

CHSS evaluates new east Kent hospice at home service



The Centre for Health Services Studies is helping Pilgrims Hospices in Kent evaluate a new service to provide help to local people with terminal illness at the end of their lives. The study aims to discover whether the new service to support people in their own homes enables more people to die where they prefer, especially those who wish to be at home.

Nikki Le Prevost, Associate Director at Pilgrims Hospices explains, 'CHSS gave us invaluable help in applying for a research grant to find out whether the Pilgrims

Hospice Rapid Response Community End of Life Service works. This is the first type of trial of its kind and the results will be of local and national significance. Properly evaluating the new service as it is rolled out across east Kent will enable other providers to make informed decisions about new service development'.

The service is being evaluated by a joint Pilgrims and University team funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR Research for Patient Benefit programme funds research to provide stronger patient and service-user centred care. The impact on carers will be evaluated using postal questionnaires and interviews. It will also compare the cost of providing the service versus the cost of usual care.

Pilgrims health care assistants will be able to offer care and support to patients and their families on the same day it is requested and for up to 72 hours. The NHS National End of Life Care Programme launched in November 2004 aims to increase individuals' choice over where they wish to live and die. The service will work with other community care providers to give people more choice about the end of their life by early 2011.

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The Centre for Health Services Studies is an international centre of excellence for health service research and research training. The centre draws together a wide range of research and disciplinary experience.

It undertakes commissioned research and has a portfolio of competitively funded studies focusing on addictive behaviours, ethnicity, social exclusion and vulnerable groups. It has a dedicated pragmatic trial

and survey unit. CHSS is funded by the Department of Health to support research in the NHS in Kent, Surrey and Sussex. The Director of the Centre is Professor of Health Studies Andy Alaszewski.

Investigating the health benefits of silver song clubs

Can singing groups for older people improve their physical and mental health compared with usual group activities? What effect does singing have on anxiety levels and depression? And could such activities prove more cost effective in terms of health care than usual group activities? A new project, evaluating the 'silver song clubs' is being undertaken by CHSS in collaboration with Eastern and Coastal Kent Primary Care Trust and Canterbury Christ Church University under the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit scheme, with the aim of answering these questions.

CHSS Acting Director and Professor of Health Services Research Simon Coulton, as principal investigator, has designed the project and is taking responsibility for methodological aspects of the study. He told us 'This research will help to discover much more about the impact of singing on the physical and mental health of older people. Previous studies have found that singing with others can help older people to feel better, with reported improvement in

physical, psychological, social and cognitive well being. However, there is little documented evidence of how much improvement in health is a result of participation in community music programmes. This will also be the first study to investigate the cost-effectiveness of group singing for older people as a form of health promotion, which may have important implications for future policy decisions'.

The research is now under way in the form of a randomised controlled evaluation of a three month silver song club intervention. Meeting in village halls in Kent, ten groups of 24 individuals have their baseline health measures taken. Half the groups participate in 12 weekly sessions of silver song club while the others continue with usual activities. All participants are asked about different areas of their health both before and after their 12 weeks of singing, and non-singers are also questioned. All the individuals are also asked about their use of health services such as visiting their GP. Once the research is complete, all the people in singing and non-singing groups are offered the opportunity to join a singing group. The cost-effectiveness analysis will examine the potential for the activity to be made widely available.



Professor Simon Coulton

Interest in the value of the arts in addressing health and social care issues is high given the rise in the older population.

Professor Grenville Hancox, Director of Music at Canterbury Christ Church University said 'The Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health recently found benefits in an evaluation of silver song clubs for older people. We hope this new study provides sound evidence for people who commission services'.

The project is due to report early in 2011.

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Homeless people slipping through the net

Lecturer in Psychology of Dependence Andy Ashenurst, and Urban Studies Professor Chris Pickvance, recently co-authored a report for the Kent homeless charity Porchlight, which found a clear need for more resources and better coordination of housing services for homeless people.

Andy said 'We discovered a patchwork of provision which whilst good in places, overall did not prioritise or meet the needs of the biggest group – young, single homeless people. Their experiences ranged from hostel staff who were 'brilliant – life savers', to being sent to a 'house from hell'.

Those interviewed for the report described a general lack of help and negative attitudes and many said local authorities moved them around the county, often to inappropriate accommodation. One person said 'I went to

my local housing department, homeless and seeking help. I left still homeless, but now felt stigmatised'. Some local authorities over-provided but others had a lack of housing stock. Under-providers 'exported' clients to over-providing authorities and this along with uncoordinated provision in the voluntary housing sector amounted to a non-system of little use to the homeless and desperate.

Placing people with mental health problems, substance users or ex offenders was difficult and generated large hidden costs. Consultant psychiatrists said that their clinical time was taken up ringing around to find places for 'bed blocking' patients who were ready for discharge. Psychiatric, probation and prison services, drug and alcohol agencies, and Connexions staff spent large amounts of time seeking accommodation for homeless clients.

Despite difficult and traumatised lives, many homeless people were optimistic

about the future. Ambitions included pursuing a PhD and finishing a nursing degree. Others live with a range of mental health problems, falling foul of the law or using alcohol and drugs to escape.

The report 'Slipping through the Net: Homeless People in Kent', provides a snapshot of service provision across Kent in 2009 and documents 91 interviews with homeless people, local authorities, voluntary sector housing providers and other agencies.

http://www.kent.ac.uk/chss/researchcentre/docs/Slipping_Through_The_Net.pdf

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For more information about Porchlight visit the website www.porchlight.org.uk

European funded research employs new technology in promoting better care

SHELTER:

Professor of Human Ageing Iain Carpenter is undertaking a three year project evaluating services and health for older people in long-term nursing home care across eight European countries. Comparing characteristics of facilities and their residents, the SHELTER project is now under way. SHELTER's primary aim is to validate inter-RAI LTCF (international Resident Assessment Instrument, Long Term Care Facility) and use it as a common tool to measure the provision of long-term care for the vastly different nursing home population across European health systems.

The instrument was developed to conduct a comprehensive and standardised assessment of the needs, strengths, and preferences of those in chronic care and other settings. Employed for ten years in the US it has now been translated for use across Europe. Funded by the European Commission Framework 7, it evaluates care standards by collecting information to support and contrast residents' needs. The results will be built into what will be the largest European web-based database of resident and facility information.

The project focuses on two aspects of care. Firstly, a profile is built of the condition, needs and levels of dependency of residents. Secondly, information is gathered about the characteristics of facilities, such as staffing levels.



Research assistants are undertaking three assessments over twelve months of 500 residents in nursing homes in West Kent, London and Essex, using records and with the help of care staff. One nurse said 'The experience has helped me reflect on the care we provide to our residents and highlighted that 'care' is so much more than just a series of tasks during the working day'. Others reported that using the LTCF had helped them think more about the needs of the resident as a whole person.

Project Manager Yachien Huang, who has been liaising with managers to gather information about their facilities, said 'By the

year 2050 the older population will rise sharply and 'ageing' will be a policy challenge in terms of the need to raise the quality of long-term care. Once we know what the residents need and like, we can build up a picture of the kind of care that should be provided'.

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Or visit www.shelter-elderly.eu
www.interrai.org

INTERLINKS:

Senior Research Fellow Jenny Billings and Research Associate Laura Holdsworth are leading the University of Kent's involvement in INTERLINKS, a three year project which is co-financed by the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme. The aim of this project is to develop and validate methods that will help organisations to describe, analyse and improve their long-term care systems from a European perspective.

Older people facing increasing care needs have to rely on different organisations and professionals coming together to meet these needs. As a consequence, they can often 'fall through the net'.

A central objective of the project is to enable countries to identify where the gaps and weaknesses are in their systems and to help them to see where improvements are needed, so that long-term care is seamless and reliable. This will be done by firstly identifying good practice examples in all of the 13 participating countries, and secondly developing a web-based toolkit that will consist of a range of guidelines and measures to be used as 'diagnostic'

instruments. The project will focus particularly on different aspects of long-term care including quality management issues, prevention and rehabilitation, informal care, and governance and finance issues.

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Further details at:
http://www.euro.centre.org/data/1240561652_6454.pdf

Where will British drug policy be in 2030?

Where will British drug policy be in 2030? And what are the challenges policymakers should be aware of? CHSS Lecturer in the Study of Addictive Behaviour Axel Klein recently contributed to a two day Home Office Drug Strategy Unit workshop to address these questions.

'Drug Landscapes 2030' brought together a wide range of professional experts from academia, civil service, law enforcement and charities to exchange ideas and predict ideas about where drugs and drugs policy may be heading over the next 20 years. Working in groups, each was charged with drawing up a different potential scenario for the future.

Axel's discussion group developed a high tolerance/low technology scenario. This optimistic model of the future predicted reduced crime rates due to falling drug prices and the elimination of need for organised trafficking and criminal drug

dealing. Direction of responsibility towards individual users would mean reduced investment in treatment, while increased tolerance could help foster increased family cohesion/cohesiveness.

Axel said 'our work considered a range of factors including possible impact of nanotechnology, international relations and immigration. We built into the future landscape potential developments like pleasure-inducing brain implants, the spread of smart drugs as cognitive enhancers, or the sudden arrival of culture specific plant-based drugs brought in by new waves of migration'.

A report of the workshop, currently in preparation, will inform the Minister taking the lead on drug strategy in the new government.

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Substance Misuse courses build skills confidence for prof



The BSc degree in Substance Misuse Management offered by CHSS is ideal for those new or returning to study. It offers progression from certificate to diploma to degree and is aimed at a wide range of professionals working with people with substance use related problems. CHSS News Review talked to student Stacey Bartlett about her experience of studying part time.

Tell us about yourself Stacey?

I'm a project worker for Crime Reduction Initiatives, a voluntary organisation which provides support, treatment and rehabilitation services to help people break free from damaging patterns of behaviour and make positive changes to their lives. We work in community and criminal justice settings.

Why did you choose to study at Kent?

I am studying for the two year part time Certificate in Substance Misuse Management. I'd heard excellent reports of the course from various agencies I work with. And it linked directly into the work I am doing in drug misuse. Also my employer wanted all frontline staff to be DANOS accredited – this course was a way to get that.

Has it helped your work?

Yes! We have learnt such a lot about drugs and the many issues and aspects of substance misuse. It has helped develop my counselling skills. I feel much better equipped to work with clients and fulfil all the requirements of my job.

Did you find anything difficult?

To be honest I was quite scared about doing the presentation – which counts for 25% of the

Management s and Professionals

course mark. A lot of us were worried about it, but in fact it turned out really well and was such a boost to our confidence. I feel much more relaxed about giving presentations now.

How is the course structured?

The teaching is delivered in three blocks a year – normally they last for five days – which is good because it means we stay in Canterbury for each module and work intensively. Students come from all over the UK and even Ireland.

What has been the highlight of your course so far?

The counselling module, because it's given me great practical skills to use with clients.

How about the lecturers and your fellow students?

We got such a lot of support from the course director Andy Ashenhurst, which is really important when you are new to studying. All the lecturers on the course have been great, and the sessions are really informative. Some lectures are given by professionals which means we get a good mix of factual and practical knowledge. There is a range of ages and quite a few mature students on the course and I am one of the youngest at 22 – but we've all got to know each other well and there's a lot of mutual support. There is always diversity of opinion and views in the group, but this has been managed well.

Would you recommend the course to others?

I already have! It has been a really positive and enjoyable experience for me.

And having been successful in the Certificate, what do you plan to do next?

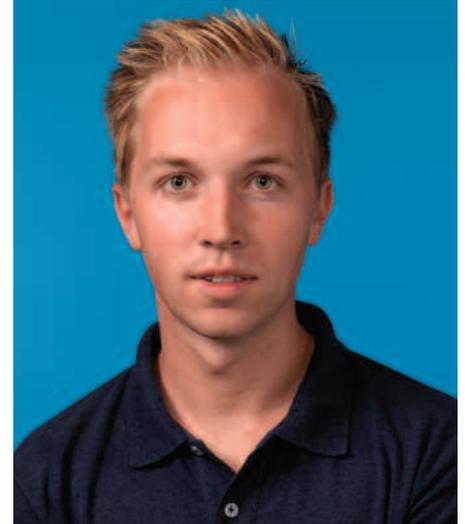
I am going to take the two year Diploma at Kent, and after that I am aiming at the BSc in Substance Misuse Management, which I am really excited about!

Thanks very much for talking to us Stacey, and we wish you all the best.

For further information about Addictive Behaviours Group programme of teaching contact Andy Ashenhurst
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Trust in psychosis services is vital to patients

When CHSS researcher Patrick Brown investigated how female patients felt about being treated in gynaecology centres associated with previous institutional failings, he found one key factor underlying satisfaction and effectiveness of services. The quality of patients' interaction with the people caring for them far outweighed the influence of clinical governance structures and other NHS policies designed to manage risk. Good communication enabled trust which acted as a rock of reassurance amidst the sea of uncertainty following cancer diagnosis.



Dr Patrick Brown

Patrick's conclusion was that the more vulnerable the patient and the more uncertain the setting, the more important developing trusting relationships with professionals becomes, a finding supported by a growing body of research. This has led him to test his findings in a more extreme setting and he is now researching trust in mental healthcare services for people with psychosis in Kent.

In an Economic and Social Research Council funded study in collaboration with Professor Mike Calnan from the University's School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Research and Dr Amanda Scrivener, Consultant Psychologist at the Kent and Medway Health and Social Care Trust, Patrick is conducting interviews with service users at home and with professionals of the Assertive Outreach, Community Mental Health and the Early Intervention Teams.

Services that support people with psychosis are classed as potentially risky and professionals working in them are vulnerable to blame for mismanagement and misdiagnosis. But episodes of psychosis are unpredictable and challenging to manage. People with previous experience of living with psychosis can be resistant to treatments that are not always effective and

can have unpleasant and life limiting side effects. People experiencing psychosis may have hallucinations, delusional beliefs, and/or disordered thoughts. They can find social interaction and normal daily life activities difficult, experiencing great uncertainty and feeling particularly vulnerable.

Those with a negative experience of mental health services may avoid them altogether, making management of their psychosis more difficult and potentially more risky. A number of studies have looked at levels of concordance with antipsychotic regimes and found that stopping taking them is associated with higher relapse and hospitalisation rates. In contrast, services which are trusted are more likely to be approached, make more accurate diagnoses, and achieve higher levels of concordance.

A full report of the study will be published at the end of 2010.

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For details of Patrick's further research publications on trust see page 7.

Mixed methods research identifies barriers to Bangladeshi learning English

Staff at CHSS carry out a wide variety of research using different methodologies. In 2008-9 Dr Ferhana Hashem undertook a Nuffield Foundation funded project which focussed on English language service provision for minority groups and the final report has just been completed. The mixed methods research project examined availability of and access to local authority-provided ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) services. Unlike previous studies looking at barriers to English language acquisition, the mixed methods approach provided two complementary datasets that helped develop an evidence base.

Ferhana explains 'We focussed specifically on Bangladeshis living in London – this community has the poorest skill level in spoken English across the standard 2001 Census ethnic groups. We wanted to know what key factors motivate them to learn English and what barriers hinder them and prevent them from becoming fluent, after coming to the UK'.

The project used both qualitative and quantitative tools to gather data. It used

surveys to build a profile of the Bangladeshi group and their use of and ability in English, and a mapping of ESOL services in London boroughs helped to find out what level of English language services public authorities provide. To complement the statistical information ESOL teachers and Bangladeshi people were interviewed. Translators were used to access detailed personal information from members of the Bangladeshi community who were poorly skilled in English. While the statistical analysis was very informative about levels of spoken English across the Census ethnic group, the interview data really helped to see what factors were affecting the community's English skills.

Ferhana said 'The research revealed that the Bangladeshi community face many barriers to accessing ESOL services, and women have below average or poor levels of English across all age groups. In some cases this is due to lack of opportunity to learn the language before coming to England, but in particular, demands of family responsibilities and childcare problems often stop them attending ESOL classes. And if classes are not available close to their homes, this is likely to impact very negatively on attendance. Women are growing especially



Dr Ferhana Hashem

concerned about the possible creation of a cultural gap between themselves and their children.

Ferhana concludes, 'I thoroughly recommend mixed methods for evaluating effectiveness of services. The statistical and qualitative data are hugely complementary and extend the depth of knowledge possible. I am keen to apply this in a health setting, potentially with minority ethnic services'.

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Research Design Service South East – developing new innovations in service delivery

CHSS is one of three university departments to have helped the NHS in the south east to develop almost two hundred new delivery service ideas since October 2008. These include systems for monitoring breathing problems in pre-term babies, improving medication regimes for older diabetes patients, developing exercise programmes for children with cerebral palsy and improving sexual health clinics.

CHSS, together with the universities of Brighton and Surrey, runs the Research Design Service South East, a resource funded by the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) which encourages the development of high-quality research for the benefit of patients. The service provides

free advice on all aspects of preparing grant applications, including finding sources of funding, building a research team and involving patients and the public.

One successful application has led to a research project in pain management in wisdom tooth extraction. Bridget Carpenter, Deputy Director of RDS SE at CHSS explained 'The project is testing whether giving paracetamol tablets when surgeons remove the teeth is as good as giving anaesthetic by injection. Many people avoid dental work through fear of pain and needle phobias, so these patients may prefer tablets to an injection. If the project provides sound evidence that tablets are just as effective in relieving pain, then the benefits for patients are obvious and the potential savings for the NHS in time and money are enormous. The NHS has ways of distributing good evidence

that can quickly change practice throughout the country, so projects like these are a fantastic investment'.

Professor Valerie Hall, Co-Director of RDS SE said 'Quite often, NHS staff needs specialist help in applying for funds to test or develop their ideas. In our first year, we held nearly 400 sessions with staff to discuss how ideas could be channelled into research applications. These sessions have initiated more than 200 research projects, most of which will improve patient experience, while having a significant impact on the way the NHS works'.

For more information on the RDS SE and for details of workshops and help with developing research proposals visit the website www.rds-se.nihr.ac.uk



Recent CHSS selected publications 2009/2010

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New appointment



Yachien Huang

Yachien joined CHSS in 2009 as project manager for the EU-funded SHELTER (Services and Health for the Elderly in Long TERM care). She previously worked at the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) in London where she was involved in managing large-scale social surveys including 'Millennium Cohort Studies' (also known as 'Child of the New Century') with a sample size of 19,000 children born in the UK in 2000/2001, and "Solving Attrition Problems in Longitudinal Studies", an ESRC-funded experiment mapping relationships between interviewer characteristics and survey response rate of interviewees.

She received her PhD from Loughborough University. Her recent research interests are questionnaire/survey design, ageing society and transnational migration.

and farewell...



Jackie Newton

We wish a happy retirement to Secretarial Assistant Jackie Newton who left CHSS in October 2009 after more than 20 years service.

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