RESEARCHING COMPLEX INTERVENTIONS IN HEALTH: 
THE STATE OF THE ART

An International Conference
Wednesday 14\textsuperscript{th} — Thursday 15\textsuperscript{th} October 2015

Programme and Book of Abstracts

Keynote Speaker:
Peter Craig
University of Glasgow, UK.
Lead Author of the MRC
Guidance on Complex Interventions
Useful Resources

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complexinterventions/events/
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Email: M.Lavender@exeter.ac.uk

The textbook "Complex Interventions in Health: An Overview of Research Methods", edited by
David A. Richards and Ingalill Rahm Hallberg is available to purchase from the Routledge website:

https://www.routledge.com/products/9780415703147
This conference is jointly convened by:

David Richards, University of Exeter Medical School, UK and

Ingalill Rahm-Hallberg, Lund University, Sweden.

It will bring together leading international contributors from the field of complex interventions for two days of presentations, workshops and discussion on the latest thinking in applied clinical health services research.

Welcome to the conference
Researching Complex Interventions in Health: The State of the Art

Professor David Richards

David is Professor of Mental Health Services Research at the University of Exeter Medical School, UK. For many years he has been at the forefront of national and international efforts to improve access to treatment for those suffering from high prevalence mental health problems such as depression. A nurse by professional background, he is a UK National Institute of Health Research Senior Investigator, President of the European Academy of Nursing Science and chair of the European Science Foundation REFLECTION Research Network Programme, an interdisciplinary European Faculty of researchers, equipped to design, plan and implement programmatic, mixed methods and complex interventions research. Like Ingalill, he has frequently challenged the research community to reduce waste in their work by refocussing their research activity towards clinically relevant programmes, driven by the uncertainties of clinical practice and the real concerns of the public, patients and clinicians.

Professor Ingalill Rahm-Hallberg

Ingalill is Professor Emeritus in Health Care Science at Lund University, Sweden. She has been the pro-dean of the Medical Faculty, the assistant vice-chancellor and pro vice-chancellor of Lund University. She is a nurse by professional background. Her research has been on ageing, the care and services for older people and living with severe diseases, an area in which she has been at the forefront nationally and internationally. Her frequent involvement in reviewing research proposals, research at universities and by research groups nationally and internationally inspired her to initiate a debate on how research was very often scattered, lacking coherent programmes and dominated by descriptive studies with no impact on health care. As the previous president of the European Academy of Nursing Science she was, together with David, a driving force to change the unwelcome preponderance of small scale, descriptive projects.
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| 15.30 – 17.00 | **Symposium B**: Feasibility of Complex Interventions  
Chair: Ingalill Rahm-Hallberg | 1. Pilot studies and feasibility studies for complex interventions: an introduction  
Lehana Thabane  
2. What can be done to pilot complex interventions?  
Nancy Feeley/Sylvie Cossette  
3. Using feasibility and pilot trials to test alternative methodologies and methodological procedures prior to full scale trials  
Rod Taylor  
4. A mixed methods feasibility study in practice  
Jacqueline Hill |
| 19.00 – 21.00 | Drinks Reception at Royal Albert Memorial Museum | Complex, complicated or chaotic?  
Talk by Paul Dieppe |

*Welcome addresses by:*

**Professor Janice Kay:**  
Provost and Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Exeter

**Professor Nick Talbot:**  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Transfer at the University of Exeter

**Professor Stuart Logan:**  
Cerebra Professor of Paediatric Epidemiology  
Director - Institute of Health Research  
Director - NIHR CLAHRC South West Peninsula
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| 09.00 – 10.30 | **Symposium C:**  Adapting trial methods for Complex Interventions  | 1. Non-standard experimental designs and preference designs  
Louise von Essen  
2. Evaluation gone wild: using natural experimental approaches to evaluate complex interventions  
Andrew Williams  
3. The stepped wedge cluster randomised trial: an opportunity to increase the quality of evaluations of service delivery and public policy interventions  
Karla Hemming  
4. Adaptive designs in confirmatory clinical trials: opportunities in investigating complex interventions  
Munyaradzi Dimairo |
|            | Chair: Katrina Wyatt                                                 |                                                                        |
| 10.30 – 11.00 | Refreshments                                                        |                                                                        |
| 11.00 – 12.30 | **Symposium D:**  Getting more value from evaluations of Complex Interventions  | 1. Processes, contexts and outcomes in complex interventions, and the implications for evaluation  
Mark Petticrew  
2. Process evaluation of complex interventions: Medical Research Council guidance  
Graham Moore/Janis Baird  
3. Qualitative evaluation alongside RCTs: What to consider to get relevant and valuable results  
Salla Atkins/Willem Odendaal  
4. Using economic evaluations to understand the value of complex interventions: when maximising health status is not sufficient  
Katherine Payne |
<p>|            | Chair: Gabriele Meyer                                               |                                                                        |</p>
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<td>13.00 – 13.40</td>
<td>“Come and See My Poster”</td>
<td>37 poster presenters will be given one minute each to invite the audience to come and view their poster. They must summarise their poster and convince the audience of why they should spend time looking at their work.</td>
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Speaker Biographies

Dr Peter Craig

**Peter** is a Senior Research Fellow at the MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit (SPHSU) at the University of Glasgow, UK, and co-Director of What Works Scotland.

**Title: Researching complex interventions: the need for robust approaches.** Since the revised MRC guidance on the development and evaluation of complex interventions was published in 2008, much progress has been made in developing and defining good practice, and there is an increasingly detailed and comprehensive set of guidance available to help researchers and funders make the right choices. But progress is patchy, and evidence continues to accumulate of waste in research. Robust approaches are needed, that combine good practice across all stages of the evaluation process, from the initial choice and framing of research questions, through to implementation and translation of evidence. The elements of a robust approach are mostly well-known, but much more rarely are they combined into a coherent package. The talk will consider why this is so, and what can be done to improve matters.

Professor Ingalill Rahm-Hallberg

**Ingilill** is Professor Emeritus in Health Care Science at Lund University, Sweden.

**Title: Complex intervention studies – an important step in developing knowledge for practice.** This presentation will provide the history of the “Complex Interventions in Health” book. The development of the book took off in the European Academy of Nursing Science (EANS) summer school. For more than 12 years the EANS has gathered doctoral students from all over Europe in a three year programme. The content developed over time, inspired by the critique stating that nursing research was heavily dominated by descriptive, cross-sectional or qualitative research not really informing practice. This lead to building a curriculum based on the MRC guidance on complex interventions and the teaching programme became truly successful among students. The road to developing the content for a book was short. Professor Richards and I played around on the black board and after that it has been a success-story. So many authors delivering on time! However, rightfully we have been told that research in health is more than researching complex interventions. I cannot agree more, it is only one step, but a very important one. Health research, as any research with aspirations for informing practice, needs to be carried out systematically and programmatically, using a variety of designs and methods. It is helpful to think of knowledge development as being a stepwise process starting off with discovery and once possible going into the phase of evaluation and once solid knowledge is obtained it is about implementation in practice.
Nicky is Professor of Applied Health Care Research at the University of Exeter Medical School, UK, and theme lead for Person Centred Care in the NIHR Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care for the south west peninsula (PenCLAHRC).

Title: Public and patient involvement in research: what, why and how? In this presentation I will explain what PPI is, what it isn’t, and how it differs from engagement, as there is some misunderstanding. There is a range of both ethical and pragmatic reasons for involving members of the public and patients in research, depending on the different values and perspectives of those involved. I will provide practical examples of PPI at different stages of the research cycle: identifying and prioritising research questions; developing research proposals; doing research; analysing research data; disseminating and implementing findings; as well as PPI in systematic reviewing and operational research. Drawing on my own research, I will use the particular example of the Diabetes Identification of Agenda Trial (DIAT) to illustrate PPI in a trial from start to finish. I will present a theoretical framework (known as the cube) for understanding PPI which paradoxically is of practical value in reflecting on PPI practice. Finally I will present the Public Involvement Impact Assessment Framework (the PiiAF) for helping to evaluate the various intended and unintended impacts of PPI.

Gunilla is Associate Professor of Nursing at the Department of Caring Science, Malmö University, Sweden.

Title: Mixed methods in health service research – where do we go from here? In the 21st century, it is more obvious than ever before that health services research and its practitioners exist in an extremely complex contextual environment. Consequently, at the heart of understanding how to deliver an evidence base for safe and effective care in a setting characterised by multifaceted health care demands, is the realisation that no one research method in isolation will suffice. This realisation, together with the REWARD group’s contention that 85% of health service research conducted – and most importantly mainly funded by public money – is ‘waste’, is one of the reasons why frameworks such as the MRC guidance on complex interventions, and mixed methods designs are subject to intensified attention. This plenary address aims to discuss the contribution of mixed methods to researching complex interventions within the MRC framework and to consider its place in contemporary health service research. The MRC framework for researching complex interventions has highlighted the importance of research designs including both qualitative and quantitative approaches. However when reviewing the literature prior to writing my chapter in our recent textbook, it was clear that designing and conducting truly mixed methods research presents health service researchers with a number of challenges. Predominant amongst these are the selection of designs from suggested typologies, methodological reporting, critical evaluation and most importantly ensuring that the core feature in true mixed methods (as opposed to multi-methods) designs – analytical and methodological integration – is implemented. To be able to conduct mixed methods approaches that are rigorously designed, logically executed, and transparently reported, we need to move to a position where funders, researchers, journal editors and research consumers demand methodological integration of methods and data from study outset, rather than as a mere afterthought in the discussion section of research reports.
Gabriele is Professor of Health and Nursing Sciences at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany.

**Title: Exploring complexity in systematic reviews of complex interventions.** There is a lot of discussion about the most adequate approaches to perform systematic reviews and meta-analyses of complex interventions. Reviewers need to broaden their view and to have a detailed look at all available evidence for the whole process of developing and evaluating complex interventions. Decisions about approaches should acknowledge intervention aims. Decisions about the scope and methods of the systematic review depend on the available information, which should be assessed in view of clinicians’ and patients’ needs. Important decisions include the type of evidence to be searched and the choice of methods to describe or synthesise it. This will usually require a combination of different study types including quantitative and qualitative data. Transparent reporting is a key issue to allow readers to apply the findings to specific contexts.

Jo is Professor of Health Services and Implementation Research, Head of School for Healthcare Sciences and Academic Lead for Impact at Bangor University, UK.

**Title: Horses for courses, the potential of qualitative evidence synthesis in complex interventions research.** Complex interventions are prone to adaptation through dynamic implementation processes, and effectiveness may be contingent on contextual conditions and the responses of stakeholders. Qualitative evidence syntheses have a potentially important function in developing insights into ‘which’ aspects of complex interventions work, and ‘how’ these interventions work in the real world, and therefore how they might best be developed. In this presentation consideration will be given to how different evidence syntheses approaches have more or less potential to unpack issues of complexity, how context might influence intervention implementation and for theory testing and development. Broadly, approaches to evidence synthesis can be descriptive, aggregative, or interpretive. Each approach may contribute different explanatory perspectives which might help with the design and evaluation of complex interventions. There is also the potential to uncover potential barriers and enablers to the implementation of interventions and to better understand the different contexts into which complex interventions are to be implemented. In this way, qualitative evidence syntheses have the potential to construct a complex intervention’s ‘theory of change’ which can explain the impacts, which can then be observed through evaluation.
Sara is a PhD researcher and registered nurse in Italy and a researcher in Scotland and Northern Ireland, UK.

Title: Can complex health interventions be optimised before moving to a definitive RCT? RCTs are recognised as the ‘gold standard’ methodology in the evaluation of complex interventions, however, they often fail to detect whether the lack of intervention effect is due to sub optimal design, implementation failure or genuine ineffectiveness. Given the current financial constraints upon health services research, it is increasingly important to define pre-trial optimisation methods that can give indications on how the intervention works and help maximise chances for the intervention to be effective. This scoping review provides a map of the health literature on pre-trial strategies aimed at optimising complex interventions before a RCT and a snapshot of the methods currently used. Scholarly literature was searched using MEDLINE, CINAHL, AMED, PsycINFO and ProQuest Nursing & Allied Health Source for papers published between January 2000 and March 2015 available in English language. The literature search identified 3940 unique references, 27 of which met the inclusion criteria. Optimisation strategies explored the feasibility and acceptability of the intervention to patients and healthcare professionals, estimated the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of different combinations of components and identified potential barriers to implementation. Large variations in the methods adopted were noted across studies, including interviews and focus groups with interventions’ providers and receivers, experts consultations, economic modelling, small uncontrolled pilot studies and evaluation questionnaires. Overall, there is the potential for optimisation strategies to detect, in a cost-effective way, those interventions and components that are likely to fail or show little effect if implemented in a full-scale RCT.

Anne is Professor in the School of Nursing, University of Michigan, USA and Research Scientist at the Center for Clinical Management Research at the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, USA.

Title: A systematic approach to develop theory-based implementation interventions. In this presentation, I will briefly review the large landscape of frameworks and theories in implementation research, and suggest an approach to designing implementation interventions that builds on current widely cited frameworks to develop theory-based implementation interventions.
Lehana Thabane is Professor/Associate Chair of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics at McMaster University, Canada and Director of Biostatistics at St Joseph’s Healthcare, Hamilton, Canada.

Title: Pilot Studies and Feasibility Studies for Complex Interventions: an introduction. A pilot trial is the best way to assess feasibility of a large, expensive full-scale study, and in fact is often an essential pre-requisite to enhance the likelihood of success of the main study (Thabane et al, *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 2010, 10:1). This presentation will cover some key aspects of pilot studies for phase III trials of complex interventions including: 1) reasons for conducting a pilot study; 2) misconceptions about pilot studies; 3) criteria for evaluating the success of a pilot study; 4) differences and similarities between pilot and feasibility studies; and 5) a brief update on the development of CONSORT extension for pilot trials.

Nancy Feeley is Associate Professor, Ingram School of Nursing, McGill University, and Senior Researcher, Centre for Nursing Research and Lady Davis Institute, Jewish General Hospital, Montreal, Québec, Canada.

Title: What can be done to pilot complex interventions? In a pilot or feasibility study, the feasibility and acceptability of many of the key features of a complex intervention can be examined. The main research questions are: Can the intervention be provided as planned? Is the intervention acceptable to participants? Certain features (e.g., content, sequence, dose, timing, mode of delivery) will be more important to scrutinize than others, depending on the particular challenges anticipated and the questions that remain at the end of intervention development. This presentation will examine which intervention features might be examined in a pilot study, and describe examples of studies that have done so. In addition, special issues such as contamination and co-intervention will be discussed.

Sylvie Cossette is Professor at the Faculty of Nursing, University of Montreal and Researcher at the Montreal Heart Institute Research Center, Montreal, Québec, Canada.
Rod is Professor of Health Services Research and Academic Lead for the Exeter Clinical Trials Support Network at the University of Exeter Medical School, UK and National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Senior Investigator.

**Title: Using feasibility and pilot trials to test alternative methodologies and methodological procedures prior to full scale trials.** Feasibility and pilot studies play a key role in health research, in providing information for the planning of full scale randomised controlled trials. Medical Research Council guidance for development and evaluation of complex interventions states that pilot and feasibility studies are essential in the development and testing of an intervention prior to a large-scale evaluation. Before committing investment in costly and time-consuming full scale trials, funding bodies increasingly demand that investigators provide evidence from pilot/feasibility studies addressing the question: “Can this full scale trial be done?” This presentation will: (i) identify the common methodological uncertainties in the design and execution of full scale trials; (ii) review approaches to testing these methodological uncertainties in feasibility/pilot studies; and (iii) discuss the design and selection of feasibility and pilot studies to best address these uncertainties. These concepts will be illustrated by reference to recent feasibility/pilot studies.

Jacqueline is a PhD researcher at the University of Exeter Medical School, UK.

**Title: A mixed methods feasibility study in practice.** Depression will become the third biggest cause of the global burden of disease by 2030 yet access to treatment is poor. To maximise access, worldwide, psychological therapies for depression are delivered using a system called stepped care. However, we do not know if this system achieves similar patient benefit for less cost compared with alternatives. A fully-powered clinical trial of stepped care is required but currently prevented by a number of critical uncertainties: (1) an estimate of the effect size of a stepped care intervention (needed to inform the sample size for a full evaluation), (2) patient pathways through treatment (needed to determine the clinical resource required for a large trial), (3) the performance of recruitment and retention methods, (4) how acceptable is the stepped care intervention to patients and therapists and how patients’ views might explain variability in the number of treatment sessions they attend. This presentation will describe how, in line with the Medical Research Council’s recommendations for researching complex interventions, we chose to answer these procedural, methodological and clinical uncertainties in a mixed methods feasibility study encompassing a pilot randomised controlled trial and embedded qualitative interviews. In this way, we will provide a practical example of how it is possible to address disparate questions of feasibility in a single study.
Paul was until June 2015 Professor of Health and Wellbeing at the University of Exeter Medical School, UK. Paul qualified as a doctor in London in 1970. He specialised in rheumatology and became ARC professor of rheumatology in Bristol in 1987, and Dean of the Bristol Faculty of Medicine between 1994 and 1997. He then switched to health services research and was the Director of the MRC Health Services Research Collaboration between 1997 and 2007. After that he spent a short time at the University of Oxford before moving to the Peninsula Medical School to work in clinical education research. With the formation of the University of Exeter Medical School, he took on the role of Professor of Health and Wellbeing. He retired in June 2015.

**Title: Complex, complicated or chaotic?**  Paul will give a talk at the Drinks Reception at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum.
Louise is Professor of Caring Sciences with a focus on oncology at the Department of Public Health and Caring Sciences, Uppsala University, Sweden.

**Title: Non-standard experimental designs and preference designs.**

Randomized controlled trials (RCT) have been accepted as the ‘gold standard’ design for evaluating the effectiveness of a single intervention such as a drug. However, recruitment to clinical trials may be affected by the choice of intervention that participants might make, if they were allowed to choose, and by whether they actually receive their preferred intervention. These effects cannot be estimated in the RCT design. Additionally the RCT runs counter to the current emphasis on patient choice which is the cornerstone in many governments’ current health strategies and where preferences or ethical objections to an RCT exist, alternatives that replicate more closely the behaviors in real world health care rather than conform to standard trial design should be considered. Citizen participation in research is advocated by governments, research councils, and other funding bodies and as the public, patients, and significant others become more involved in research activities they may be unwilling to be passive participants of a research randomization process. Non-standard and preference designs go some way towards addressing the problems of low recruitment and retention rates and non-implementation of results of clinical research. Advantages and challenges e.g. with regard to internal and external validity with non-standard and preference designs such as the comprehensive cohort design, pre-randomized design, cohort multiple randomized controlled trial, and two-stage randomized design will be presented at the conference.

Andrew is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in natural experimental approaches at the Farr Institute in Scotland, and the Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy, University of Edinburgh, UK.

**Title: Evaluation gone wild: using natural experimental approaches to evaluate complex interventions.** Any outcome evaluation of an intervention needs to address the following questions: 1. Did change occur? 2. Was the change due to the intervention? 3. Was the change significant/meaningful? With the ability to calculate the unbiased attributable effects on an intervention the randomised controlled trial (RCT) is seen as the ‘gold standard’ method for answering all three questions. However, as complex interventions are recognised as events within systems, they are rarely tame enough for RCTs to be feasible. The natural experimental approaches (NEAs) permit quasi-experimental evaluation which can answer the three questions when the intervention is wilder, particularly when routinely collected outcome data are available. Robust NEAs rely on quasi-randomised identification (instrumental variable, regression discontinuity or propensity score matching) of a control (counterfactual) population to compare with the intervention population. Subsequently, taking a difference in differences or controlled before-after approach permits the calculation of an effect attributable to the intervention addressing the three questions. Quasi-randomised scenarios often occur by chance (naturally, not designed as part of an evaluation) within complex interventions allowing valuable prospective or retrospective evaluation. For example, criterion-based intervention eligibility permitting a regression discontinuity design. Although not faultless, NEAs offer an often missed opportunity to evaluate complex interventions.
Dr Karla Hemming

Karla is Senior Lecturer in Medical Statistics at the University of Birmingham Medical School, UK where she leads the undergraduate and postgraduate statistics teaching.

**Title: The stepped wedge cluster randomised trial: an opportunity to increase the quality of evaluations of service delivery and public policy interventions.**

The stepped wedge cluster randomised trial (SW-CRT) is a novel research study design that is increasingly being used in the evaluation of service delivery type interventions. The design involves random and sequential crossover of clusters from control to intervention, until all clusters are exposed. We illustrate the use of the design by giving case examples, summarise the results of an update of a methodological systematic review of the quality of reporting and provide recommendations for reporting and analysis. A methodological systematic review of published SW-CRTs. Assessment was guided by recent developments in statistical design and analysis of these studies. The use of the SW-CRT is rapidly increasing and areas of use are diverse. We illustrate how the design is being used to evaluate the effectiveness of a complex intervention, being rolled-out across 90 UK hospitals, to reduce mortality in patients undergoing emergency laparotomy. Quality of reporting is found to be low. In a SW-CRT more clusters are exposed to the intervention towards the end of the study than in its early stages. A result which *prima facia* might look to be suggestive of an effect of the intervention may therefore transpire to be the result of a positive underlying temporal trend. A large number of studies do not report how they allowed for temporal trends in the design or analysis. The SW-CRT is a pragmatic study design which can reconcile the need for robust evaluations with political or logistical constraints. Quality and reporting is generally low and so consensus guidelines on reporting and analysis are urgently needed.

Munyaradzi Dimairo

**Title: Adaptive designs in confirmatory clinical trials: opportunities in investigating complex interventions.**

Adaptive designs are now considered innovative alternative trial designs with potential to improve efficiency in clinical trials research when appropriately used to answer research questions. Their appropriate implementation in confirmatory trials is gaining widespread attention among researchers, public funders and regulators. Based upon findings from our review of confirmatory adaptive designs, this talk focuses on acceptable scope with huge potential to be implemented in confirmatory trials setting. In theory, although adaptive designs could be applied across a wide range of study interventions, attention will be given to complex interventions, with relevant examples without focusing much on technical statistical details. This study is funded by the NIHR investigating the use of adaptive designs in publicly funded confirmatory trials with an aim to come up with a guidance document and recommendations for their appropriate use.
Mark is Professor of Public Health Evaluation in the Faculty of Public Health and Policy, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK.

**Title:** Processes, contexts and outcomes in complex interventions, and the implications for evaluation. It would be convenient if there were two categories of interventions - simple and complex – but of course this is not the case. Instead interventions can be placed on a spectrum of complexity. For simpler interventions there is often a relatively well-understood (or perhaps just well-accepted) causal pathway between the intervention and its outcomes. This may derive from basic science - for example if the physiological pathways between particular medical interventions and changes in outcomes have been previously shown. For more complex interventions - those in which the intervention interacts with and adapts within its social context - such pathways may be less well understood, less predictable (or even chaotic) and, crucially, non-linear. Here, the intervention may not even be easily distinguishable from the context. In such situations it may be more productive to move away from identifying “interventions” and “components,” towards seeing interventions as changes systems (Hawe et, al. 2009) rather than as discrete events, or as “packages” of interconnected elements. Such a perspective has major implications for how we conceptualise and evaluate public health interventions. This presentation will discuss the implications for evaluation, using recent examples from public health.
Attempts to address health problems increasingly involve the development and evaluation of ‘complex interventions’. In addition to outcomes evaluation, understanding complex intervention mechanisms, how interventions are implemented, and how they produce change in specific contexts, is essential if findings are to inform policy and practice. For this, process evaluation is vital. MRC guidance for evaluating complex interventions, published in 2008, recognised the value of process evaluation alongside trials of effectiveness, though provided little insight into how to conduct process evaluation. In 2010, a workshop funded by the MRC Population Health Science Research Network (PHSRN) identified a need for guidance to fill this gap. Following the workshop, 11 researchers with experience of public health evaluations developed draft guidance, drawing upon reviews of the literature, group discussions of case studies and feedback obtained at a number of conference workshops. Academic, policy and practice stakeholders were also consulted during the development of the guidance. The new guidance sets out a framework for linking core functions of process evaluation, understanding implementation, mechanisms of impact and context. It provides assistance in planning, designing, conducting, reporting and appraising process evaluations, and argues for a systematic approach to designing and conducting process evaluations, drawing on clear descriptions of intervention theory and identification of key empirical uncertainties. While acknowledging that each process evaluation will be different, the guidance assists in thinking through common decisions to be made when planning and conducting a process evaluation, and provides a framework for peer review.
Title: Qualitative evaluation alongside RCTs: What to consider to get relevant and valuable results.

Qualitative evaluations are becoming increasingly commonplace alongside RCTs. They provide useful insight into the way things work within RCTs, particularly insight into the how and why things work, and contextualise RCT effects. While there are established guidelines for conducting qualitative research, there is less guidance on how to go about qualitative process evaluations alongside RCTs. Our presentation will discuss how to enhance the utility of qualitative evaluations in explaining RCT effects, through identifying key issues, such as involvement of trialists in the evaluation; scaling the evaluation; and maintaining the integrity of the trial. We discuss these issues by reflecting on practical examples of qualitative evaluations conducted in South Africa.
Katherine was awarded a personal chair in health economics at The University of Manchester in August 2010. She is based within the Manchester Centre for Health Economics, UK.

**Title:** Using economic evaluations to understand the value of complex interventions: when maximising health status is not sufficient. The economic evaluation of complex interventions may be problematic for many reasons generally underpinned by ‘complexity’ of the intervention but more specifically because of the potential number of relevant patient outcomes. This presentation will begin by presenting an overview of methods of economic evaluation used by decision-making bodies such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and then describe a programme of work that focused on clinical genetics services, as an example of a complex intervention, to illustrate why sometimes maximising health status alone is not sufficient. Genetic services and tests, are a good example of a complex intervention and have broader objectives than just health gain, which may usefully be measured using the concept of capability to make an informed decision. The presentation will conclude by describing the further methodological work required to ensure the methods to value outcomes continue to consider opportunity cost and are therefore, suitable for informing resource allocation decisions with the constraints of a finite healthcare budget.

**Professor Theo van Achterberg**

Theo is a health scientist, nurse and epidemiologist. He is Professor of Quality of Care, and head of the Centre for Health Services and Nursing Research, at KU Leuven, Belgium.

**Title:** How to arrive at an implementation plan. The presentation “How to arrive at an implementation plan” will highlight the most important steps to be taken in the development of an implementation plan, using examples from research and practice. These include 1) analysing barriers and facilitators for implementation and linking these to relevant concepts, 2) using these concepts to find and consider theories that can inform the selection of implementation strategies, 3) considering effectiveness of common strategies, and 4) collaborating with target groups and stakeholders in operationalising strategies into a practical implementation plan. Well considered preparations such as these are crucial to implementation success, and thus optimising chances of effective improvement in healthcare.
Professor Walter Sermeus

Walter is Professor of Healthcare Management, School of Public Health & Primary Care, Leuven University KU Leuven, Belgium. He is Programme Director of the Master in Health Care Policy & Management.

Title: Modelling process and outcomes in complex interventions. In this presentation, I focus on probably the least studied and understood element of developing a complex intervention: modelling the complex intervention by putting together all ‘active components’ that are known to have an effect based on empirical evidence or theory. I will discuss several problems: What active ingredients to select? How do we know that the intervention is the best one? How to optimise? How to anticipate on barriers in implementation? These problems will be discussed making use of a practical example.

Professor Martin Pitt

Martin is Associate Professor of Healthcare Modelling and Simulation at at the University of Exeter Medical School, UK and Director of PenCHORD - The Peninsula Collaboration for Health Operational Research and Development, part of the NIHR CLAHRC for the SW Peninsula.

Title: Systems Modelling for Improving Health Care. The growing complexity of health care coupled with the ever-increasing pressures to ensure efficient and effective use of limited resources have encouraged policy makers to turn to system modelling solutions. Such techniques have been available for decades, but despite ample research which demonstrates potential, their application in health services to date is limited. This presentation surveys the breadth of approaches available to support delivery and design across many areas and levels of healthcare planning. Case studies will be presented to exemplify how impactful application of health system modelling can be achieved and demonstrate how policy making can benefit from the application of these tools. This is followed by a discussion of the key issues surrounding the use of these methods in health, what barriers need to be overcome to ensure more effective implementation, and the likely developments in the future.

Dr Thomas Monks

Thomas is a Senior Research Fellow in Operational Research in the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Southampton, UK. He leads NIHR CLAHRC Wessex's methodological hub. He holds a BSc(Hons) in Computer Science and Mathematics, MSc in Operational Research and PhD in Simulation Modelling.
Professor Sascha Köpke

Sascha is Professor of Nursing Research at the University of Lübeck, Germany.

Sascha will chair Symposium A: Syntheses and development of Complex Interventions

Professor Ingalill Rahm-Hallberg

Ingalill is Professor Emeritus in Health Care Science at Lund University, Sweden.

Ingalill will chair Symposium B: Feasibility of Complex Interventions

Professor Katrina Wyatt

Katrina is Associate Professor of Health Research, University of Exeter Medical School, UK.

Katrina will chair Symposium C: Adapting trial methods for Complex Interventions

Professor Gabriele Meyer

Gabriele is Professor of Health and Nursing Sciences at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany.

Gabriele will chair Symposium D: Getting more value from evaluations of Complex Interventions
Rob is Associate Professor of Health Economics and Evaluation, University of Exeter Medical School, UK.

Rob will chair Symposium E: Implementation Issues.