

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The 2024 PGR conference took place at the end of last year where our CHERI PhD students were invited to present and attend the 2024 Winter Postgraduate Research Conference held on Old Aberdeen campus. This interdisciplinary conference brought together postgraduate researchers and academics from the Schools of Education, Psychology, Sociology, Law, and our CHERI group. The conference theme, “Unified Vision: Bridging Disciplines to Enhance Wellbeing and Societal Resilience,” highlighted the intersection of cross-disciplinary research in impacting societal wellbeing and the importance of promoting wellbeing amongst our postgraduate research community.

It was a busy conference day! The main sessions centred around research presentations by current PGRs who broadened talks to the interdisciplinary audience.

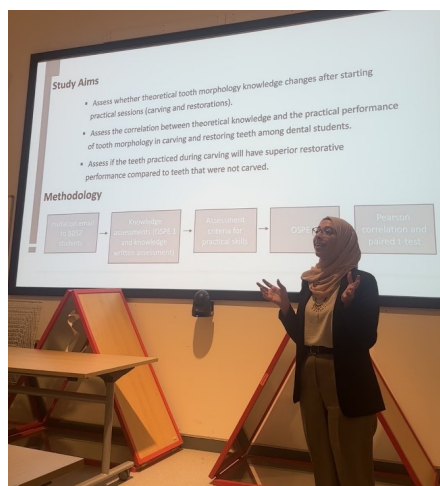
Lauren Charter, as a member of the organising committee, planned and hosted the conference day with PGR colleagues from the Schools of Education and Psychology. She also presented provisional findings from her longitudinal audio-diary study, discussing how the unique methodology is used to explore medical students’ experience of transitions through remote and rural placements and will help us in Scotland better understand and improve these educational experiences. She enjoyed the opportunity to present this part of her work and lots of discussion from those in the room.

Leen Habboub (CHERI PhD student) presented preliminary findings from her PhD project, focusing her talk on how her mixed-method approach was used to understand and explore the translation process of the theoretical

knowledge of tooth morphology into practical skills among dental students. She appreciated the opportunity to engage with diverse audiences and discuss the translation process across various disciplines.

The conference also included keynote presentations by Dr Rachel Shanks (Interdisciplinary Research Institute Director) and Dr Douglas Martin (Head of School of Psychology), as well as a roundtable discussion on Navigating life during and after your PhD, facilitated by a panel of early-career researchers at Aberdeen.

Anita Laidlaw, Florin Nedelea (CHERI PhD student) and Emily Cleland (SMMSN education PhD student) were also in attendance. The conference was well attended both in-person and online by PGRs and academic staff from across participating Schools. CHERI attendees made new connections, exchanged ideas, and explored potential collaborations for future work and events. Lauren is back on the organising committee for the Summer PGR Conference and looks forward to more CHERI PhD students sharing their health professions education research to an interdisciplinary audience, and building connections with PGR students and Schools across the University.



Leen Habboub presenting

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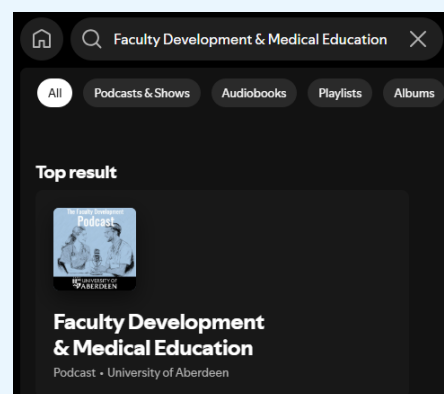
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CHERI BLOSSOM – 27TH FEBRUARY

The February CHERI Blossom will be presented by Dr Claire Parkin and Manfred Gschwandtner from Kent and Medway Medical School on 'Scholar 20 and Digital 20 self-assessment tools for healthcare students' on 27th February at 1.00-2.00

The Teams details are below. A calendar invite has been sent out to IEHMS. Please add this to your diaries for those not in the Institute that would like to attend.



Dr Claire Parkin



Manfred Gschwandtner

[Join the Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 382 678 858 248

Passcode: b2ZB2Qb2

Dial in by phone

+44 20 7660 8305,,777500958# United Kingdom, City of London

Find a local number

Phone conference ID: 777 500 958#

For organisers: [Meeting options](#) | [Reset dial-in PIN](#)

SHERG UPDATE

School Higher Education Research Group (SHERG) meetings occurred in both January and February. The February meeting focused on discussions with colleagues from the Institute of Dentistry, led by Karolin Hijazi, Research Lead in the Institute for Dentistry. There was a large attendance from across the School. Key areas of shared interest included the provision and use of feedback, including student perceptions of their use of feedback. We also discussed social accountability within healthcare education, including dentistry and how we could try to understand whether health professional courses were supporting the needs of their local populations. There was also an interest from many present to discuss potential for educational research into aspects of EDI within higher education and health professional education.

The topic was carried through into the February SHERG meeting led by Malcolm Stewart, Lead for EDI in the Institute for Dentistry, which was again well attended. In this meeting we focused on aspects of EDI within the admissions process, within assessment, relating to the welfare of students and to the learning and professional culture. In both meetings useful connections were made across the school and we look forward to hearing about new research projects emerging.



Malcolm Stewart

Karolin Hijazi

AMUDHA WINS AWARD

Congratulations to Prof Amudha Poobalan for winning the Best Event at a recent excellence and impacts award ceremony.

Her success was for an event with between 200 and 500 delegates, for The International Higher Education Teaching and Learning Association she hosted in June 2023. It brought together Higher Education professionals and students from across the world to provide a platform for discussion, debate, networking and collaboration on all aspects of teaching and learning in higher education.

Well done to Amudha and all who were involved! Read more about the University's Aberdeen Convention Bureau wins here: <http://abdn.io/law>



Amudha with Laura Wilson

WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Katie presented the school's work on widening participation to medicine at the SMMSN Impact Symposium. She outlined the programme of research that has evolved from an initial evaluation and the steps that we are taking as a team to maximise impact beyond academia. We have forged key partnerships across Scotland because of the research that is being led here at Aberdeen, and it is hoped that these will help facilitate impact at a national level. It is all very much a work in progress but really positive that we have already seen small impacts from the research we have done.



Katie Gibson Smith

WELCOME TRICIA TOOMAN



Tricia Tooman has recently joined CHERI as a postdoctoral fellow on an NIHR-funded project led at CHERI by

Dr Kim Walker. The study is a UK-wide collaboration based at Oxford examining the role of Physician Associates in the NHS workforce.

Tricia has enjoyed being a researcher for over 20 years and began in a medical education research unit at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She moved to Scotland with her family over 15 years ago and completed her PhD at the University of St Andrews in 2019.

Highlights of her prior work include the Scottish Doctors' Wellbeing Study, Transitions of new healthcare graduates during Covid, as well as improving NHS service delivery for head and neck

cancers, stroke rehabilitation, long Covid and sepsis. Tricia has a growing interest in models of care for people in later life with a focus on reducing health inequalities.

Tricia brings expertise in qualitative methodologies, an array of work in learning, change and wellbeing of the health and social care workforce, and an interest in using systems thinking and theories for addressing these challenging and important issues.



AWARD FOR LAUREN CHARTER AT SMMSN PGR CONFERENCE

CHERI PhD Student Lauren Charter presented her project at the SMMSN PGR Conference 2024 and won Best 1st Year Talk for her session! Her presentation focused on the What, Why, and How of her PhD - With three minutes for her talk, Lauren explained the importance of her work in better understanding rural and remote clinical placements across Scotland and the experiences of medical students whilst on these placements, and how she is conducting the multiphase PhD project. The SMMSN PGR Conference is held annually for all 1st and 3rd year PGR students to present their research to the School, with this year's conference theme being "Joining Forces with Bots: AI in Research." The 3-day conference aims to celebrate the range of research types and subject areas being carried

across SMMSN and encourage a more interdisciplinary approach to science communication. In addition to presenting, Lauren joined the SMMSN PGR Conference Organising Committee as a PGR student representative and co-chaired several PGR presentation

sessions. She enjoyed getting to know faculty and other PhD students from across the School and gained a valuable experience with all that goes into planning and running a multiday conference!



Lauren Charter (3rd from left) and PhD students

AMUDHA POOBALAN 'SLOW AND STEADY STILL ACHIEVES!'

That's the 2025 message from Masters programme lead Prof Amudha Poobalan who shared her own personal journey as we start a new year and prepare to welcome back our students. Read about her journey [here](#).

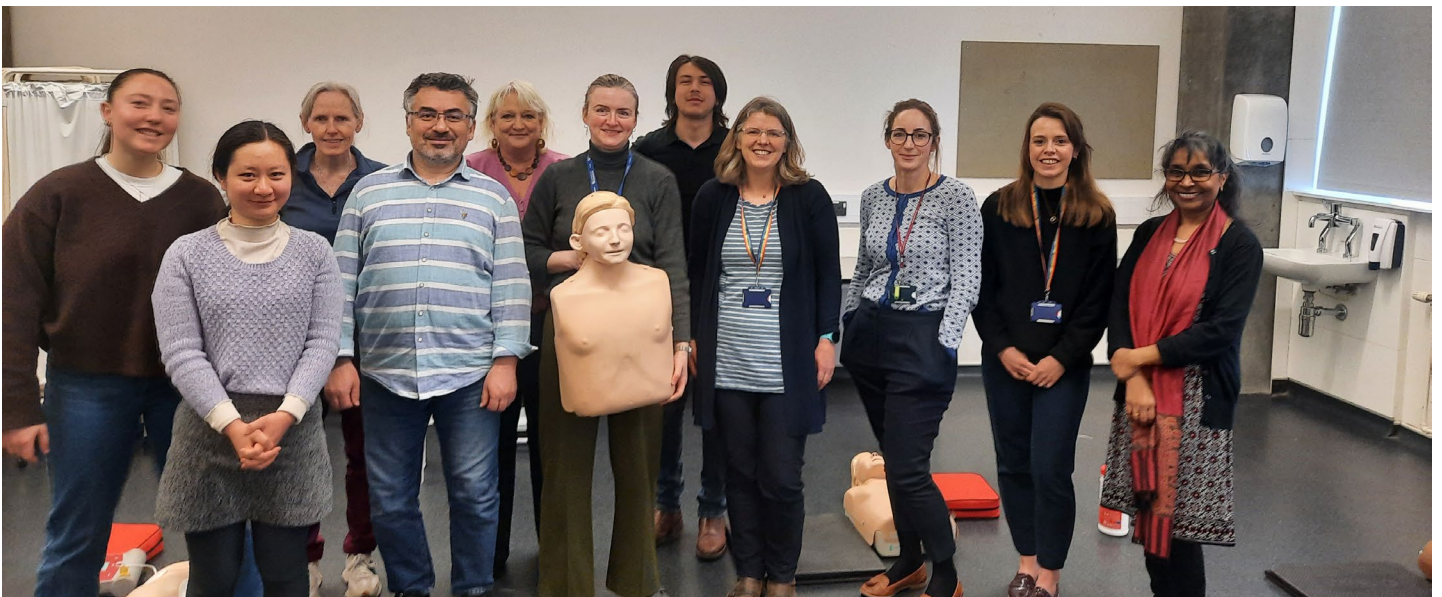


DATES TO REMEMBER

Date	Online / in-person	Time	Presenter	Title
27/02/25	Online Teams	1-2pm	Claire Parkin and Manfred Gschwandter Kent and Medway Medical School	'Scholar 20 and Digital 20 self-assessment tools for healthcare students'. Microsoft Teams meeting: Click here to join the meeting Meeting ID: 382 678 858 248 Passcode: b2ZB2Qb2

RESTART A HEART TRAINING

In January the CHERI team attended the Restart A Heart CPR training with Ashley Meldrum. The training aims to teach vital life-saving CPR skills in the event of a cardiac arrest as early intervention is critical to saving lives. Survival rates from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest remain low in the UK, with fewer than one in 10 people surviving. If you would like more information on receiving the training please contact ashley.meldrum@abdn.ac.uk



GET TO KNOW...

Helen Vosper



Helen crossing the 'un-white' glacier on the Lutschberger Pass in the Swiss Alps



1. Could you tell us about your role at the university?

I'm a senior lecturer and lead for patient safety, and also one of the Year 2 Deputies for the MBChB.

2. What's the most exciting part of your job?

I'm a Human Factors specialist, and Human Factors is all about understanding what we call work-as-done. In this way, you can make improvements that work, because they are designed to account for the specific context. From robotic surgery through to mass vaccine delivery – the complexity of healthcare work never ceases to amaze me.

3. What brought you to the University of Aberdeen?

It's more of a "who?!" The University of Aberdeen has always had an excellent track record in patient safety education, much of it driven by Professor Rona Patey. As Director of IEHMS, she was very supportive of a Human Factors professional having the role of patient safety lead, for which I am very grateful.

4. What are your special areas of interest?

All UK Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies have decided that Human Factors (a person-centred safety science) is the way forward to address the safety 'crisis'. However, it is poorly understood, often conflated with non-technical skills. The healthcare education need is often described as 'Porters to Board'. I am particularly interested in identifying healthcare Human Factors education opportunities from undergraduate right through to CPD. A bit like a well-known fast-food chain, I am always trying to upsell. Rather than "Would you like fries with that?"; it's "Would you like a Human Factors tutorial with that?!"

5. What are your work priorities at the moment?

We recently launched a complete Human Factors for patient safety curriculum for the MBChB. I'm working on finalising the strategy to ensure its sustainability, which will hopefully include monetising some of our education offering to provide an income stream.

6. What future projects would you like to be involved in?

During my time here, I've seen some excellent peer tutoring. As part of the Human Factors strategy, we have an embryonic student faculty. I would love to develop this further.

7. Do you have a mantra both professionally and personally?

It's the boring minutiae that hold the key to success!

8. How do you like to relax outside work?

I'm not sure it counts as relaxing, but I've become an unwilling rugby fan as my son-in-law to be plays for Glasgow warriors. Most matches seem to involve some sort of horrific injury. When asked about seat preference, I'm inclined to ask for one with a restricted view! If not at Scotstoun, I'll likely be up a mountain somewhere.

9. Do you have any hidden talents or fun facts about yourself?

I qualified as a flying instructor 15 years ago, and at one point I was an enthusiastic sports diver... I can honestly say that whether it's seen from the air, the mountains or under the sea, Scotland has got to be one of the most beautiful places on earth!



Lochnagar