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# Newsletter

**CHSS**  
University of Kent

Centre for Health Services Studies

Issue 21 / Autumn 2015



## CHSS community event draws large crowd

Local residents 'really engaged'  
with 'Let's Talk'

Our recent event to raise awareness of health research really struck a chord with the local community and gave everyone lots to talk about!

Funded by a University Public Engagement with Research grant, 'Let's Talk about Health Research' drew a large crowd and was a great success. Full report and more photos on page 2

# Excellence in health research

# News round up

## Award success for Leah



CHSS Leverhulme Artist in Residence Leah Thorn has been celebrating the success of her short film 'watch'. The piece is one of five short films nominated for the Arts and Humanities Research Council Inspiration Award. These prestigious awards form part of AHRC's 10th anniversary activities, recognising creative and innovative work being undertaken at the interface between research and film.

CHSS Professor of Primary Care Patricia Wilson will join Leah in attending the special awards ceremony at the British Film Institute in London later this month.

'watch' recently beat more than 900 competitors to win the award for Best Film at the Dorking Film Festival. It also attracted positive feedback from audiences at the CHSS 'Let's Talk' screenings.

'watch', a personal and deeply moving film, slowly reveals the centrality of memory to identity and the impact of dementia on a father/daughter relationship.



## Recent CHSS events

### 'Let's Talk about Health Research'



More than 100 local people attended CHSS' highly successful 'Let's Talk' drop-in event on 9 September, at Canterbury's Westgate Hall. Designed to engage the public with health and social care research, the event showcased CHSS projects around dementia, weight management, long-term health conditions and health psychology.

Exhibits and interactive activities gave the public a chance to learn about CHSS and contribute ideas, feelings and opinions about research and health.

There were plenty of volunteers for a 'mindfulness and chocolate' exercise. People enjoyed being creative – posting their ideas of 'wellbeing' on a concept wall, and drawing their personal illustrations of 'health'. Ideas were exchanged over a buffet lunch and Leverhulme Trust Artist in Residence Leah Thorn's AHRC award-nominated film 'watch' was screened throughout the day.

### Talking loud and clear

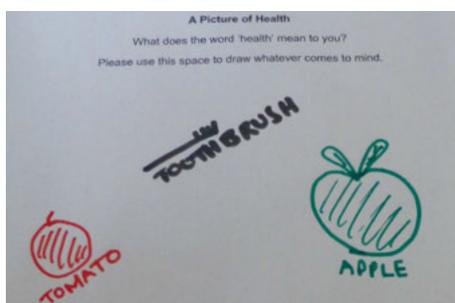
There was great feedback on the day and people were keen to say why health research matters:

*'...it helps to support best practice, makes treatment efficient and improves the patient experience.'*

*'...Care should become better through health research as evidence for assessment and treatment can be gathered and used as part of clinical reasoning.'*

The results of a 'People's Poll' of preferred research priorities were:

- 1st Health services and delivery
- 2nd Medical conditions and treatment
- 3rd Health promotion
- 4th Health technology





### What next?

CHSS Public Engagement Officer Amanda Bates was thrilled with the response to 'Let's Talk'. 'I am delighted that so many people came out to find out about our work at CHSS. Thanks to everyone who participated, and to colleagues who helped make it such a success. I hope this will be the first of many events involving the public'.

To help drive some of the day's ideas forward, we are putting together a CHSS Public Reference Group made up of local people who are willing to act as 'critical friends' to our research. Support will be available and costs covered.

To find out more, please contact:  
Amanda Bates  
CHSS Public Engagement Officer  
E: A.J.Bates@kent.ac.uk  
T: 01227 824406



## Other events news...

### KAPCU Seminar update

#### Dr Hilary Pinnock on Telehealthcare

Regrettably we were forced to cancel this seminar scheduled for 23 September due to circumstances beyond CHSS and the University's control. A new date will be published on our website shortly.

### CHSS Seminar

#### 7 October, Canterbury

Still 'Elegantly muddling through'? Trust and the management of uncertainty in healthcare rationing decisions in England

To a full house, Professor of Medical Sociology Michael Calnan presented details of an ESRC-funded study of NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) 'technological appraisals' – panels governing decisions on which new drugs should be recommended for NHS use in England. Mike – a former Director of CHSS is Principal Investigator, and the research team included Research Fellow Dr Ferhana Hashem and Dr Patrick Brown.

The research team observed panels in session and conducted interviews with committee members and representatives from key interest groups. The seminar focused on how the NICE appraisals attempt to manage the complex uncertainties that surround the rationing decisions process. After Mike's presentation, the capacity audience joined in a lively Q&A session.

**Look out for future CHSS events on our news page and on Twitter.**

## Other CHSS news

### Congratulations to...

#### Dr Wei Yang

Research Associate who has been awarded a prestigious ESRC Future Leaders Fellowship. The scheme awards outstanding early-career social scientists to enable them to acquire skills to become the future world leaders in their field.

#### Dr Olena Nizalova

Research Fellow who has been selected for the Aurora Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) sector-wide development programme for women in higher education.

# CHSS people

## Jenny Billings

### From ward nurse to Professor of Applied Health research

**Jenny's journey from ITU nurse to Research Professor at a top UK University is an inspiring tale of sheer hard work, determination and the will to succeed. She overcame traditional obstacles to build a national and international profile in applied health research while raising a family. Awarded Professorship in October, Jenny insists she would not have made it without recognising the value of special people along the pathway...**

'I had a lovely childhood in Ramsgate – a beautiful seaside town back then. Dad worked on the railways and Mum was home fulltime. Mum was very bright but had left school at 14. Both my parents were keen for my sister and me to have a great education. I enjoyed academic work and planned to study languages at Liverpool after grammar school.

'At eighteen I went to live with a German family I'd visited through a school exchange. I loved it there and I worked in Luxembourg and Paris too. Back home two years later I had lost the impetus for University. Mum suggested nursing.

'I trained and qualified in Intensive and Coronary Care nursing in Canterbury. Despite the terrifying matrons I loved it! I met my husband Jon – a trainee radiographer. He was in the staff pantomime – literally my Prince Charming!

'After Jon qualified we moved around the south coast. Like many women juggling kids and a career, I was working part-time as a night nurse. Promotional opportunities were non-existent. I was frustrated and yearning for something academic. I didn't know what.

'We were in Eastbourne in the late 80s and the Director of Nursing and Quality, Richard Ryland, was one of the inspirational people in my life, encouraging me to apply for a research secondment when I was at an all-time low career-wise. He sponsored me to do a part time 4 year BSc in nursing research and I gained first class honours while raising a baby; (I even breastfed George in an exam!). Seeing nursing through a different lens was life-changing. I knew research was where I wanted to be.

'After a postgraduate course at Southbank, I became a Health Visitor for three years. I've been blessed to have a rounded career and a clinical and community background. It gave me great understanding of NHS systems and led to my love of integrated care. It also helps me remain calm in a crisis or life-threatening situation.

'Another "champion" who I met at Eastbourne, Professor Dame Sarah Cowley, suggested I apply for a research assistant post at Kings College London, the University for nursing at the time. I jumped at it. I also had the chance to do my MSc Health Research. Working on a project with Sarah as PI looking at family health needs in Hastings was an amazing experience and I fell in love with research. I learnt the art of interviewing, knowing how to talk to people and quickly build up trusting relationships.

'My research and teaching career really took off at Kings and I never looked back. It was the late 90s and I worked extremely hard. I was living in Canterbury and the commute was difficult. I joined the local Trust, supporting research infrastructure but spending half my time at CHSS.

'Meeting then Director Andy Alaszewski was another pivotal moment. I learnt so much. My enduring love affair with CHSS began and after nine months I grabbed the offer of a fulltime position with both hands. Andy let me find my research focus and introduced me to European research, one of my great passions. I progressed from Research Fellow to Senior Research fellow, then Deputy Director where I learned management skills.

'My time as Acting Director after Andy's retirement was challenging, but great experience. CHSS as a self-funding unit was in financial difficulty. So, in 2011, I wrote a business case for University support in collaboration with senior colleagues. I'm immensely proud that in 2012 this led to Stephen's appointment as Director. It also meant I could get back to the research I love!

'My proudest career moment is undoubtedly getting this Chair. Reaction from friends and colleagues has been overwhelming, with emails, flowers and a hug from the Vice Chancellor! Having all your hard work finally recognised is wonderful. I will never forget the first time I introduced myself as "Professor" in a meeting – I still can't quite believe it! Outside work, it's my two grown-up kids I'm proudest of, they have been my blessing.

'Often it is those champions and mentors that support you who make the difference, but you must grab opportunities with every fibre of your being. Building relationships and making people remember you are crucial and for me have led to great research collaborations.



'Women face a lot of obstacles in rising to senior and professorial research roles. Initiatives like Athena and Aurora are in place to help, but there are blocks in the system and our role in society as child bearers and carers is still a problem. Pay is still different. Even nationally, the number of female professors is woefully small. It's also harder to meet the necessary criteria for getting into the REF. But Kent is trying hard.

'In terms of further career ambitions, it's great to be able to focus on Integrated Care now. I really do want to make the new Centre for Integrated Care (CICR) an ambitious centre of excellence, and to "make it fly!"

'In personal ambition terms though, as a keen swimmer I really fancy the idea of swimming a long distance in the sea. And I would love to be a Granny at some point!

**Read more about Jenny's research at [www.kent.ac.uk/chss/staff/research/billings.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/chss/staff/research/billings.html)**

# Ageless Thanet



## Promising a brighter old age for residents

**Professor Jenny Billings has won Big Lottery funding, as part of a multi-agency collaboration – Ageless Thanet – to evaluate a five year project targeting social isolation.**

Ageless Thanet is part of the Big Lottery Fund's national 'Ageing Better' programme, securing £3million in funding to reduce social isolation, loneliness and improve the mental and physical health of Thanet's older residents.

Led by Social Enterprise Kent, in partnership with a number of organisations including Turner Contemporary, Cummins Power Generation, Age UK, Your Leisure, Thanet Citizens Advice and Thanet Volunteer Bureau, the project will deliver a wide range of services and activities across five separate work streams.

- **Wellbeing** – Activities to improve health and wellbeing include language classes, craft sessions such as 'yarn bombing', fitness sessions and burlesque dancing!
- **Active Citizenship** – Volunteer 'Ageing Better Champions' will be trained to target socially isolated people, identify their needs and signpost to local activities.
- **Planning for Later Life** – 'Life Planners' will provide one to one intensive advice, support, guidance and life coaching to vulnerable older people who are at risk of isolation.
- **Older Entrepreneurs** – helping people 50+ to set up small businesses or develop an existing business.
- **Age-Friendly Businesses** – the development of an 'Ageless Thanet' kite mark to be displayed by businesses.

The evaluation design draws from the RE-AIM framework, which explores impact on both processes and individual outcomes. To facilitate this, a mixed-methods approach will be used to gather data from individuals who access the services and the agencies delivering them.

Research Associate Dr Sarah Hotham is working with Jenny on the evaluation and helped to design the framework: 'This is a unique and dynamic evaluation. We can continuously test the initiatives to learn what works – what will have a meaningful impact on social isolation? We want to make Thanet a great place to grow old.

'Furthermore the evaluation will equip community researchers with the skills to eventually take the reins from the academic leads to evaluate the benefits of local activities themselves beyond 2020. It really is all about involving and empowering a community to be self-sufficient'.

For more information visit the project website: [www.sekgroup.org.uk/ageless-thanet/4586427559](http://www.sekgroup.org.uk/ageless-thanet/4586427559)

# From the Director

## Is the NHS in crisis?



**By Stephen Peckham, Professor of Health Policy, CHSS Director**

**The Care Quality Commission's recent report on the quality of care in English hospitals suggests that two thirds of those inspected are providing substandard care. Three-quarters had areas of unsafe care, with one in eight hospitals rated inadequate.**

'Three South East hospitals are in special measures, while others are still considered to require improvement. Poor finance figures for English hospitals highlighted a deficit in the first three months of the financial year of nearly £1 billion – over twice the level reported at the same time last year. Newspaper and media broadcast headlines reflected the headline figures, asking "is the NHS in crisis?"

'Those south east Hospitals in special measures have a combined deficit of over £100 million. The local picture is not good. Finances are unlikely to get better and may get worse.

A 2014 analysis published in Health Service Journal found that the trusts removed from special measures were predicting a collective deficit of almost £140 million. Five planned to end the financial year with deficits equivalent to 10 to 12 per cent of turnover. Getting out of special measures costs money, and experience suggests that it can take many years.

'While money is not always the answer, to address staff recruitment problems and long waiting lists, more finance will be needed. The Government promised an additional £8 billion for the NHS before 2020. Some of this is urgently needed now. Certainly current deficit levels mean achieving the £22 billion efficiency savings promised by NHS England looks increasingly unlikely.

'We must look to longer term solutions to address changing health needs. In East Kent there are lots of new developments in community and primary care services to restructure the way care is delivered. They are not short-term solutions, nor necessarily cost saving. The shift towards more community care adds a further reason to urgently address the configuration of hospital services. But reconfiguration is complex and will no doubt cause concern in some communities – whatever the long-term solution.

'What can be said with some certainty is that any changes will require additional money, in the short-term at least. The Government should consider heeding calls for a transformation fund. It's time to see some of the promised government investment'.

## Other new projects

### ADAM: Alcohol dependence and adherence to medicine



**Professor of Health Services Research Simon Coulton is part of a study aiming to help prevent people from relapsing into alcohol dependence.**

Acamprosate (Campril) is an effective medication which reduces alcohol cravings to prevent relapse. Many people do not take it consistently, which reduces its effectiveness.

ADAM is a three arm randomised controlled trial, led by Professor Colin Drummond at the Institute of Psychiatry, Kings College. Funded by the NIHR Health Technology Assessment programme, the trial will recruit alcohol dependent but currently sober adults being treated with acamprosate, in several locations. Simon Coulton will ensure the scientific quality of the study and will lead on statistical analysis and methods.

The trial will determine the effectiveness of pharmacy-delivered medication management with or without contingency management, to help alcohol-dependent people stick to acamprosate and prevent relapse, compared to treatment as usual.

Medication management (MM) is a programme providing support and advice about drinking behaviours and the importance of taking medication. Contingency management (CM) uses rewards, such as small financial incentives, to encourage people to stick to their treatment plans.

There is evidence that these techniques are effective for treating drug addiction, but limited research into its effectiveness in alcohol dependency the study aims to find out if MM and CM are effective in helping people follow their acamprosate treatment plans.

If the combination in addition to standard support proves effective, there is potential for it to be applied across the NHS to help reduce alcohol consumption and relapse.

The four year trial is now recruiting.

For further information on Kings College website: [www.kcl.ac.uk/ioppn/depts/addictions/research/alcohol/ADAM-Alcohol-Dependence-and-Adherence-to-Medications.aspx](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/ioppn/depts/addictions/research/alcohol/ADAM-Alcohol-Dependence-and-Adherence-to-Medications.aspx)

#### New Selected CHSS Publications 2015

Marks L, Hunter D J, Scalabrini S, Gray J, McCafferty S, Payne N & **Peckham S** et al (2015) The return of public health to local government in England: changing the parameters of the public health prioritization debate? *Public Health* 129 (9), 1194-1203.

**Peckham S**, Falconer J, Gillam S, Hann A et al (2015) The organisation and delivery of health improvement in general practice and primary care: a scoping study. *NIHR Health Services and Delivery Research* 3, 29

Miller R, **Peckham S**, Coleman A, McDermott I, Harrison S & Checkland K (2015) What happens when GPs engage in commissioning? Two decades of experience in the English NHS. *Journal of Health Services Research and Policy* ISSN 1355-8196

**Wilson P M**, Mathie E, Keenan J, McNeilly E, Goodman C M et al (2015) ReseArch with Patient and Public involvement: a RealisT evaluation – the RAPPORT study. *NIHR Health Services and Delivery Research* 3, 38

Brown P R, **Hashem F** & Calnan M W (2015) Trust, regulatory processes and NICE decision-making: appraising cost-effectiveness models through appraising people and systems. *Social Studies of Science* ISSN 0306-3127 (In press)

**Billings J R** & **De Weger E** (2015) Contracting for integrated health and social care: a critical review of four models. *Journal of Integrated Care* 23 (3) pp 153-175 ISSN 1476-9018

**Coulton S**, Clift S, Skingley A & Rodriguez J (2015) Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of community singing on mental health-related quality of life of older people: randomised controlled trial. *British Journal of Psychiatry* 207 (2) ISSN 0007-1250

Stoerber J & **Hotham S** (2015) Perfectionism and attitudes toward cognitive enhancers ("smart drugs"). *Personality and Individual Differences*

Riches N, Coleman A, **Gadsby E W** & **Peckham S** (2015) *The Role Of Local Authorities In Health Issues: A Policy Document Analysis*. PRUComm, 49 pp



#### Need help from NIHR Research Design Service South East?

The RDS is a national service funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) delivered in ten regions in England. The service supports researchers in preparing proposals for submission to peer-reviewed funding programmes in applied health and social care.

The RDS SE operates from the Universities of Kent (CHSS), Surrey (Faculty of Health & Medical Sciences) and Brighton (School of Health Science). Advice and support is free. [www.rds-se.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.rds-se.nihr.ac.uk)

# Staff news

Information about all CHSS staff can be found on our website: [www.kent.ac.uk/chss/staff/index.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/chss/staff/index.html)

## Welcome to...

### Chris Farmer

Clinical Professor

Chris, a renal consultant and prodigious researcher at East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust (EKHUFT), joins CHSS on a part-time basis to develop new areas of clinical research.

### Vanessa Short

Clinical Research Fellow

Vanessa is a GP and EKHUFT renal research registrar. In addition to teaching on the BSc Primary Care Management, she will develop Primary Care research whilst undertaking a PhD in community-acquired Acute Kidney Injury (AKI).

### Ugochi Nwulu

Research Associate and NIHR RDS SE Research Adviser

Formerly a visiting researcher working for Kent County Council, Gochi joins CHSS as a fulltime member of staff dividing her time between CHSS research and advising with the NIHR Research Design Service.

### Amy Randall

Research Assistant

Amy joins CHSS from Perpetuity Social Research. An experienced methodologist, she is currently working on the London Triborough community health evaluation.

### Catherine Marchand

Research Assistant

Catherine is working with Professor Stephen Peckham on the General practitioner (GP) recruitment, retention and re-engagement research project. She joins us from Université du Québec à Montréal.

### Emily McKean

CHSS Scholarship Student

Emily, an Occupational Therapist has worked in the community and the hospice environment. She joins CHSS to study for a PhD researching community end of life care.

## About CHSS

CHSS is a centre of research excellence which undertakes high quality research into a wide range of health systems and health services issues at local, national and international levels. CHSS also supports and advises health care staff to develop and undertake research projects. CHSS collaborates with a wide range of partners in Kent, the UK and in other countries to improve the links between research, policy and practice.

Please see the CHSS website for details of current and previous research and publications

Details of current CHSS vacancies and studentships can be found at: [www.kent.ac.uk/chss/vacancies.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/chss/vacancies.html)

## Save the date!



### Open Days

#### Management in Primary Care iBSc (Hons)

CHSS intercalated BSc in Primary Care Management – a full-time one-year course for medical students to prepare for working in primary and community care, public health or management.

#### Open days:

12.30-15.30 – **14 November 2015**, Canterbury  
12.30-15.30 – **23 January 2016**, Canterbury

For informal enquiries please contact:

Dr Rowena Merritt

E: [R.K.Merritt@kent.ac.uk](mailto:R.K.Merritt@kent.ac.uk)

For bookings for BSc open days and information about our other CHSS courses, visit the Study with CHSS page: [www.kent.ac.uk/chss/study.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/chss/study.html)

### Change to KAPCU (Kent Academic Primary Care Unit) Seminar

#### Still elegantly muddling through?: Trust and the management of uncertainty in healthcare rationing decisions in England

Professor Michael Calnan, Professor of Medical Sociology University of Kent

13.30 – **2 December 2015**

Boardroom (R2-09) Rochester Building, University of Kent, Medway

In a change to December's scheduled KAPCU session, CHSS is pleased to announce that Professor Michael Calnan will deliver insights from his study of processes surrounding NHS healthcare rationing.

**NB:** This replaces Professor Vari Drennan's session on Physician Assistants, which has sadly been cancelled (time, date and venue unchanged).

[www.kent.ac.uk/chss/news/index.html?view=840](http://www.kent.ac.uk/chss/news/index.html?view=840)

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