an adapted version of the Client Service Receipt Inventory (CSRI) that collects information on housing, employment, criminal activity as well as health service use. This study therefore offers an exciting opportunity to explore the measurement of outcome and cost from multiple perspectives and to measure the feasibility and acceptability of using these measures within this clinical population.

## Staff news...

With rises in student numbers and increases in staff within the Unit, even our admin team have struggled to cope with increased demand. Therefore, we are delighted to welcome a third member of the office team to assist with all the varied administrative tasks.

Our hugely valued admin team is led by **Helen Evans**, Unit Manager, with two admin assistants, **Pauline Mutimer** and **Sandra McMullan**.

Between them they provide the administration for all teaching in the unit, (including our ever expanding MSc course, teaching of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate Economics students and a MbChB module), deal with the financial requirements of the Unit, manage the diaries of many of the staff and successfully control the day to day running of the Unit. All this is done with professionalism, dedication, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness to other members of the team.



Pauline, Helen and Sandra

## Have you heard...

...about HEU's recent recruitment drive?

HEU has been delighted recently to be able to appoint to eight new posts within the Unit through a combination of additional University funding, project grants and NIHR core funding. These appointments have gone to a mix of current staff, current PhD students and new appointees from outside the Unit.

**Dr Andrew Sutton** was already working within the Unit but has now been awarded a more secure Lecturer post. We were also very pleased to offer two of the appointments to current PhD students nearing completion. **Lazaros Andronis** has just submitted his NIHR funded doctorate on "Analytic approaches for informing research funding decisions: an exploration of their role and value using case studies of cancer clinical trials" and has taken up a Lecturer post in the Unit. **Paul Mitchell** is due to complete his doctorate on "Modelling with the ICECAP-O capability questionnaire: exploring the capability approach from a health economics perspective" in January 2013 and will take up his new role as Research Fellow in February 2013.



Lazaros, Andrew and Paul

Our new staff who have joined the Unit from elsewhere are **Ilias Goranitis**, **Louise Jackson**, **Eoin Moloney**, **Deirdre O'Brien** and **Melcior Rosselló Roig**. Deirdre and Louise join us from our own MSc in Health Economics and Health Policy, whilst Ilias has recently completed an MSc at London School of Economics, Eoin has recently completed an MSc at University College Cork and Melcior has recently completed an MSc at Barcelona Graduate School of Economics. We are delighted to welcome all our staff to these new roles and look forward to telling you about the work that they will be doing in future issues.



Louise, Eoin, Deirdre, Ilias & Melcior

## Seminar Series

Dates and speakers for the forthcoming Health Economics Unit monthly seminars are as follows:

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2012  
Sabine Grimm (University of Sheffield)

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013  
Jing Shen (Newcastle University)

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013  
Manuel Gomes (LSHTM)

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013  
Richard Smith (LSHTM)

If you would like to attend any of these seminars or would like to contribute, please contact us on our email address.

## Pelham's Pen



After a long and successful career as a Health Economics consultant, our hero joins the queue at the pearly gates. Seeing him standing there, St Peter sends an assistant with a chair for him to sit on while he is waiting. When he gets to the front of the queue, our hero asks St Peter what he has done to merit such special consideration. St Peter replies "Well, I have added up all the hours you have charged your clients, and by my reckoning you must be at least a hundred and ninety years old."

## Capacity building news...

In our Spring 2012 newsletter we told you about our current cohort of full-time students. In this edition of HEUnews we want to tell you about the exciting doctoral work that some of our staff members are undertaking. We have three staff members undertaking part-time doctorates, all at early stages of their doctoral work.

**Raymond Oppong** worked for five years on a EU FP6 project applying economics to issues of antimicrobial resistance and LRTI. Much of this work involved the conduct of economic evaluation alongside large multinational clinical trials. Ray's PhD will focus on extending the funded work to improve methodology for analysis in this area. Ray is supervised by **Tracy Roberts, Sue Jowett**.



Rosanna, Ray and Cristina

**Rosanna Orlando** is working on projects in the area of venous thromboembolism (VTE) and end of life, and is taking her doctoral work forward in end of life care. Her doctoral work will be on "Development of a method to combine two quality of life measures across two elements of patient (living and dying) outcome during the end of life continuum" and will be taken forward alongside EU funded work on Economic Evaluation of End of Life Care. Rosanna is supervised by **Jo Coast** and **Pelham Barton**.

**Cristina Penalzo** is undertaking a PhD alongside funded projects on cardiovascular disease: BBC CLAHRC Theme 7, Optimisation of the Management of Stroke and TIA, and work on the Stroke Prevention Programme including a trial looking at targets and self management for the control of blood pressure in stroke and at risk groups (TASMIN-SR). Cristina is extending this work by conducting her PhD in the area of "Effects of alternative model structures and assumptions in the economic evaluation of cardiovascular disease prevention and acute stroke/Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA) models: use of practical examples". Cristina is supervised by **Pelham Barton, Sue Jowett** and **Andrew Sutton**.

### MSc Health Economics & Health Policy and associated short courses.

The MSc HEHP is ideal for new graduates hoping to pursue a career in health economics or for those currently working in the health care sector who wish to develop skills in health economics. The course explores the key principles and theories upon which health economics is based as well as developing practical skills for the conduct of empirical work. The MSc provides a programme of carefully developed modules, with the following modules also provided as individual short courses:

- Introduction to Health Economics
- Policy and Economics of Health Care Delivery
- Economic Evaluation in Health Care
- Modelling for Health Economics
- Statistics / Econometrics\*

\*The 2012 academic year welcomes in conjunction with the Department of Economics the option of a core module in Econometrics.

To learn more about the MSc or about the short courses, visit <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/healthconomics>, contact Helen Evans on 0121 414 7694 or email [healthconomics@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:healthconomics@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

### Selected recent publications

**Al-Janabi H**, Peters TJ, Brazier J, Bryan S, Flynn TN, Clemens S, Moody A, **Coast J**. An investigation of the construct validity of the ICECAP-A capability measure. *Quality of Life Research*, 2012, In press. DOI: 10.1007/s11136-012-0293-5

**Frew E**, Bhatti M, Win K, Sitch A, Lyon A, Pallan M, Adab P. Cost-effectiveness of a community-based physical activity programme for adults (Be Active) in the UK: an economic analysis within a natural experiment. *British Journal Sports Medicine*, 2012, DOI: 10.1136/bjsports-2012-091202

Goodrich K, **Kaambwa B**, **Al-Janabi H**. The Inclusion of Informal Care in Applied Economic Evaluation: A Review. *Value in Health*, 2012. DOI: 10.1016/j.jval.2012.05.009

**Kaambwa B**, Bryan S, Billingham L. Do the methods used to analyse missing data really matter? An examination of data from an observational study of Intermediate Care patients. *BMC Research Notes*, 2012, DOI: 10.1186/1756-0500-5-330

**Mistry H**, Morris S, Dyer M, Kotseva K, Wood D, Buxton M. Cost-effectiveness of a European preventive cardiology programme in primary care: a Markov modelling approach. *BMJ Open*, 2012, DOI: 10.1136/bmjopen-2012-001029