

# Health Economics Unit

Welcome to the Winter 2014 edition of HEUnews!

As we prepare for the traditional seasonal festivities, the featured research articles in this issue echo the festive spirit of thinking of others. The EconEndLife team have been exploring the views of decision makers and the public about the importance of incorporating outcomes experienced by individuals close to the patient in decision making; while work led by Emma Frew and Ilias Goranitis explore a wider evaluative space and the role of Social Behaviour and Network Therapy (SBNT) which involves close friends and family as part of the treatment process, when considering treatments for drug misuse.



In this issue, we focus primarily on capacity building at various stages. We are delighted to have been successful with two new PhD studentships, whilst welcoming three PhD students, Magda, Arjun and Chidubem who were appointed to HEUs three existing successful studentships from the last round. We are also delighted to welcome 28 new students to HEUs MSc Programmes, including three NIHR funded students to the Unit's new MSc Health Economics and Econometrics running for the first time this academic year. To complete the festive mood, we are pleased to congratulate all our students celebrating their graduations in December (photograph on back page). Enjoy the seasonal celebrations & Happy New Year!

Tracy Roberts  
Head of Unit

## Inside this issue:

Welcome message	1
What's new in HEU...	
Contact us	
Research	2
Have you heard	3
Pelham's Pen	
Staff news	
Seminar Series	
Capacity building news	4
Recent publications	
MSc / short courses	

## What's new in HEU...

### Research studentship success.

Researchers within HEU have successfully teamed up with other members of the School for Health and Population Sciences to win doctoral studentships.

**Joanna Coast**, along with Fiona Irvine and Cara Bailey from Nursing, has been successful in securing a 3 year PhD research studentship for a student to investigate capabilities at end of life for people experiencing different trajectories towards death and associated different forms of care. The studentship will be linked with work on economic evaluation at end of life which has developed a new tool - the ICECAP-SCM - for assessing the opportunity for a good death. Applications for the studentship will be advertised shortly.

**Tracy Roberts** led an application for a joint Melbourne-Birmingham U21 PhD studentship. The studentship will explore ways to quantify the potential harms associated with over-diagnosis in breast cancer screening, specifically Ductal Carcinoma in Situ (DCIS) and specifically include these harms (Disutilities) in cost effectiveness models. Co supervisors include UoB colleague Miss Adele Francis (a breast cancer surgeon) from Cancer Sciences, and Professor Bruce Mann and Dr Dennis Petrie, a breast surgeon and health economist respectively from the University of Melbourne.

### Contact us at:

Health Economics Unit, University of Birmingham, Public Health Building, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT  
Website: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/healthconomics>  
Email: [healthconomics@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:healthconomics@contacts.bham.ac.uk)  
Follow Birmingham Health Economics Unit @HEU\_UoB on Twitter

## Exploring the views of policy-makers and the public on decision-making in the context of end of life care

The EconEndLife team have been busy conducting focus groups across the West Midlands region with members of the general public and policy-makers involved in end of life care decision-making. This is the final phase of data collection for the EconEndLife Programme which aims to explore the measurement of end of life care for use in economic evaluation.

Members of the general public were recruited to take part in focus groups across five locations, during summer 2014. Despite coinciding with a mini 'heat wave', 38 participants valued attributes from the newly developed ICECAP-CPM (close person measure), developed by Alastair Canaway as part of his PhD. Participants also considered the relative importance of outcomes experienced by patients versus close persons in the context of end of life care, using a budget pie approach. Finally, participants considered various decision-rules for resource allocation.

Amartya Sen has suggested that values in a capability framework should be arrived at through discussion and deliberation; hence facilitating discussion was a key objective within the groups as well as capturing the impact of discussion on individual views. Early results indicate strong public support for taking into account outcomes experienced by those close to the patient. Follow-up interviews revealed that participants had a positive and interesting experience, despite the chocolate biscuits melting in the heat!

The first focus group with local policy-makers was conducted in November, with a stronger focus on decision-making/resource allocation, but still with an emphasis on deliberation. Additional focus groups with local and national policy-makers will be conducted in the new year (with more optimal chocolate biscuit temperatures).

The EconEndLife team are: **Jo Coast** (PI), **Cara Bailey** (Senior Lecturer), **Alastair Canaway** (PhD student) and **Phil Kinghorn** (Research Fellow).

For an overview of the EconEndLife project see: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/ICECAP](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/ICECAP)



## Cost-effectiveness of Social Behaviour and Network Therapy (SBNT) for Heroin Users: Broadening the Evaluative Space

Drug misuse is a major problem in the UK with more than 380,000 individuals being addicted to opiates. The implications of this problem are wide and extend beyond the individual, to the physical and mental health of user's family and friends, and to the safety of society. Drug misuse is also a significant drain on public resources with an estimated annual societal cost of £15 billion.

Evidence suggests that social networks are central to the resolution of addictive behaviour, but existing treatment pathways remain individually focused. Social Behaviour and Network Therapy (SBNT) involves close friends and family as part of the treatment process, and has been shown to be effective when targeted at alcohol problems. SBNT has since been adapted for use with primary opiate users and a pilot trial, funded by the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit Programme, was conducted to explore the cost-effectiveness of SBNT for both opiate users, and their social network members.



Emma and Ilias

**Emma Frew** and **Ilias Goranitis** are exploring the impact of broadening the evaluative space when measuring the cost-effectiveness of SBNT. Within the trial, resource use has been measured from a societal perspective using the Client Service Receipt Inventory, and outcomes measured using both the EQ-5D and the ICECAP measure. Their analysis aims to contribute to the treatment policy for drug misuse, as well as to the discussion around the importance and methodological challenges of broadening the evaluative space within economic evaluations. Their work will be discussed in the upcoming Health Economists' Study Group January 2015 meeting, hosted by the University of Leeds.

## Seminar Series

The Health Economics Unit runs a monthly seminar series at which speakers from around the UK and Europe present their work.

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

29 January 2015

Louise Longworth  
Brunel University

19 February 2015

Liz Fenwick  
University of Glasgow/Icon plc

19 March 2015

Nils Gutacker  
University of York

16 April 2015

Amanda Owen Smith  
University of Bristol

Look out for information on our Twitter feed #HEUseminar.

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

## Pelham's Pen



A mathematician, an accountant and an economist apply for the same job.

The interviewer calls in the mathematician and asks "What does two plus two equal?" The mathematician replies "Four." The interviewer asks "Four, exactly?" The mathematician looks at the interviewer incredulously and says "Yes, four, exactly."

Then the interviewer calls in the accountant and asks the same question "What does two plus two equal?" The accountant says "On average, four - give or take ten percent, but on average, four."

Then the interviewer calls in the economist and poses the same question "What does two plus two equal?" The economist gets up, locks the door, closes the shade, sits down next to the interviewer and says "What do you want it to equal?"

## Have you heard...

...about the contribution that HEU makes to research funding decision making?

Whilst members of HEU are fully engaged in research and teaching, they also undertake a number of citizenship activities. Given the nature of work undertaken within the Unit, Staff expertise is particularly suited to the various NIHR panels, both at regional and national level, and focusing on both research and career development. Staff members are currently serving on the NIHR Programme Grants for Applied Research Committee (Tracy Roberts), the West Midlands Research for Patient Benefit Committee (Sue Jowett) and the NIHR Doctoral Research Fellowship Panel (Emma Frew). There are also contributions to charitable funders' panels, including the Marie Curie Cancer Care Research Funding Committee (Joanna Coast) and the Cancer Research UK Early Diagnosis Advisory Group (Joanna Coast), and to more ad hoc research funding activities including reviews of existing support (Tracy Roberts, Welsh Health Economics Support Service) and, in the last couple of years, international funding activities (Emma Frew, Health Research Board in Ireland; Joanna Coast, Quality of Life and Health Board, Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research). All of these activities, whilst clearly being of benefit to the research funders involved, are also hugely valuable for HEU staff in terms of exposure to the requirements of funding panels, meeting other colleagues and contributing to the general research environment in the UK – although the amount of reading involved can, of course, often be challenging!

## Staff news

HEU welcomes **António Teixeira Rodrigues** who is visiting HEU for six months on the Erasmus Internship programme. António is a PhD Student in Epidemiology and Public Health at the University of Coimbra, Portugal, where he is conducting research on the issue of antimicrobial resistance, a major public health problem. António's PhD is on Improving antibiotic use throughout a multidisciplinary intervention: a cluster-randomized controlled trial, and during his visit he aims to perform an economic evaluation alongside this randomized controlled trial to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the multidisciplinary intervention. He is also thinking about methods for modelling the long term effects of the intervention on antibiotic effectiveness and on antimicrobial resistance rates, as well as working on some of the datasets available in HEU.

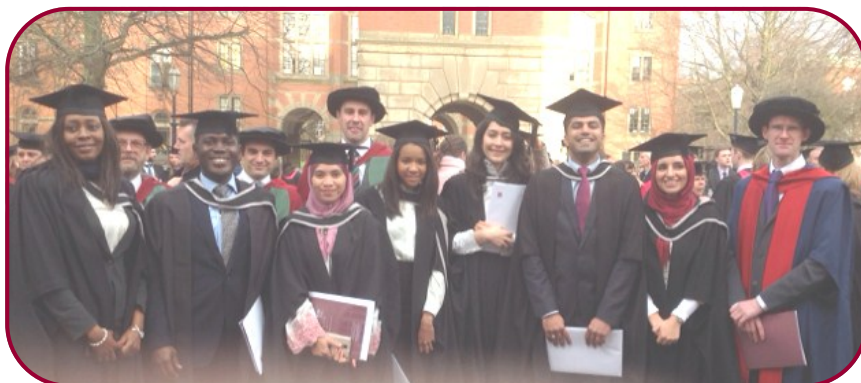


HEU welcomes new doctoral students **Magda Aguiar, Arjun Bhadhuri** and **Chidubem Ogwulu Chricasimir**, who have all recently completed their MSc. Magda will be exploring treatment and prevention strategies for vitamin D deficiency supervised by **Emma Frew, Lazaros Andronis**, Miranda Pallan (public health) and Wolfgang Hogler (paediatrician). Magda's PhD work will model the cost-effectiveness of different strategies within a paediatric population from a global perspective. Arjun will be working on his project on health spillovers and will be supervised by **Hareth Al-Janabi, Sue Jowett** and Kate Jolly (public health). Arjun's PhD work will examine methods for including spillover effects in economic evaluation, focusing on case studies of childhood illness and adult respiratory illness. Chidubem will be supervised by **Tracy Roberts, Louise Jackson** and **Phil Kinghorn** and will develop and pilot approaches for the valuation of outcomes associated with sexually transmitted infections.

Welcome back to **Alastair Canaway** who has been working towards a PhD on the EconEndLife programme for the past three years. He will be re-joining the HEU as a research fellow working with **Dr Emma Frew** on the WAVES obesity prevention trial. The trial is being conducted across the West Midlands and aims to prevent weight gain in children aged 6-7 years by increasing physical activity and promoting healthy eating by working with schools and communities. The trial has been ongoing for the past three years and Alastair's work will focus on conducting the economic evaluation of the trial to determine its cost-effectiveness.



## Capacity building news



### Graduation December 2014

From the start of this academic year, we are pleased to introduce 2 new members to the Health Economics Teaching Team. Dr Louise Jackson has taken on the role of Deputy Director of Teaching and Dr Ilias Goranitis as Assistant Deputy Director of Teaching. Louise and Ilias will work alongside the Director of Teaching Dr Pelham Barton.

Louise and Ilias are enjoying their new roles and have been busy welcoming new students onto our existing MSc in Health Economics and Health Policy and our new MSc in Health Economics and Econometrics.



Ilias, Pelham, Louise

We are delighted to welcome the new intake of students to HEUs MSc programmes and are particularly pleased to welcome the very first cohort of students to the new programme - MSc Health Economics and Econometrics which runs alongside our existing programme: MSc Health Economics and Health Policy. A total of 28 new students joined the MSc programme this year, which includes three full time students who were successful in winning the NIHR funded MSc studentships places for MSc Health Economics and Econometrics. Karen Pickering, Kirsty Hounsell and Katie Eminson are all University of Birmingham graduates who fought off strong competition to win their funded places. Kirsty and Karen graduated in Economics and Katie graduated in Mathematics. Applications for the programmes and the three fully funded full time studentship places for MSc Health Economics and Econometrics for 2015/16 are now invited. Details of the application process can be found at <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/taught/med/health-econometrics.aspx#CourseOverviewTab>

## 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 MSc programmes are ideal for new graduates hoping to pursue a career in health economics. The MSc in Health Economics and Health Policy is also particularly suited to those currently working in the health care sector who wish to develop skills in health economics. 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. The MSc Health Economics and Econometrics is differentiated primarily by its compulsory modules in Microeconomics and Econometrics in addition to the health economics modules and requires a first degree in Economics.

The following modules are shared by both programmes and are also provided as individual short courses:

- Introduction to Health Economics;
- Policy and Economics of Health Care Delivery (optional for MSc Health Economics and Econometrics);
- Economic Evaluation in Health Care;
- Modelling for Health Economics.

To learn more about the MSc's 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, Flynn TN, Peters TJ, Bryan S, Coast J.** Test-retest reliability of capability measurement in the UK general population. *Health Economics*, 2014. DOI: 10.1002/hec.3100

Gale NK, Shapiro J, **McLeod HST**, Redwood S, Hewison A. Patients-people-place: developing a framework for researching organizational culture during health service redesign and change. *Implementation Science*, 2014. DOI:10.1186/s13012-014-0106-z

**Goranitis I**, Siskou O, Liaropoulos L. Health policy making under information constraints: An evaluation of the policy responses to the economic crisis in Greece. *Health Policy*, 2014. DOI: 10.1016/j.healthpol.2014.07.012

Hoefman R, **Al-Janabi H**, McCaffrey N, Currow D, Ratcliffe J. Measuring caregiver outcomes in palliative care: a construct validation study of two instruments for use in economic evaluations. *Quality of Life Research*, 2014. DOI 10.1007/s11136-014-0848-8

McManus RJ, Mant J, Haque MS, Bray EP, Bryan S, Greenfield SM, Jones MI, **Jowett S**, Little P, **Penalosa C**, Schwartz C, Shackelford H, Shovelton C, Varghese J, Williams B, Hobbs FDR. Effect of Self-monitoring and Medication Self-titration on Systolic Blood Pressure in Hypertensive Patients at High Risk of Cardiovascular Disease The TASMINE-SR Randomized Clinical Trial. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2014. DOI: 10.1001/jama.2014.10057

**Oppong R, Jowett S**, Nicholls E, Whitehurst DGT, Hill S, Hammond A, Hay EM, Dziedzic KS. Joint protection and hand exercises for hand osteoarthritis: an economic evaluation comparing methods for the analysis of factorial trials. *Rheumatology*, 2014. DOI: 10.1093/rheumatology/keu389