

Health Economics Unit

Welcome to this issue of HEU News! Since publication of our last newsletter we have had a summer reprieve, with the EU cliff edge being replaced, for now at least, by the circus of various political leadership contests and divisions. Thankfully, in the world of health economics, the spirit of collaboration, sharing and capacity building still prevails!

Opportunities for applying economic principles to social care, and the challenges of doing so (methodologically and practically), were themes discussed at a recent HEU workshop led by Phil Kinghorn (see below). Inside, the research focus includes an overview of parallel research, led by Hareth Al-Janabi, on **spill-over effects from health care and their impact on carers' quality of life** (and notification of another workshop on **carer and family effects in economic evaluation** in September).

Preparations for **HEU's 21st Birthday Alumni event** are gaining momentum and the University of Birmingham's beautiful Bramall Building is booked as the venue for this exciting all-day event, celebrating developments and advances in Health Economics over the 21 years in which HEU's MSc and PhD programmes have been running.

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The **spotlight** in this issue is on HEU colleague Chidubem (Duby) Ogwulwu – who, as an Alumni of both HEU MSc and PhD programmes, and now member of staff, exemplifies the success of the capacity building objective of our teaching programmes. We are also delighted to present a **student profile** on Anastasiia Zharinova, who won an NIHR studentship to join our MSc Health Economics and Econometrics and who is now employed in our local NHS Commissioning Support Unit. We are hugely proud of all our alumni. We are fortunate, therefore, to have plenty to distract us from the current political circus!



Tracy Roberts,
Head of Unit

Have you heard...

About the success of our workshop on the economic evaluation of social care?

In March, HEU hosted a workshop on the use of economic evaluation to inform resource allocation decisions in social care, which brought together academic health economists, and those working in policy-making organisations and local authorities.

The event included presentations from a range of experts in social care and/or economic evaluation: Professor Graeme Betts (Corporate Director for Adult Social Care & Health at Birmingham City Council); Professor Joanna Coast (University of Bristol); Professor Rhiannon Tudor Edwards (Bangor University); Professor Julien Forder (University of Kent); Professor Martin Knapp (LSE); **Dr Phil Kinghorn** (HEU); and Dr Juliette Malley (LSE).

Presentations set the scene in terms of current priorities, achievements and challenges in social care (principally financial pressures), methodologies currently available to economists, the challenges for economists of working in the context of social care, and opportunities and priorities for future research. Challenges for economists discussed at the workshop include a lack of data on costs and the lack of any existing infrastructure to support research.

The day was funded from Phil Kinghorn's MRC New Investigator Research Grant and Phil presented work that he has undertaken to elicit a monetary threshold for a year of sufficient capability.

It was fantastic to be able to bring together delegates with such varied backgrounds and perspectives. Collaboration between the presenters has continued with the submission of a paper for discussion at this summer's HESG.



The Second Group B Streptococcus (GBS₂) Study

Group B Streptococcus (GBS) is the leading cause of serious early-onset neonatal sepsis in developed countries. The incidence of early-onset GBS sepsis in newborn babies in the UK and Ireland increased from 48 per 100,000 livebirths in 2010, to 57 per 100,000 births in 2015. The health & social care costs for affected infants in the first 2 years of life have been estimated to be twice as high as those for unaffected infants.

With increasing pressures on healthcare budgets, it is important to use the most cost-effective advanced screening interventions that better identify maternal colonisation in order to lower the risk of neonatal infection with GBS. Current screening for GBS is by an assessment of maternal risk factors, with those identified as at risk being prescribed Intrapartum Antibiotic Prophylaxis (IAP). Rapid tests have been seen as a promising definitive screening method that can present the GBS colonisation results during labour and inform appropriate use of IAP. A major challenge is obtaining and communicating the test result before the baby is born.

HEU's **Lorraine Munetsi, Patrick Moore, and Tracy Roberts**, - with colleagues from the Birmingham Clinical Trials unit - are collaborating with colleagues from Queen Mary University of London and elsewhere on the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) funded GBS₂ study. GBS₂ is a cluster randomised trial designed to investigate the real time accuracy of a rapid test to detect GBS colonisation among women in labour with risk factors and compares the cost-effectiveness of rapid testing to usual care of assessing maternal risk factors alone. Among its primary objectives is exploration of the potential for rapid GBS testing to reduce maternal and neonatal antibiotic usage compared with usual care.



Lorraine and Patrick

Valuing family carer quality of life effects

Should we value family carer outcomes within economic evaluation? And if so, how? These are among the questions being addressed by **Hareth Al-Janabi's** NIHR Career Development Fellowship on "Carer quality of life and economic evaluation".

In recent work, Hareth, supported by collaborators from Erasmus, Harvard, and Glasgow Caledonian University, completed a person trade-off study. This explored public preferences for quality of life gains for family carers and patients. Initial findings show that the general public are invariably willing to sacrifice some patient quality of life for carer quality of life. As ever, however, the devil is in the detail!

In a second study, recently appointed researcher, **Nishit Dhanji**, has undertaken econometric analysis to understand the relationship between carer wellbeing, health and caring experience outcomes. This work investigated the viability of using the wellbeing valuation method to value carer outcomes for economic evaluation. Both projects are still work-in-progress, although initial evidence suggests: (i) carer outcomes are important in terms of public value and wellbeing; and (ii) these valuation techniques have promise in this area.

For those interested, Hareth will be running a **one-day workshop in Birmingham on "Carer and family effects in economic evaluation" on September 19th**. The workshop will be advertised soon, but if you are interested, please feel free to contact Hareth now to book your place.



Nishit and Hareth



What's new in HEU?

Preparation for an event to celebrate the 21st Birthday of our MSc Programme:

We are hosting a HEU Birthday Event to celebrate 21 years of capacity-building in health economics, through our MSc programmes. The event will take place in the Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, at the University of Birmingham. We want to flag the date to our alumni and former staff. For our overseas alumni, do still register as you may be able to contribute with the aid of technology.

The event will be by invitation only, so it's important that you register your interest to ensure that we have your contact details. We can then either send you your invitation to attend in person, or discuss the possibility of seeing/hearing from you digitally/virtually!

Save the Date

Spotlight on...

Dr Chidubem Ogwulu
(Research Fellow)



Chidubem (Duby) trained as a public health physician in her home country of Nigeria before completing the MSc in Health Economics & Health Policy here at the University of Birmingham. After graduating from the MSc in 2014, Duby completed a PhD in health economics (entitled "Developing and piloting approaches for the valuation of outcomes associated with sexually transmitted infections in order to construct QALYs for use in economic evaluation"), with the support of a College of Medical and Dental Sciences studentship. In September 2018, she joined HEU as a Research Fellow, working across several clinical trials.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

A chemical engineer

What's your favourite book?

So long a letter by Mariama Ba

Who is the most famous person you have met?

Paul McCartney (in a coffee shop near the American Embassy, London)

Which famous person (living or dead) would you like to have dinner with?

Michelle Obama

What are you most well-known for?

My laughter and my research on sexual and women's health (the two are unrelated!)

Pelham's Pen

A man in a pub leans over to the man next to him and says: "Want to hear an economist joke?"

The man next to him replies: "Well, before you tell the joke, you should know that I am 6 feet tall, 14 stone, and I am an economist. And the man next to me is 6 foot 2, 16 stone, and he's also an economist. Do you still want to tell that joke?"

The first man says: "No, I don't want to have to explain it twice".



Many congratulations to HEU's **Carol Mcloughlin** and husband Dan on the birth of their healthy & handsome son, Joe!

Staff News



We are delighted to welcome **Hannah Bromley**, who joins HEU as a Research Fellow. Hannah joins HEU as a staff whilst finishing her joint U21 funded PhD with the Universities of Melbourne and Birmingham (supervised by HEU's Tracy Roberts among others). Hannah will continue to work with Tracy, using her PhD findings on quantifying the disutilities associated with breast cancer screening and overdiagnosis, to inform the pre-trial analysis for the LORIS (Low-Risk DCIS) trial: a randomised, multi-centre study comparing surgery versus active monitoring for low risk ductal carcinoma in situ.



Congratulations to **Phil Kinghorn** on his promotion to Senior Research Fellow. Phil joined HEU in January 2012 to work on Professor Jo Coast's European Research Council funded project on the economics of end of life care. Since then, Phil has contributed to teaching on HEU (and other) MSc programmes and has been part of the HEU team of front line advisors for the Research Design Service. He has contributed as a co-applicant on NIHR and Department of Health and Social Care funded projects, and spent three years leading his own MRC funded research to elicit a monetary threshold for a year of sufficient capability.



Student Profile: Anastasiia Zharinova

Healthcare Analyst, NHS Midlands & Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit

Anastasiia completed the MSc in Health Economics and Econometrics as a full time student in the 2017-2018 academic year. Before starting the MSc she completed a BSc in Economics in Moscow, and secured a short-term internship in the UNESCO Health Education Department.

Why did you choose the course?

I knew by the second year of my Bachelor degree that I wanted to study health economics; I really liked the idea of being able to change population health via economic research. There are no health economics MSc courses in Russia, so I started looking for international opportunities. I chose the University of Birmingham because the programme focuses on quantitative research and there is some flexibility in terms of the choice of modules.

What did you enjoy most about the MSc?

Definitely the people, and what I learnt from them! It was great to be taught by the team at HEU who have extensive experience in health economics and were very welcoming. We also had some lectures from external experts, which were just brilliant. Last but not least, time spent with other students was very insightful.

What was your dissertation topic?

The impact of economic shocks on the risk of abortion: Evidence from the Russian Federation

What have you gone on to do since finishing the course?

After completing the course, I started working as a healthcare analyst in the NHS. The range of my current projects includes economic evaluations of healthcare interventions, descriptive analysis of population health and econometrics research. I'm also supporting NHS-R Community, which encourages NHS analysts to use more applied statistical techniques within their projects. I hope to undertake a part-time PhD alongside my current paid role in the near future.

Selected recent publications

Coomarasamy A, Devall AJ, Cheed V, Harb H, Middleton, Gallos, Williams H, Eapen AK, **Roberts TE, Ogwulu CC**, Goranitis I, et al. (2019) "A Randomized Trial of Progesterone in Women with Bleeding in Early Pregnancy". *New England Journal of Medicine*. 380:1815-1824 DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa1813730

Ross J, Brittain C, Cole M, Dewsnap C, Harding J, Hepburn T, **Jackson L**, Keogh M, Lawrence T, Montgomery A, **Roberts TE**. et al (2019) "Gentamicin compared with ceftriaxone for the treatment of gonorrhoea (G-ToG): a randomised non-inferiority trial" *The Lancet*. Published Online May 2, 2019 [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)32817-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)32817-4)

Webb N, Woolley R, **Lambe T, Frew E**, et al. (2019) "Long term tapering versus standard prednisolone treatment for first episode of childhood nephrotic syndrome: phase III randomised controlled trial and economic evaluation" *BMJ*. 365 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.l1800>

Kinghorn P & Coast J, "Appropriate frameworks for economic evaluation of end of life care: A qualitative investigation with stakeholders" *Palliative Medicine*. Online first: March 27, 2019, doi.org/10.1177/0269216319839635

Monahan M, Jowett S, Nickless A, Franssen M, Grant S, Greenfield S, Hobbs FDR, Hodgkinson J, Mant J, McManus RJ. (2019) "Cost-effectiveness of telemonitoring and self-monitoring of blood pressure for antihypertensive titration in primary care (TASMINH4)" *Hypertension*. Jun; 73(6): 1231-1239

Canaway A, **Al-Janabi H, Kinghorn P**, Bailey C & Coast J. (2019) "Close person spill-overs in end of life care: using hierarchical mapping to identify whose outcomes to include in economic evaluation" *PharmacoEconomics*. 37(4):573-583. doi: 10.1007/s40273-019-00786-5.

Health Economics MSc Programmes and associated short courses

HEU runs two separate but allied MSc programmes: **MSc Health Economics and Health Policy** and **MSc Health Economics and Econometrics**. Both programmes explore the key principles and theories upon which health economics is based as well as developing practical skills for the conduct of empirical work. Selected modules are also accessible as short courses (see website for details). For more information visit:

www.birmingham.ac.uk/healthconomics or email healthconomics@contacts.bham.ac.uk

