

Welcome to our October Newsletter

In this issue we highlight our MSc in Health Economics for Health Professionals and welcome our latest cohort of students. We also feature an exciting new research project on supporting shared decision making in breast cancer care and report the results of the iQuaD trial which is informing guidelines and country-level dental contracts internationally.

We hope you enjoy reading about our work and activities. Further information is available on our website and you can see more frequent updates on the HERU twitter account (@HERU_Abdn).

Plenary at the first Swiss Society of Health Economics Conference

Mandy Ryan delivered the closing plenary presentation at the first conference of the Swiss Society of Health Economics in Lucerne, Switzerland. Mandy spoke about valuation in health economics,

highlighting the importance of taking a patient-centred approach to valuation, and reflected on her experiences as a patient as well as her extensive research in this area.



Mandy Ryan, Plenary, Lucerne

NHS Research Scotland Conference

On 30th October **Shona Christie, Dwayne Boyers, Shelley Farrar, Zoé Ejebu, and Nicolas Krucien** attended the NHS Research Scotland Conference. This year's conference focused on 'the NHS at 70: the impact of research then, now and in the future'. The conference was well attended and the HERU contingent enjoyed attending sessions and welcoming delegates to discuss health economics at our HERU stand.



Café MED: 'See Cancer'

On 28th September, as part of the University's **Café MED** series, we took part in a public engagement event in the Town



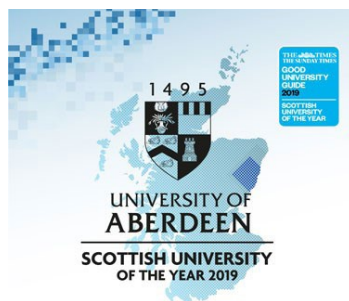
Mandy Ryan, Steve Heys, Val Speirs

House, Aberdeen. Titled 'See Cancer', the event looked at how the plans of the University of Aberdeen for a world-class centre for cancer research are taking shape. It was led by Professor Steve Heys (Head of School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition), Professor Valerie Speirs (Chair in Molecular Oncology) and Professor **Mandy Ryan** (Director of HERU).

Many members of the public, researchers and clinicians attended and heard about the developments in cancer research, the fundraising campaign and the potential for future trials and cutting-edge treatments.

Aberdeen-Curtin Alliance PhD opportunities

Two fully-funded joint PhD scholarships in Health Economics are available for 2019 entry as part of the Aberdeen-Curtin Alliance (<http://aberdeencurtinalliance.org/>). We welcome PhD proposals in the following areas of health economics: economics of health behaviours, the development and application of Discrete Choice Experiments, evaluation of interventions that require broader measure of value and development of novel methods for utilising and analysing linked administrative health data. For further information contact **Marjon van der Pol** (m.vanderpol@abdn.ac.uk).



Scottish University of the Year

We were proud to hear that the University of Aberdeen has been named as Scottish University of the Year in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019.

Nordic meeting in Oslo

Elisabet Jacobsen attended a meeting in Oslo hosted by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health with attendance from all the Nordic countries. Elisabet gave a presentation on HTA and medical technologies in the UK.



Elisabet Jacobsen

New project – Supporting shared decision making in early and advanced breast cancer: what matters to patients in an era of personalised care?

Patients face information overload when considering the balance of risks and benefits from the wide variety of treatment options for early and advanced breast cancer. Clinical teams need help to understand what matters most to patients if they are to help them navigate these difficult choices.

The Breast Cancer Institute is funding an 18-month project to investigate preferences for breast cancer treatment. Using the discrete choice experiment methodology, this project aims to better understand which side effects are important to individuals when balanced against potential clinical benefits. The project will work with local patients and the clinical team to develop a large scale online survey that seeks to measure the preferences of patients, carers and the general public for benefits versus specific risks. The analysis will help understand how such preferences vary between individuals and will unpick the disparity between the perceptions of the clinical team and the reality of patient wishes.

The results will be available as a basis for the development of improved shared



decision-making processes, patient information or decision aids. A comparison of the results will also be made with the preferences put forward in recent Public and Clinical Engagement statements during the assessment of new medicines by the Scottish Medicines Consortium.

The project is carried out in collaboration with colleagues at the Edinburgh Cancer Research Centre. **Professor Mandy Ryan** and **Dr Nicolas Krucien** from HERU will contribute. For further information please contact **Mandy Ryan** at m.ryan@abdn.ac.uk.

Secure Lab User Consultation Workshop

Dr Diane Skåtun was invited to attend the Secure Lab User Consultation Workshop on 2nd October held at the Westminster Conference Centre, London. The workshop was organised by the UK Data Service, in conjunction with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The UK Data Service Secure Lab allows researchers

to access sensitive data that cannot be made available under standard access arrangements. The workshop consisted of presentations from the ESRC, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the UK Data Service, followed by four 'lightning' talks from users of the

secure lab service. HERU's use of the secure lab facility relating to research on the Staff Market Forces Factor was presented within this invited user presentation session. The afternoon was spent discussing the practicalities of using the secure lab and supporting its use in the future.

New project: Testosterone Effects and Safety in Men with Low Testosterone levels



The National Institute for Health Research have provided funding (17/68/01) for a study into the clinical benefits and risks of androgen replacement therapy (ART) in men with symptomatic low testosterone. Despite current uncertainty on the effectiveness of ART, prescriptions have doubled in the UK since 2001 and prescription costs have increased eight-fold.

This new research will provide a synthesis of current quantitative, qualitative and economic evidence and will include a new decision model-based economic evaluation utilising patient level data. **Rodolfo Hernández** of HERU is a co-applicant on the project which started in September 2018 and is funded for 24 months.

Capacity Building

Building Global Capacity in Health Economics

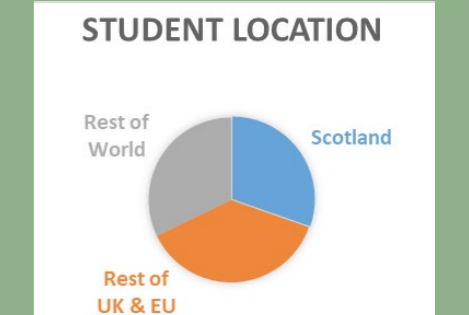
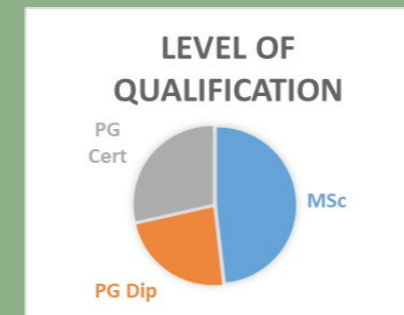
The MSc in Health Economics for Health Professionals was launched in 2017/18 as part of HERU's strategy to increase capacity in health economics skills and knowledge.

We have around 50 students studying on the online programme in 2018/19. Students choose between studying to Post Graduate Certificate, Diploma or

MSc level. The most popular choice, as can be seen in the chart below, is to study to MSc. This has become a more feasible option for our part-time students as the University has relaxed the regulations on the permitted time to completion.

The second chart shows that around a third of our current cohort of students are living in Scotland or working in the Scottish healthcare sector. The remainder of the students are split broadly between 'the rest of the UK and other EU countries' and 'the rest of the world'. We are delighted to be making such a significant contribution to the building of health economics capacity globally and particularly in Scotland. Our students are drawn from a range of professional backgrounds, for example, different medical specialties,

including psychiatry and general practice; ophthalmology; orthodontics; physiotherapy; the prison service; health services research; the pharmaceutical and medical devices industry and various administrative functions within local and national health and healthcare organisations.



Improving the Quality of Dentistry, the IQaD study



Scale and polish is a widely used technology in the UK (about 15m treatments per year) to prevent periodontal disease, but little is known about its clinical or cost-effectiveness.

The IQaD trial compared the clinical (gingival inflammation at after 3 years) and cost-benefit of offering scale and polish (none, annual, six-monthly) alone or in combination with different types of oral hygiene advice (routine, personalised).

We found no evidence of any clinical benefit of routinely provided scale and polish, or personalised hygiene advice. Compared to standard care, no scale-and-polish with personalised advice has the greatest NHS: -£15 (-£34 to +£4) and participant: -£64 (-£112 to -£16) cost savings. However, the general population place a high value on (and are willing to pay for) scale-and-polish and personalised oral-hygiene-advice services.

A judgement is required as to whether health services should pay the additional cost for services which are highly valued by the general population and therefore increase social welfare, but which do not deliver measurable clinical benefit.

The IQaD study was funded by the National Institute for Health Research Health Technology Assessment Programme (Project Number 09/01/45). The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the HTA programme, NIHR, NHS, or the Department of Health. The Health Services and Health Economics Research Units are funded by the Chief Scientist Office of the Scottish Government Health & Social Care Directorates.

For further information contact: d.boyers@abdn.ac.uk, or visit <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/heru/research/assessment-of-technologies/inuse-tech/iquad/>.

Other News...

Focus on new member of staff – Huey Chong

Huey Chong joined HERU as a Research Fellow in September 2018. In 2018 she gained a PhD in Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences from Monash University, Australia, where she researched the health economics of personalised medicine in Southeast Asia.



Farewells

In September and October, we said a fond farewell to Aileen Neilson and Dr Gin Nie Chua. Aileen has moved to a new post at the Usher Institute of Population Health Sciences and Informatics, University of Edinburgh, and Dr Gin Nie Chua took up a post with Evidera. We wish them both all the best.

HERU promotions

We are delighted that Dr Graham Scotland has been promoted to Reader. He is currently theme leader for our Assessment of Technologies theme.



PhD student success

Congratulations to **Laura Dysart** and **Luis Loria Rebolledo** who successfully defended their PhD's.

Luis' thesis on *'Investigating preferences for low emission buses'*, and Laura's on *'Health over time: An investigation into the relationship between the future and health behaviours for people with long term conditions'*.



HERU's External Seminar Series: Welcome to past colleagues

In October, we welcomed two former Research Fellows in HERU who returned to the Unit to give a presentation as part of our external seminar series.



Dr Philip Kinghorn

Dr Philip Kinghorn from the University of Birmingham, gave a talk on 'Methods for eliciting a monetary threshold for public spending on social care and public health: arbitrated deliberative versus individual citizen values'.

Professor Julie Ratcliffe, Professor of Health Economics, Institute for Choice, University of South Australia, presented on 'Best worst scaling versus traditional ranking generated preferences for attributes of quality of life. One and the same or different? An empirical investigation in an Australian general population sample'.



Professor Julie Ratcliffe

New funding secured

We have been funded by Arthritis Research UK (ARUK) to research 'Patient-centred Care for Fibromyalgia: New pathway Design (PACFIND)'. The project will run for five years with funding of £832,600 and is headed by Professor Gary Macfarlane of the Epidemiology Group at the University of Aberdeen. Professor Paul McNamee of HERU is a co-applicant on the grant.



the Breast Cancer Institute

We have been funded by the Breast Cancer Institute to research preferences for treatment of breast cancer. The project will run for 18 months with funding of £125,724 and is headed by Dr Peter Hall (Senior Clinical Lecturer/Honorary Consultant Oncologist at the Edinburgh Cancer Research Centre). Professor Mandy Ryan of HERU is a co-applicant and Dr Nicolas Krucien from HERU will also contribute.



Health Economics Research Unit

University of Aberdeen, Institute of Applied Health Sciences,
Polwarth Building, Foresterhill, Aberdeen AB25 2ZD

T: +44 (0)1224 437196 F: +44 (0)1224 437195
E: heru@abdn.ac.uk W: www.abdn.ac.uk/heru /HERU_Abdn