

Newsletter for Summer 2018

Learning the importance of research impact at the Doctoral Training Alliance summer school

PhD student Laura Simmons attended the Doctoral Training Alliance Biosciences for Health summer school hosted by the University of Huddersfield on the 24th-26th July. During the 3-day event students took part in a variety of workshops that focused on how individuals can make an impact with their research. The main focus of the summer school was the Impact Challenge where students had to present a pitch to a group of judges on a particular research topic. They were encouraged to choose a goal, define the outcomes, outputs and funding requirements. This provided a great opportunity for students to consider how much funding would be required and what resources would be needed to carry out the project. They were also encouraged to consider our connections to external charities and organisations that could help us in achieving the project goals.



There were a variety of projects that were presented during the summer school including: a uterus massage to reduce haemorrhaging and maternal mortality (Laura Simmons); a diabetes mobile app to reduce mortality from non-communicable diseases and promote health (Sophie Mohamed); and implementing an online training course to empower healthcare workforces in developing countries (Ksenia Trischel).

Laura and her team were one of three groups who were awarded 'funding' from the judging panel (awarded in chocolate coins!) for their work on developing an educational programme to reduce haemorrhage during childbirth to reduce maternal mortality.

Overall the Impact Challenge was a useful exercise that mirrored the real life expectations of working with colleagues to produce a funding application. It challenged students to think outside the box and consider the impact that the project may have from other perspectives such as the economy.

For more information about the Doctoral Training Alliance visit their website <https://unialliance.ac.uk/dta/programmes/dta-applied-biosciences-for-health>

By Laura Simmons

Continuing to Work with Parliament



Dr Coral Sirdifield and Dr Rebecca Marples from CaHRU are continuing to engage with parliament and raise awareness of the research that they are doing around healthcare for people on probation. Earlier this month they met with Dr Phillip Lee, MP for Bracknell and former Minister for Youth Justice, Victims, Female Offenders and Offender Health. Coral and Rebecca discussed their current work on their Improving Healthcare Commissioning for Probation: 'Mapping the Landscape' project, and Dr Lee agreed to be part of the external advisory group for this project.

Coral and Rebecca have also recently contributed to the Ministry of Justice Consultation on the proposed changes to the structure and content of probation services 'Strengthening Probation, building confidence'. Here they have highlighted the importance of focusing on the health of offenders to reduce health inequalities in society, meet public health targets, reduce reoffending, and save money that is currently wasted on avoidable use of crisis services and the costs associated with reoffending. Here and in their research, Coral's team are providing an evidence base and offering practical solutions to some of the problems around improving offenders' health and access to healthcare.

By Dr Coral Sirdifield

CaHRU sleep research cited in UK parliamentary briefings on Sleep and Health

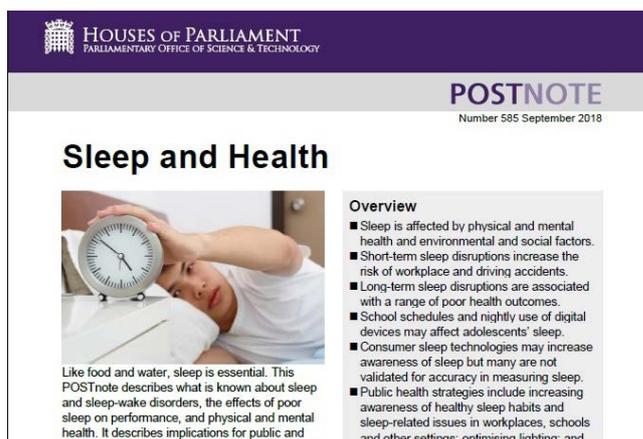
Sleep and health research from CaHRU was cited in the recently published parliamentary briefings on 'Sleep and Health' and 'Sleep and Long-term Health'. The briefing was issued as a POSTnote from the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology and cited CaHRU's work on primary care for insomnia including the Resources for Effective Sleep Treatment (REST) website. Professor Graham Law and Niro Siriwardena met with one of the co-authors Lev Tankelevitch earlier this year to discuss their work.

The briefing on Sleep and Health also cites two systematic reviews led by CaHRU's Dr Coral Sirdifield on patient and general practitioner (GP) perceptions of the problems of benzodiazepine sleeping pills, an article by Prof Siriwardena providing guidance for GPs, and the OASIS trial (led by Prof Dan Freeman of Oxford University) showing the effects of treatment using digital Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (dCBTi) on psychiatric symptoms. The briefing on Sleep and Long-term Health research papers on sleep assessment and the DIALS trial showing the effect of dCBTi on quality of life which was published in JAMA Psychiatry.

CaHRU's REST project is also explicitly mentioned: 'One strategy to improve training for healthcare professionals is through online training developed by the Resources for Effective Sleep Treatment project'. The REST e-learning programme for GPs and healthcare staff has been accessed over 16,000 times by users in over 160 countries.

POSTnotes are distributed in paper copies to Parliamentarians, placed in the reference libraries of both Houses of Parliament and also promoted via social media using Twitter @POST_UK. CaHRU are currently collaborating in a major trial of sleep restriction therapy in primary care, the HABIT trial.

By Prof Niro Siriwardena



CaHRU at SAPC Annual Scientific Meeting London 2018

Professor Siriwardena attended the Society for Academic Primary Care Annual Scientific Meeting which this year was hosted by Barts and the London Queen Mary University of London and took place at his alma mater of St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College, with the main conference sessions at the Guildhall School of Music and the Barbican Centre. The theme of this year's conference was 'Learning from Europe and populations on the move'.

The first day, taken up by the Heads of Departments meeting, was punctuated by the RAF centenary flypast over London. Highlights of the conference included the 5th Helen Lester Memorial Lecture given by Professor Anne McFarlane, with the enigmatic title 'The leper's squint: spaces for participation in primary health care'. There were further plenaries given by Professor Val Wass on 'Populations on the move' and Lord Victor Adebawale, past Chancellor of the University of Lincoln on 'Primary care: exclusion, inclusion and community'.

CaHRU's research 'Explaining differences in Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners Applied Knowledge Test performance associated with candidate sex and ethnicity' which featured as an oral presentation in a session on education was well received. There were many excellent and interesting oral presentations, posters and workshops including an interesting session facilitated by Prof Deborah Swinglehurst (QMUL) and Dr Stefan Hjørleifsson (University of Bergen) on 'resisting too much medicine'.

Finally there was an excellent social programme including drinks in the Great Hall at Barts, dinner at the Tower Hotel beside the Tower of London and an interesting walk through London with Dr Sally Hull.

By Prof Niro Siriwardena

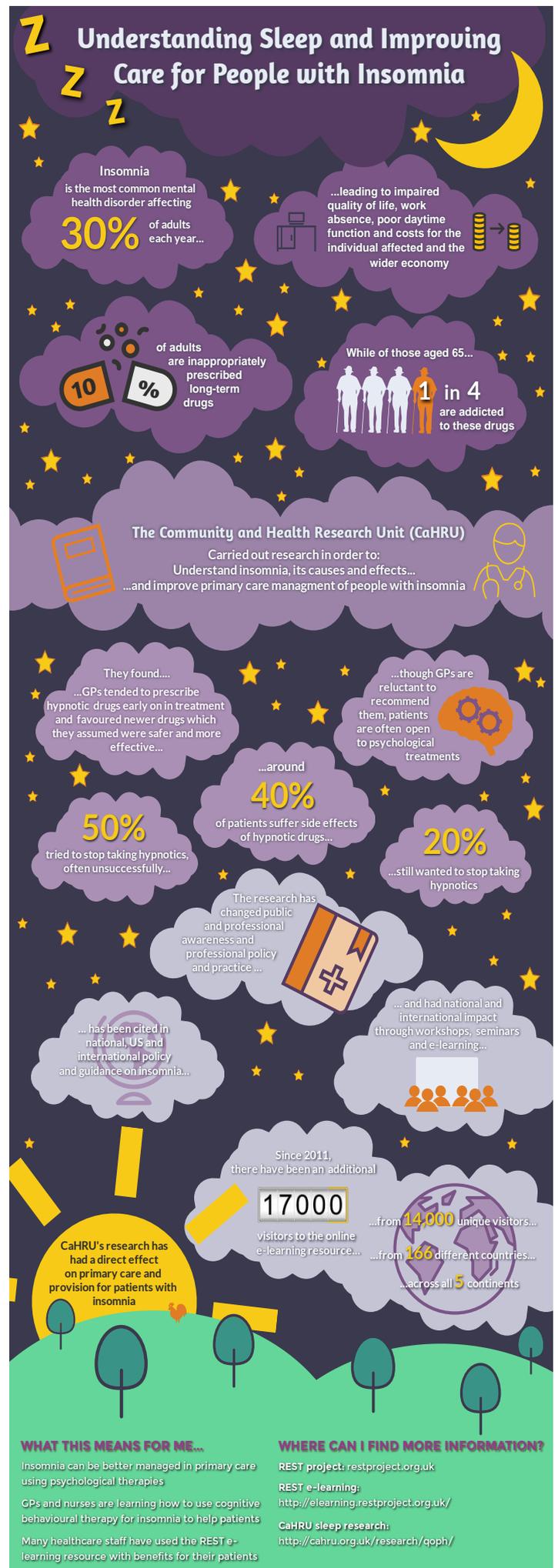
How we are making a difference?

CaHRU's research impact has now been captured in a series of stunning infographics created by student intern Beth Warman and accessed via our page 'How we are making a difference'. Beth, after studying a number of impact case studies produced by Professor Niro Siriwardena and the team describing the effect of CaHRU's research on "change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia", developed this evidence into the infographics. These capture how CaHRU's research is making a difference in a visual form, accessible to the general public as well as the scientific community in a number of topics including: sleep and insomnia, prehospital outcome measures, flu vaccination uptake, large-scale healthcare quality improvement programmes, new prehospital ambulance pathways, and reliable, valid and fair licensing exams for doctors.

Beth, a student in psychology recently graduated and is studying for her PhD entitled 'Character strengths, mindfulness and pro-environmental behaviours: how awareness of one's strengths affects engagement in sustainability'. She will be looking at mindfulness and the positive psychological traits most strongly associated with being eco-friendly.

She is also a research assistant, working with Dr Roger Bretherton on a project called 'The character course: design, dissemination and evaluation of a church-based small group programme for character development'. This will involve creating a church-based multimedia course to encourage people's use of certain personal strengths (in this case, learning, hope, love, forgiveness, gratitude, humour, persistence and curiosity). We wish her the best in her future endeavours and thank her for the work she has done with CaHRU.

By Prof Niro Siriwardena



Publications

Espie CA, Emsley R, Kyle SD, Gordon C, Drake CL, Siriwardena AN, Cape J, Ong JC, Sheaves B, Foster R, Freeman D, Costa-Font J, Marsden A, Luik AI. The mediating impact of improved insomnia symptoms on functional health, quality of life and psychological wellbeing: a randomized controlled trial. *JAMA Psychiatry* 2018 (online first).

Parke A, Griffiths M, Pattinson J, Keatley D. Age-related physical and psychological vulnerability as pathways to problem gambling in older adults *Journal of Behavioural Addictions* 2018 (online first).

Pattinson J, Lewis S, Bains M, Britton J, Langley T. Vape shops: who uses them and what do they do? *BMC Public Health* 2018; 18:541.

Brooker C, Paul S, Sirdifield C. Mental health in Sexual Assault Referral Centres: A survey of forensic physicians. *Forensic and Legal Medicine* 2018; 58:117-121.

Espie CA, Machado PF, Carl J, Kyle SD, Cape J, Siriwardena AN, Luik AI. The Sleep Condition Indicator: reference values derived from a sample of 200,000 adults. *Journal of Sleep Research* 2018; 27(3):e12643.

Funding

Siriwardena AN, Ellis Vowles V, Jackson J, Menezes I, Hodgson T. Exploring experiences of the illness, its care and achieving function following Guillain-Barre syndrome. Gain: 'Guillain-Barré and associated Inflammatory Neuropathies', £35,745.