A welcome from our Faculty Research and Enterprise Lead, Dr Helen Poole.

Welcome to the first edition of the Faculty Research and Innovation Newsletter, designed to provide updates, information and contacts for all Faculty staff, PGR students, Service Users, PPI participants and external stakeholders.

Research is central to the strategic direction of the University with the Strategic Plan 2020 and Beyond citing research as integral to the three key strategic aims: Future Focused, Super Supportive and Social Impact.

The Faculty of Health and Society, in collaboration with our partners, is well placed to deliver research and enterprise activities that contribute to the 2020 and Beyond strategy, and already has a significant record in this respect.

We can only feature a small selection of our activity in the newsletter, but I hope you enjoy this edition and that it widens your understanding of the breadth of research our Faculty is engaged with.

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Questions or queries about research in the Faculty of Health and Society?
Email fhsresearch@northampton.ac.uk
In the Faculty of Health & Society we crossed the borders of science and psychology through a highly popular topic: ‘mindfulness’. With an emphasis on wellbeing throughout the NHS, the application of mindfulness is on the rise. With this in ‘mind’ David Young from Human Bioscience (below)

and Rachel Evenden from Psychology (above) were encouraged to utilise each other’s skills and deliver a more comprehensive and unique take on the subject.

The session allowed the students to experience this hot topic from not only their own perspective, but also that of different disciplines.

Human Bioscience learners (above) fully engaged and tried for themselves to experience mindfulness and it was received with such high praise, the class have asked for Rachel to come back before the exam period to help them fulfil their potential.

Furthermore, the psychology class could get a hands-on approach to neuro-anatomy by dismantling brain models to understand where areas of conscious contention arise.

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Public and Patient Involvement in Falls and Risk Prevention  Tony Kay

Falls are the main reason for hospital admissions in older people (2.5m per year) in the UK, resulting in serious injury including 75,000 hip fractures and 30,000 deaths within 12 months of a fall.

This is a particular problem for care home residents where 60% fall at least once a year.

However, routine screening for fall risk factors is not performed as current tests are time consuming and expensive, and predicting who is likely to fall is not sufficiently accurate.

Researchers at the University of Northampton, Coventry University and Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust recently submitted a Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) bid to the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) titled ‘Using low-cost portable screening diagnostics to measure multiple fall and fracture risk factors and improve fall prediction in care home residents’.

To ensure the project has external validity, it was developed with patient and public involvement (PPI) representatives, including care home residents and workers, and older individuals living in their own homes.

A PPI meeting funded by the Research Design Service East Midlands (RDSEM) was held in October 2018 that enabled PPI representatives to influence the design of the project by commenting on the potential acceptability of the methods to care home residents and staff, questioning the rationale for the project and its design, reviewing the ‘Plain English Summary of Research’ section to ensure clarity for a lay audience, providing feedback that validated the aims, and suggesting changes to improve the testing and dissemination strategies.

Feedback from the PPI representatives specifically indicated they:

1. understood and validated the Plain English Summary, aims and need for the research
2. felt comfortable that the testing protocols would be accepted by residents
3. were confident that care homes would welcome and engage with the project
4. suggested care home staff were present during testing to reassure residents
5. thought that testing should take place in a private area or the resident’s room to maintain dignity
6. felt a common falls reporting form would make recording consistent and simpler to collate data across care homes
7. suggested that residents’ families (where appropriate) were informed of the project
8. thought that including workshops with local care homes could be included to disseminate the findings.

In addition to PPI being embedded within the development phase, if successful PPI will continue throughout the project with representatives being part of the project’s Steering Group working alongside research and clinical representatives to ensure the project is not only developed, but also delivered and disseminated, with the patients’ and care providers’ voice at the forefront of the research.
UnityDEM Evaluation  Mary Burton

Professor Jackie Parkes and Mary Burton (Senior Lecturer in OT) alongside local health professionals, are currently involved in an exciting evaluation project working directly within the local community. ‘Understanding the impact of UnityDEM for people with early stage dementia and their carers’ is the title of a mixed methods study; a ChangeMaker project that is being completed by the University of Northampton and NHFT. The project aims to establish whether the provision of a community based psychosocial support programme (UnityDEM) for people newly diagnosed with dementia supports cognitive function, quality of life, and social and community engagement over 12 months, and to establish whether this also enhances the quality of life for their carers. Mid and post intervention measures (ACE-III, MOHOST, self-reporting via OSA, DEMQol and BADLS) with people with dementia for cognitive function, quality of life and social engagement are being conducted. Post assessment for family carers of people with dementia for quality of life, wellbeing with questions on access to care and social/community engagement (ACQol, Dem QoL-Proxy Version 4, WHO-5, Community Integration Measure) are also planned alongside a focus group with carers to ascertain their perceptions of the maintained capacity and quality of life of the people living with dementia and the personal impact of attending the centre.

CHILD-UP: Helping Migrant Children’s Positive Integration

Given the unprecedented increase in migration over the past few years, it is no surprise we are in what some commentators have called the ‘decade of the child migrant.’ Despite gains to support the integration of adult migrants, for instance helping them to better integrate into employment, comparatively there is much less in terms of policies and practice to help children who find themselves in alien education systems. A new, pan-European research project will look at developing better ways schools can support them. The ‘CHILD UP’ project* starts this month and the University of Northampton is one of eight higher education institutes across the continent involved in the research.** CHILD UP will collate current practices in schools, spotlight the best of what different countries across Europe provide, as well as listening to the opinions of adult and child migrants and education professionals about how and why they work, and what else could work in the future. The research, funded by the European Commission, will last for three years and involves:

- A review of existing, national integration policies and legislation across all partner countries
- A survey of migrant children and their parents to gauge their experiences of UK schools, teachers and children

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New Faculty member is calling on all dog owners.

Dr Wanda McCormick has recently joined FHS. She has brought with her a continuing PhD student that is exploring the shape of dog skulls and they are looking for more participants. You may have heard about this project before as both Wanda and Claire Mitchell, her student, used to work at Moulton College, and the project got some local press attention last year but in case you missed it last time, here’s a quick round up...

Dogs show the most extreme phenotypic ranges of any vertebrate animals with the breeds we have produced spanning everything from chihuahuas to Great Danes, and the head shows a huge diversity. Traditionally, skulls are grouped as either brachycephalic (short-faced), mesaticephalic (medium-faced) or dolichocephalic (long-faced) but these labels are based on a human system and don’t really account for the full range of shapes we see. As the shape of the skull directly affects the way that animals process food, it is also linked to their dental health, and pilot work has suggested different incidences of problems existed accordingly. To fully explore this, Claire is trying to determine a better skull classification system, with support from Robin Crockett in the Faculty of Arts, Science and Technology, by using images of as many dogs as possible. Any dog can be included, pedigree or mongrel, it just requires owners to submit two head photos alongside a few details on the dog. If you own a dog and are interested in taking part, please email claire.mitchell@northampton.ac.uk
Measures for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

A new paper co-authored by Dr Karen Anthony is the result of longstanding international collaborations between academia and industry to standardise biochemical outcome measures for Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) drug development. Dr Anthony played a key role in the early clinical development of the first FDA-approved drug for DMD, Exondys51® and is continuing pre-clinical and clinical work focusing on the brain-related comorbidities in Duchenne.

https://journals.plos.org/plostone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0204485

Children’s Friendships in Middle Childhood

Rachel Maunder has recently had an article published in the British Journal of Developmental Psychology. The study, co-authored by Dr Claire Monks at the University of Greenwich, investigated children's friendships in middle childhood. Over 300 primary school children completed a survey about their friends in class, the quality of their best friendship and a measure of self-worth and peer and school identification. Findings showed that best friendships were better quality when they were reciprocated (i.e. both children identified each other as being best friends) and friendship reciprocity was most relevant for children's self-worth and peer identification. The study shows that reciprocated friendships appear to be particularly important for children's adjustment, suggesting that peer relations interventions should focus on helping children nurture meaningful dyadic friendships.


Forensic Gait Analysis

Forensic gait analysis is a rapidly developing domain and is being used successfully with increasing frequency. There is a need for research to improve the understanding of the effects of variables on human gait, given that the recognition and comparison of repeatable and exclusive features is important in forensic gait analysis. To this end Dr Mike Curran and an ex-student Richard Anness have recently had an article published in the Journal of Forensic Identification. The research was an investigation into the effect of weight on angle and base of gait. The findings from the study were when carrying a weight of 15kg to the left-hand side of the body, there was an effect on the angle and base of gait. The base of gait decreased and the left (non-dominant) foot abducted excessively, whereas the right foot abducted marginally. Where these increases and decreases in abduction come from are unclear at present and this is an area for further research. Dr Curran was pleased to get this published having previously presented the findings at an international forensic conference in Atlanta, Georgia in the US.

Affiliations and awards

Rachel Maunder has recently become a member of the British Psychological Society (BPS) Psychology of Education Section Committee. As part of this role, Rachel will be contributing to the work of the Section, publicising its work and encouraging new members, and assisting with planning for annual conferences.

Further information about the Psychology of Education Section is available here: https://www1.bps.org.uk/networks-and-communities/member-microsite/psychology-education-section

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PURE has arrived  Dawn Hibbert

Pure is the University of Northampton’s Research Information system. It contains individual profiles for all staff members who are research active. Staff members can verify, add, or update the information in their individual profile – including checking for new publications – at any time. Pure includes publications, projects, awards, datasets, press clippings, activities and impacts. Pure is designed to cover the entire publication journey, from preparation, through to submission, acceptance and publication and beyond.

Research outputs, projects, activities and impacts, including presenting a seminar, publishing a journal article, through to organising a conference, can all be inputted to Pure. This information (with the exception of sensitive/confidential/commercial research) can be displayed on the web via the Pure Public Portal (University of Northampton Research Explorer (NRE)). Note, all publisher's policies will be respected, with full text only being made available where allowed.

Pure allows you to have items that are ‘in preparation’ or at an ‘entry in progress’ stage – where they will only be visible to you and Pure administrators. Reports of this information are extremely helpful for research leaders. The metadata and full text files that are fed through to the portal are highly visible in Google, and other search engine search results.

The platform from which academics can access Pure is: https://pure.northampton.ac.uk/admin/ - log in using your University login details.

One-to-one and group training sessions commenced on 28 January and a new yammer group ‘Pure’ will contain a Pure handbook, instruction videos and priorities for staff. This will continue to be updated throughout the year. The public portal to Pure went live on 18 February at our Pure launch/Diamond Research Awards night.

If you have any questions relating to Pure please email pure@northampton.ac.uk

Poole’s Puzzles

Across
3. Common element of analysis in qualitative research (6)
4. Non-probability form of sampling (9)
7. Location of the PGR workspace (6)
8. Experimental Psychologist used as an ethical case study (7)
11. Journal article summary (8)
14. Analysis software for quantitative research (1,1,1,1)
15. Professor of Psychology in FHS (4,3)
16. Surname of author of Real World Research (6)
17. Variable that stands alone (11)
18. Former Executive Dean for Research and Enterprise (5, 5)

Down
1. Rite of passage for doctoral students (7)
2. Group contributing to research (6,3,8)
5. Ethical requirement for interviews (8,7)
6. Theory testing research (9)
9. Analysis of the relationship between 2 variables (9)
10. Submersive qualitative research approach (11)
12. New acronym for the RSBO (1,1,1,1)
13. Beliefs about reality (8)
Lucy Atkinson has produced an article for the PsyPag Guide 2, which is produced by PsyPag, a national organisation for all psychology postgraduates based at UK Institutions and is funded by the Research Board of the British Psychological Society. The article, titled ‘Alternative Funding for Psychology Postgraduates,’ is an overview of what alternative funding sources are available for postgraduate students. Charity funding is an incredible source and one not to forget when planning further higher education courses such as a master’s or PhD.

The PsyPag Guide 2 released on 21 January will be distributed in the Faculty’s academic workspace and Research Students’ Workspace in the Senate building, once physical copies have been delivered. Here is the link to the first PsyPag Guide, which includes useful articles: http://www.psypag.co.uk/psypag-book/

My story

Six months into teaching English as a Foreign Language in South China in a reputable boarding school putting my master’s knowledge into practise, I browsed the internet for funded PhD scholarships and projects. I knew I wanted to begin a new challenge, complete research at doctorate level in the UK and begin working towards my career goal of being an academic lecturer and researcher. After searching, I couldn’t find any PhD opportunities which fit my research ideas, and several of the deadlines had already passed. I quickly realised that I would be self-funding the course. Shortly after being accepted for the PhD, I began researching again for sources of alternative funding. Quite baffled and not entirely sure where I could look, a family member stumbled across an article by Anderson (2011) in The Guardian, which detailed ‘alternative funding for postgraduate study’. I followed the advice in the article and began to locate funding and thinking about what I needed the funding for other than my tuition fees. Due to my research being experimental fieldwork, I knew additional funds for travel and materials were needed.

To date, I have won over £12,000 for my PhD over the last four years and have gained experience in writing different types of applications. Some of the charities which have funded my PhD are: Sidney Perry Foundation, Merchant Navy Educational Trust and the Dorothy Johnson Charity. I feel that postgraduate students in Psychology need to be more aware of the different types of funding, especially alternative sources. My strong advice to postgraduate students is to research all avenues (e.g. internal awards, internet databases and educational directories) and begin applying. Students often need some encouragement to apply to these sources and knowing where and how to apply. Furthermore, I would advise any graduate who is thinking of going into postgraduate study (master’s or PhD) to always follow their plan and dream. If money is the only barrier, it can be alleviated. Charity funding is an incredible source and one not to forget when planning further higher studies. More important is the experience that comes from engaging in funding applications as this can provide an insight into writing grants in the future. It can also help in future employment applications when there is evidence of securing funds and grants.”

Primary funding sources

Charities and trusts

Alternative sources of funding are a resource which students can apply to and they typically come in the form of charities and trusts. Charities are sometimes a bit unusual, obscure, hard to find, and funded by ‘old money’. However, there will be dozens which
will consider sponsoring you, whatever your course, university, nationality or background, and whether you need money for fees, maintenance, research costs, travel, or conferences. Hearing about charities funding postgraduate courses may come as a surprise, as few people or universities are familiar with this funding option. The UK has a strong tradition of philanthropy, and there are many thousands of charities, trusts, and foundations out there with grant-making power totalling millions, that will consider funding students at both postgraduate and undergraduate level (Blaxill & Zhou, 2018). These voluntary bodies vary considerably in size and resources from huge multi-million pound organisations like Oxfam, to small trust funds run by a few volunteers.

Some charities and trusts are specific, for example The Vegetarian Charity which will only grant postgraduate funding to students with a history of vegetarianism or veganism, and The Leverhulme Trade Charities Trust will only finance students who are related to grocers, chemists, or commercial travellers. Most of them, however, are interested in simply helping people overcome financial difficulty, and funding good causes.

**Professional bodies and societies**

Professional bodies and societies are a place to begin searching for conference and research-related costs once enrolled on your postgraduate course. Typically associated with your subject area, this source is interested in your research and helping with your professional development. Some examples are: British Psychological Society, British Academy, PsyPAG and the Experimental Psychological Society. Take advice from your supervisor or fellow peers and colleagues about relevant professional organisations, if there is a membership fee (usually discounted if you are a student or recent graduate) and what grants they have available.

**Crowdfunding**

Crowdfunding is a relatively new funding concept, and a major alternative fundraising strategy for postgraduate students. Websites such as Hubbub, Kickstarter or GoFundMe are ideal for beginning your campaign, although Hubbub seems to be the best for students at present.

There are many successful students who have succeeded in raising impressive sums for fees and maintenance through crowdfunding, and a few have received attention in the national press (Packham, 2016).

If you feel comfortable with the idea of crowdfunding, begin by creating a profile to raise funding for a designated specific amount of money (for example, £4,000 towards fees) and try to write a persuasive pitch for a lay audience on why you and your work are interesting and important, as you would for a charity. You could also include a video and promote your campaign on social media. While strangers can and do donate, crowdfunding campaigns are often most successful in raising money from people you already know, who are encouraged to give when they see you as a campaign.

A particularly innovative strategy would be to dovetail crowdfunding campaigns with charity applications. Naturally, if a charity is made aware that you are also running a crowdfunding campaign, especially one that already has some supporters, then they are likely to be emboldened by this in the same way they would be if you already had other charity backers.

**Top-up funding**

During your postgraduate studies, there will be situations where you will require top-up funding. For example, help with funding tuition fee payments, accommodation and maintenance, living costs, research related costs, travel costs, printing costs, equipment, memberships and/or conferences.

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Try to remain open to different platforms, networks and places when looking for top-up funding. Some of the areas to concentrate on and look at are listed below:

- Your institution - check your university website to see if there are any internal scholarships available. There is also usually a hardship grant.

- Online - using Google searches with keywords ‘alternative funding postgraduate,’ or ‘PhD charity funding.’ Often universities have published their own PDF documents of funding sources and awards, so it’s worth searching for these.

- Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding - a social enterprise which is committed to postgraduate funding from charities and providing students with the blueprint of where to look, how to apply, tips and advice and recent student stories.

- Local library - a visit to the local library (one where you live and your local authority, not your university library) can prove useful. Two sources to look for are: The Grants Register and The Directory of Grant Making Trusts. These books have dedicated sections for educational grants and will contain hundreds of bodies you may apply to.

Using the Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding

My motivation for looking for alternative funding sources came from the Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding (2018), which I read about through an article on The Guardian online. I purchased the PDF book, and used the advice, tips and contact details of over 30 charities. The resource now comes in an online version and universities across the UK subscribe, so it’s worth checking whether your university has a subscription. The Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding was initially founded in 2007 as a social enterprise dedicated to postgraduate funding from charities. They currently publish The Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding as a web resource, printed, CD, and PDF form and it’s one of the most popular postgraduate funding resources in the UK, selling over 500,000 copies or licences in the five years they have been publishing (Blaxill & Zhou, 2018). The online resource is incredibly compressive and an area of the website which is free to use is the Student Stories. These are real and honest accounts from postgraduate students who have received funds for their studies through alternative means, and well worth reading. Overall, I would say the Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding is a wonderful resource, and without finding this little gem I would really have never enrolled on my PhD. The guide gave me the blueprint for successful letter writing and spurred my interest and determination to keep on applying throughout each year of my PhD.

Other advice and tips

- Be prepared to spend some time on applications and follow up applications if you haven’t had any response or feedback on your application.
- Search using all methods, not just using online sources.
- Always read the charity or trusts history, case studies and tailor your applications.
- Log your applications in a spreadsheet with name, contact details, deadlines, criteria and whether you have applied or not, with the dates.

References


Labour and Birth in Water: Women’s Narratives
Claire Clews

Claire is graduating as a Doctor of Professional Practice this summer. Here she outlines the details of her study.

Waterbirth is currently a marginalised practice within midwifery in the UK. The research explored women’s stories of labour and birth in water and how these were constructed to reflect transitions to motherhood and changes in identity. The study sought to answer the question: What do women’s stories of waterbirth reveal about a woman’s self and social identity around birth?

A feminist framework guided the research design adopting a narrative inquiry methodology to explore the stories of ten women who birthed in water. A single in-depth interview facilitated elicitation of the women’s stories of waterbirth. Stories were analysed using the Voice Centred Relational Method (VCRM) with an emphasis given to the socio-cultural and relational contexts individual to the woman. Three key narratives that emerged from the women’s stories were identified. These were: the ‘visible self,’ the ‘agent self’ and the ‘connected self.’

The narrative of the ‘visible self’ spoke of how waterbirth offered the women protection and privacy during childbirth, it allowed them to retain a sense of their private self.
Women valued the presence of the midwife during the birth in two ways. First, when the midwife valued the woman’s intuitive knowledge of her own body and second, when the midwife maintained a non-interventionist stance in the birth process. The narrative of the ‘agent self’ illuminated storylines from the women of resistance, negotiation and compromise in order to achieve birth in water. Activation of the women’s agent self, afforded them feelings of control leading to an embodied sense of self. Continuous support from the midwife offered women reassurance, enhancing their perceptions of autonomy and empowerment.

Finally, the narrative of the ‘connected self’ illuminated water as a means of preventing disconnection instead fostering contemporary socio-cultural concepts of the ‘good mother’ for the women. It promoted connection between the woman and her newborn and helped to initiate a close family bond at birth. In a relational sense the women valued the emotional connection with the midwife, which was further strengthened when they mirrored the woman’s desire for waterbirth. The thesis concludes that taken collectively, these key narratives reflect how waterbirth enabled the women to maintain a secure identity during a time of transition.

On tour - Research can be such a pain

It is when you are involved in pain neurophysiology anyway....

Prof Jackie Campbell is preparing to go out to work at the University of Genoa, Italy, funded by the EU Erasmus programme, for a couple of weeks’ intensive collaboration with Prof Massimo Leandri, the Professor of Neurology there. He and Jackie have been working together on various aspects of pain research since the 1980s - their first joint publication was in 1985 on tooth-pulp evoked potentials (brain signals produced by electrically stimulating teeth – which they did on their own teeth)!

They are again working on pain-related evoked potentials as Massimo has developed a new electrode which enables selective stimulation of pain fibres. On her last trip, they worked on perfecting their recording technique (Jackie spent some time with needles in her scalp – apparently you get a better electrical connection that way) and they are now developing novel ways of analysing and interpreting these signals with a view to being able to use these recordings in clinical situations to assess the integrity of the nerve/spinal cord and brain pathways associated with pain perception. The good news is that all the recordings are being done in Italy, so she doesn’t need any volunteers!

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