Effective care for older people with depression

The UK’s largest ever study into the primary care of older people with depression is being carried out by researchers at the University of York.

Under the £1.6 million CASPER project, the York Mental Health Research Group – a partnership between HYMS and the University’s Department of Health Sciences – is examining the effectiveness of screening and psychological treatments for people aged over 75 with depression.

The treatments have been specially adapted to address social isolation and physical health problems common in older people and do not require hospital referral, with people remaining under the care of their general practitioner.

Depression is directly targeted by identifying older people with symptoms of depression and offering brief evidence-based psychological treatment delivered by York-trained psychological wellbeing practitioners over the telephone.

The five-year CASPER study is funded by the NHS Health Technology Assessment Programme and involves the York Mental Health Research Group, the York Trials Unit at the University of York and academics from the Universities of Leeds and Durham.

Dr Dean McMillan from HYMS and the University of York’s Department of Health Sciences helped design the treatment programme. He said: “Depression is very common in older people and often goes untreated. People sometimes see unhappiness and clinical depression as an inevitable consequence of growing old. This is unfortunate as in many cases effective treatments exist.

“In the CASPER project we have developed a treatment that can be offered over the phone which directly targets depression in older people.”

Continued on page 2...

Phase II trial success for new heart drug

Reports published in *The Lancet* by HYMS Professor of Cardiology John Cleland, of the University of Hull, have been referred to favourably in *Nature Reviews Cardiology*.

The reports which cover Professor Cleland’s findings that a novel, small-molecule, sarcomeredirected activator of cardiac myosin, omecamtiv mecarbil, is well tolerated in healthy individuals, and significantly improves cardiac function in patients with heart failure and left ventricular dysfunction, were reported in August’s edition of *The Lancet*.

To read both articles, click on the links below:

- [The Lancet](#)
- [Nature](#)
Effective care for older people with depression

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Dr Helen Lewis from the University’s Department of Health Sciences manages the trial. She said: “We have now trained therapists to deliver this intervention and we began recruiting participants to CASPER in June. People registered with GP practices in York have been the first to be offered the chance to participate in the trial.

“Later this year, the trial will be rolled out in Leeds and the North East as we need to recruit 450 people to test whether the treatment offers significant benefit in reducing depression symptoms and improving people’s quality of life.”

The Mental Health Research Group at York researches into common mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). It is directed by Professor Simon Gilbody, who is also leading the CASPER project.

He said: “These disorders are disabling and often go unrecognised and under-treated, particularly in older people. As a group we look into the causes, consequences and treatments for these conditions, focusing on brief psychological treatments which can be delivered over the telephone, via computer or in the GP surgery. This is one of several publicly-funded trials which we have been commissioned to undertake on behalf of the NHS into common mental health problems.

“We are keen to expand the range of psychological and social interventions offered in the NHS, but only if they are shown to be effective and good value for money. Therefore as part of any project we work very closely with colleagues at the University in the York Trials Unit and the Centre for Health Economics.”

Five years of HYMS at Scarborough

The HYMS Student Liaison team in Scarborough recently held an event to celebrate the first five years of the medical school at Scarborough Hospital.

A welcoming speech was given by Dean of HYMS Tony Kendrick with talks about Primary and Secondary Care from HYMS Directors of Clinical Study Mr Mark Laws and Dr Phil Perry.

Visitors had the opportunity to look round teaching facilities at the hospital and have a go at some of the activities which contribute to the students’ experience, including clinical skills sessions, OSCEs (objective structured clinical examinations) and delivering a baby.

The evening event, which took place at Scarborough Hospital’s Health Education Centre, was coordinated by HYMS Scarborough Student Liaison Manager Ellie Tomlinson.

Fizzy drink research study

PEOPLE who suffer side effects after consuming artificial sweeteners found in fizzy drinks are being asked to take part in a research study in Hull. The £300,000 study will look at the effects aspartame has on people who may be sensitive to it, and will be led by Professor Stephen Atkin, an expert in diabetes and endocrinology at HYMS, on behalf of the Food Standards Agency. Aspartame is about 200 times sweeter than sugar and has been used in soft drinks and other low-calorie or sugar-free foods across the world for more than 25 years. For some people, side effects can include nausea, dizziness, visual problems, mood swings and constipation.

Heart attack link

AN international study led by HYMS has found that the use of popular non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs can increase the risk of heart attack or stroke by a third. Researchers at HYMS and the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences in Canada carried out a systematic review of controlled observational studies. They found that in patients with heart problems, or those with cardiovascular risk factors, use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) including diclofenac and indomethacin was significantly associated with an increase in the risk of serious cardiovascular events such as heart attack and stroke.
“Celebrating innovation and good practice”

More than 80 delegates attended the recent HYMS 6th Educational Conference at Bishop Burton College.

Delegates were welcomed by Dr Anna Hammond, HYMS Director of Communication Skills Teaching, and Dr Jean McKendree, HYMS Associate Dean for Assessment, who introduced the conference’s theme of “Celebrating the innovation and good practice at HYMS.”

A presentation was given by graduates from HYMS’ first cohort; Jessie Morgan and Abigail Brooks reflected on the highlights of their educational experiences at HYMS, and Caroline Barry commented on the differences she had observed between HYMS students and those from more traditional medical schools.

During the day, delegates had the opportunity to attend workshop sessions on a variety of subjects including:
- Student support at HYMS (Demian Whiting, Senior Lecturer in Medical Ethics and Professionalism, and Gwen Irving, HYMS Student Office Manager and Electives Facilitator)
- Overview of eLearning at HYMS (Paul Scott, HYMS Manager of Learning Resources, and Catriona Kemp, HYMS Librarian)
- Developing skills for future teachers (Alison Pettigrew, HYMS Director of PGCEM)
- Overview of Assessment at HYMS (Joanna Micklethwaite, HYMS Head of Assessment)
- Approaches to developing professionalism in our students (Anna Hammond)
- Creating resources and going mobile (HYMS eLearning Team)
- Assessment Question Writing and Review (Jean McKendree and Joanna Micklethwaite)

Following a presentation of posters featuring a wide range of education research and activities, HYMS P1CC Tutors Paul Docherty, Kathryn Hammersley and Jonathan Blakeborough, joined by Ben Fitzpatrick of the University of York Law School, spoke about why the HYMS model of Problem-based Learning (PBL) works well.

Interim Undergraduate Dean Colin Melville closed the event by summing up the key points of the day and looked forward to future developments at HYMS.

“We were very pleased with the variety of presentations and the enthusiastic participation from all the delegates,” said Jean McKendree. “We hope to take forward the ideas that have emerged and to welcome even more HYMS members next year.”

Click on the links to see presentations and evaluations of the day:
- HYMS model of PBL
- Evaluations
- HYMS Alumni presentation

Student publications and conference success

Congratulations to the following HYMS students who have had had papers accepted for publication and presentation at conferences recently:

**Muhammad Islam** (Year 5) has had a paper accepted in the *Nutrition Journal*. Go to ‘Research publications’ on page 4 for a link to “Randomised controlled trial of food elimination diet based on IgG antibodies for the prevention of migraine like headaches”.

**Melody Redman** (Year 4) has had a paper “Cocaine: what is the crack? A brief history of the use of cocaine as an anesthetic” published in the *Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine* scientific research journal after undertaking SSCs in the History, and Publishing of the use of cocaine as an anesthetic” published in the *Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine* scientific research journal after undertaking SSCs in the History, and Publishing of

**Deidre Walsh** (Year 5) will give an oral presentation at the 2011 International Conference for Healthcare and Medical Students in Dublin on the subject of “Cost analysis of patients undergoing cardiac surgery managed with or without cerebral oximetry (INVOS)”. **Eleanor Swift** (Year 4) will give an oral presentation entitled “Time-resolved CT pulmonary angiography contrast transit time in patients with pulmonary embolism – A novel functional CT metric of right heart strain!” at the British Thoracic Society Winter Meeting. Eleanor became interested in this subject during an SSC in Ultrasound and initiated a further SSC research project under the supervision of Radiologist Dr Andy Swift (no relation!) at Hull Royal Infirmary. Follow the link to see the abstract for Eleanor’s presentation.

Staff news

**Congratulations to ...**

**Wendy Clarke**, who will be taking up the role of Phase II Coordinator on a temporary basis, following the departure of Jo Russell.

**and welcome to ...**

**Dure Shaikh**, who takes over from Wendy as Temporary Undergraduate Support Assistant for Phase II.

**Goodbye (for a while) to ...**

**Liz Greensted**, CII Centre Administrator, who started maternity leave in September.

Don’t be shy! – enter the HYMS Christmas card competition

Pictured above, last year’s winning entry painted by HYMS student Hannah Clarke

If you’d like to enter, please send your photo or a picture of your art work to val.parker@hyms.ac.uk as soon as possible ... and don’t forget there’s a £25 gift voucher for the winner! Click on the link for further information.

Hester’s York website

**HYMS first intercalating PhD student Hester Baverstock has been helping to set up a new media and news company in York in her spare time.**

The company’s recently launched website aims to pull together everything that is going on in York in terms of culture, science, community etc and provide articles and previews that reflect and celebrate all the wonderful things about the city.

The business has also been registered as a Community Interest Company – with a percentage of profits always being fed back into the company – with a percentage of profits always being fed back into the area.
Grant for blood clotting research

Congratulations to HYMS Professor of Biomedical Sciences Khalid Naseem and Professor John Greenman of the Postgraduate Medical Institute in Hull on being awarded funding to carry out research to be based in the new facility provided by the Allam Building, which is now under construction at the University of Hull.

Professor Greenman has won an NC3R grant worth £450,000 to research blood clotting in patients with ovarian and pancreatic cancers.

Professor Naseem has been awarded funding worth a total of £427,000 to run two research programmes aimed at understanding how blood platelets are controlled in order to prevent blood clotting. The first £241,000 was awarded by the Biological Sciences Research Council and the second £186,000 was awarded by the British Heart Foundation.

Research publications

RECENT publications by HYMS staff include:

Oxberry SG, Torgerson DJ, Bland JM, Clark AL, Cleland JGF, Johnson MJ.
Short-term opioids for breathlessness in stable chronic heart failure: a randomized controlled trial. European Journal of Heart Failure (2011) 13, 1006-1012.


Publish your own book!

THE International Journal of Clinical Skills is giving an opportunity to staff and students to publish their own book. The winner will be awarded £1000 and have their entry published internationally by Hampton Bond. Runners-up will also have their books published.

Dean’s inaugural lecture

DEAN of HYMS Professor Tony Kendrick will give an inaugural lecture entitled “Down at the doctor’s” at Middleton Hall, the University of Hull at 6pm on Monday 7 November. In the lecture Professor Kendrick will address the question “How should GPs and their teams help people with mental health problems?” Contact margaret.smith@hyms.ac.uk for further information.

Gulf war syndrome

RESEARCHERS at the University of Hull believe they have found a treatment for people with Gulf War Syndrome. Professor Stephen Atkin and his team at the Hull York Medical School are pioneering the treatment. Of the 11 veterans with Gulf War Syndrome sent to the infirmary, “nine were diagnosed with a rare problem with their pituitary gland which led to a deficiency of certain hormones, such as testosterone and thyroxin.” Those patients are now being treated “with injections to replace the missing hormones.”

BMA trainees conference

The 2011 BMA Clinical Academic Trainees Conference will take place in London on Saturday 5 November.

If you have any contributions for this internal bulletin, please send them to val.parker@hyms.ac.uk.