

MAY 2019

# HERU NEWS

HEALTH ECONOMICS RESEARCH UNIT

## Welcome to our May Newsletter

In this newsletter, we feature the annual research symposium that we are involved in organising and which this year focused on evidence for value in an era of realistic medicine. The symposium coincided with the publication of the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland's fourth annual report placing patients at the centre of realistic medicine. In this edition, we highlight three new projects addressing the realistic medicine agenda. The newsletter also features the launch of the new Scottish Health Economics (SHE) collaboration and a short report from our Visiting Scholar, Professor Mark Harris.

We hope you enjoy reading about our work and activities. Further information is available on all our activities on our website. More frequent updates are on the HERU Twitter account (@HERU\_Abdn).

## 11th German Health Economics Association Annual Conference 2019, Augsburg

**Marjon van der Pol** gave the closing plenary at the German Health Economics Association annual conference in Augsburg in March 2019. Marjon spoke about the role of time preferences in health behaviours and argued that health economists should embrace both behavioural economics and intervention design to a greater extent.



## Scottish Health Economics (SHE) – launch event announced

We are excited to announce the launch of Scottish Health Economics (SHE), a new collaboration of health economists from Scotland's Universities, NHS and Government. Our aim is to bring together researchers and users of health economics to explore the development and application of health economics in Scotland. Membership of SHE will be open to health economists working in Scotland in any setting as well as individuals who are interested in health economics. The launch event will take place on 3rd October 2019 at the Discovery Point in Dundee. The event will provide an opportunity to contribute to the development of the group and learn what SHE can offer.

There is more information about SHE and our launch event on the HERU website [www.abdn.ac.uk/heru/news/12941](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/heru/news/12941).

## NHS Scotland Event 2019

Paul McNamee, Shelley Farrar and Mary Kilonzo attended the annual NHS Scotland Event from 30-31 May 2019 at the Scottish Event Campus in Glasgow. The event is the leading health event in Scotland and aims to highlight how NHS Scotland and its partners are transforming care, improving quality and securing value and financial sustainability. The HERU exhibition stand proved popular with delegates and gave an opportunity to discuss the research and teaching activities of the Unit, and the contribution that health economics can make to healthcare. While not on duty at the stand, HERU staff attended a number of talks including *NHS Near Me: Delivering a Digital Service that Patients Want*, and *the Virtual Community Ward Model*.

### APPLICATIONS WELCOME

#### MSc/Postgraduate Diploma/Postgraduate Certificate in Health Economics for Health Professionals

Further details are on our website, please visit: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/heru/courses/pgcert/> and there is a short YouTube video about the course: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwJ4KB\\_wUBEShelley](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwJ4KB_wUBEShelley)

### Places still available for our 2019 courses

#### 'Using Discrete Choice Experiments in Health Economics: Theoretical and Practical Issues'

Banff, Alberta: 8th–11th September  
Aberdeen, Scotland: 13th–15th November

For more information on both courses, and registration, see: [www.abdn.ac.uk/heru/courses/workshops/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/heru/courses/workshops/)

# Informing the Realistic Medicine agenda in Scotland

## HERU at the 7th Annual Research Symposium: Evidence for value in an era of realistic medicine

This annual symposium is jointly organised by Healthcare Improvement Scotland and three CSO funded Units (HERU, Health Services Research Unit and the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit). The day presents an opportunity to showcase policy relevant work conducted across Scotland, as well as hear from researchers and policy makers from further afield.

This year's symposium focused on the delivery of realistic medicine in Scotland. **Stirling Bryan** was a keynote presenter, talking about 'The rise and rise of patient-orientated research: what implications for Scotland's agenda on realistic medicine and value?' **Dwayne Boyers** and **Elisabet Jacobsen** presented work on cost-effective interventions for the management of severe obesity and **Verity Watson** presented her work concerned with evaluating the trade-offs men with localised prostate cancer make between the risks and benefits of treatments. **Mandy Ryan, Patricia Norwood** and **Attakrit Leckcivilize** delivered a workshop on 'Ensuring value for money in a person centred health care system: how can economics contribute?'

This year's symposium coincided with the publication of the 2017–2018 annual report of the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland.<sup>1</sup> This is the Chief Medical Officer's fourth annual report on realistic medicine. The focus of the report is on the principle of building a personalised approach to care. The following articles feature three newly funded HERU projects concerned with personalising the provision of care.

1. Chief Medical Officer, (2019) 'Personalising realistic medicine: Chief Medical Officer for Scotland's Annual Report 2017–2018'; Edinburgh: Scottish Government. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/personalising-realistic-medicine-chief-medical-officer-scotland-annual-report-2017-2018/>



From left to right: Attakrit Leckcivilize, Dwayne Boyers, Elisabet Jacobsen, Patricia Norwood, Marjon van der Pol, Mandy Ryan and Verity Watson

## Putting men's preferences at the centre of the patient-doctor relationship

Prostate cancer (PCa) affects 1 in 10 men and is the most common cancer amongst men in UK. Men with localised PCa can choose between several treatment options e.g. active surveillance, radiation therapy, or surgery. Different treatments are associated with different risks and side effects including urinary incontinence, bowel function, and erectile dysfunction. There is no overall best treatment for localised PCa in terms of cancer control. Treatment choice should depend on men's views about the different harms and benefits of each treatment. In new research funded by *The Urology Foundation*, we will design a new decision aid tool to help men make informed treatment decisions.



This is a two year research project, commencing June 2019. This research is a collaboration with the *Academic Urology Unit* at the University of Aberdeen and the Prostate Cancer group in the *Department of Surgery and Cancer* at Imperial College London.

For more information see the HERU Blog post 'Putting men's preferences at the centre of the patient-doctor relationship' (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/heru/blog/putting-mens-preferences-at-the-centre-of-the-patientdoctor-relationship/>) or contact **Verity Watson** ([v.watson@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:v.watson@abdn.ac.uk)) or **Nicolas Krucien** ([Nicolas.Krucien@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:Nicolas.Krucien@abdn.ac.uk)).

## HERU Blog updates

We've added a couple more posts to our HERU Blog, both related to our research that puts patients and their families at the centre. One of the Blog posts covers our forthcoming project also featured in this newsletter looking at research focused on helping men with prostate cancer make informed treatment decisions. The other post highlights research on preferences of patients and their families regarding the genetic testing of children with rare disorders.

The posts are available at the HERU Blog site <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/heru/blog/>

# Developing a person-centred discrete choice experiment to promote shared decision making in the patient-pharmacist interaction



Following a brief break due to staff changes, the PRUK funded project to develop a Decision Aid Tool (DAT) for people living with persistent pain resumed on March 1st. We are delighted to welcome **Luis Loria** and Dr Amanda Cardy to the research team. Luis is the research fellow on the project. Amanda is from the Scottish Primary Care Research Network and joined the team to help with patient recruitment. The study is progressing well, with Phase 1 due to be completed by August 2019. As part of this stage, over 40 interviews with pharmacists, GPs and people living with persistent pain have taken place all over Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The information obtained from interviews will help inform the content of the DAT. The next stage will be to design and test the DAT in pharmacies across Scotland.

**Research Team:** Mandy Ryan, Nicolas Krucien, Terry Porteous and Luis Loria (HERU), Professor Christine Bond, Dr Rosalind Adam and Dr Peter Murchie (Primary Care) and Dr Amanda Cardy (Scottish Primary Care Research Network).

For further information please contact **Mandy Ryan** ([m.ryan@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:m.ryan@abdn.ac.uk)) or **Luis Loria** ([luis.loria@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:luis.loria@abdn.ac.uk)).

## Valuing baby boxes: what's important to parents?

The introduction of baby boxes is a Scottish policy that is unique within the UK. The policy aims to improve health outcomes for babies and provide practical support for new parents in Scotland. A Scottish Government commissioned pilot evaluation<sup>1</sup> notes that rigorous longer term studies of impact are required. Developing appropriate outcome measures for these longer term studies is necessary. While the importance of 'hard' health outcomes such as infant mortality and morbidity is clear, wider societal benefits and cultural changes to parenting may also be important. A review of safe sleep interventions found some evidence that providing cheap cribs, along with information about safe sleeping, is associated with reduced sudden infant deaths and increased parental knowledge. However, there has been very little research into the wider social and cultural impact of baby boxes. Such information is crucial for future evaluations.



Our work, funded by NHS Grampian Endowment, will explore what factors should be considered in future evaluations of baby box programmes. We will conduct analysis of both media coverage of the introduction of baby boxes within Scotland and online parental discussion forums. In addition, we will carry out a series of focus groups with women attending mother and baby groups within the NHS Grampian area. We will purposively sample a diverse group to ensure we include the views of women from different socio-economic backgrounds, educational level, geographical contexts and age groups.

As well as providing invaluable information for future evaluations of baby box programmes, and public health interventions more generally, the research will also consider the role of media coverage and online discussion forums (in addition to the more commonly used focus groups) to inform the development of valuation in economic evaluation models.

The research team, all from the University of Aberdeen, includes Dr Zoe Skea and Professor Louise Locock, (Health Services Research Unit), Dr Heather Morgan (Institute of Applied Health Sciences), Dr Mairead Black (Aberdeen Women's Centre) and **Mandy Ryan** (Health Economics Research Unit).

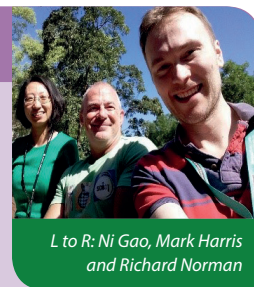
For further information please contact **Mandy Ryan** ([m.ryan@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:m.ryan@abdn.ac.uk)).

1. Scottish Government, Social Research, (2017) 'Scotland's baby box pilot research', Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

## Developing Links with Curtin University in Australia

**Ni Gao's** PhD investigates the recovery process among women following a breast cancer diagnosis, from a time allocation perspective. Ni's PhD is jointly supervised by **Mandy Ryan** and **Nicolas Krucien** from HERU and Richard Norman and Suzanne Robinson from Curtin University, Perth, Western Australia. Ni spent November 2018 to March 2019 at Curtin University working on her second research paper, focusing on the relationship between time use and wellbeing following a breast cancer diagnosis. Whilst there she developed links with Professor Mark Harris, and we are delighted to welcome Mark to the team for this paper. Whilst at Curtin, Ni presented an internal seminar on 'Work or leisure: does it matter? The impact of time use patterns following a cancer diagnosis on health service usage'.

Continuing our links with Curtin University, we were delighted to welcome Professor Mark Harris as a Visiting Scholar for three weeks in March. Mark is a John Curtin Distinguished Professor in the School of Economics and Finance at Curtin University, of his visit, Mark said:



L to R: Ni Gao, Mark Harris and Richard Norman

*"I was immediately interested in a Visiting Scholar position at HERU due to their worldwide reputation as one of the premier institutions for health economics research. I met many researchers and students during my visit and discussed shared research interests with several staff. Indeed, there's already one paper with **Paul McNamee** that has been submitted to an upcoming conference. These collaborations are likely (hopefully!) to continue well into the future resulting in research papers, and grant applications, cementing further the aforesaid alliance. HERU, and Aberdeen, and Scotland, were all fantastic places to visit; in particular, everyone at the Unit was incredibly friendly and welcoming. I was lucky enough to attend an in-house seminar on the use of indicator and inter-action effects in health economics, and presented a two hour Master Class on Latent Class Models in Health Economics. I would strongly encourage anyone with a similar opportunity to visit HERU to take full advantage of it".*



L to R: Paul McNamee and Mark Harris

## HERU's external seminar series continues...

We were delighted to welcome two former HERU Summer Interns came to Unit. In March, Elizabeth Lemmon, a PhD student at the University of Stirling, presented on 'Variations in domiciliary free personal care across Scottish local authorities'. In May Chiara Pastore, now a PhD student at the University of York, presented her research, looking at the human capital consequences of missing out on a grammar school education.

In February Dr Laura Cornelsen, Assistant Professor in Public Health Economics at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, presented on 'Framing and signalling effects of taxes on sugary drinks: a discrete choice experiment among households in Great Britain'. In May, Dr David Meads, Associate Professor at the Leeds Institute of Health Sciences at the University of Leeds presented on 'Exploring the impact of choice on cost-effectiveness: A case study in community intravenous antibiotics for infections'.

We thank all our seminar speakers over the last session. Details of the 2019/20 programme will be published when available <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/heru/heruevents/heru-seminars/>.

## Supporting public engagement in our research



L to R: Rodolfo Hernandez, Alastair Irvine and Patricia Norwood

Our Public Engagement team has been busy. **Ourega-Zoé Ejebu** took part in Soapbox Science on the 25th of May at the University of Aberdeen's King's Lawn. This interactive event is part of the University's May Festival and it brings local women in science to the public to share their research, without a PowerPoint slide in sight! Zoé talked about her research on alcohol minimum unit pricing. On the 30th of May, **Patrícia Norwood**, **Rodolfo Hernández** and **Alastair Irvine** visited HM Prison Peterhead as part of the 'Cell Block Science' initiative. This Wellcome Trust funded initiative aims to deliver informal science learning to prisoners and in this event the team discussed how health economics informs decision making on health care financing.



Ourega-Zoé Ejebu undertaking her Soapbox Science event

## New Funding

**Verity Watson** and **Nicolas Krucien** (HERU) with co-applicants from Academic Urology and Health Psychology, University of Aberdeen were awarded £35,801 over 24 months from the Urology Foundation to design a new decision aid tool to help men with prostate cancer make **informed** treatment decisions.

In collaboration with colleagues in the Department of Gynaecology, University of Aberdeen, **Graham Scotland** (HERU) secured funding from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) (£2.2 million over 54 months) for the 'CATHETER II Study: A randomised controlled trial comparing the clinical and cost-effectiveness of various washout policies, versus no washout policy, in preventing catheter associated complications in adults living with long-term catheters'.

With colleagues in the Health Services Research Unit (HSRU), Applied Health Sciences and Obstetrics and Gynaecology, **Mandy Ryan** (HERU) secured funded by NHS Grampian (Endowments) for their research into the value of the baby box initiative in Scotland (£10,427 over on year).

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