Welcome to the first newsletter of the Exeter Health Economics Group (HEG)!

We are a team of researchers at the University of Exeter, based in the Institute of Health Research, College of Medicine and Health, who research and teach the economics of health. The team works across a wide range of topics and interests. Our newsletters aim to keep you informed about recent developments including new, current and completed research projects, teaching, presentations and publications, staff and student achievements.

In this Spring edition you can read about two exciting new projects. Anne Spencer is leading the health economics on CanTest, a project exploring cancer diagnosis in primary care. Antonieta Medina-Lara is health economics lead on Babygel, a study taking place in Uganda that aims to prevent newborn infections.

At the end of last year we were delighted to welcome Claire Hulme, Nia Morrish and Rich Smith to HEG Exeter. More details of their research are outlined below.

We are very active over the next few months, and as we come up to conference season I would urge any of you attending iHEA to come and say hello to members of HEG who will be presenting their research including Rebekah Hall, Viktorija Kesaite, Nia Morrish, Rich Smith, Anne Spencer and Antonieta Medina-Lara.

Further information is available on our website and you can receive more frequent updates by following us on Twitter @HEG_Exeter.

Have a good summer,
Colin Green, Head of Health Economics Group

Babylgel Study, Uganda

In sub-Saharan Africa, 1 in 12 children will die before their 5th birthday, with infection the most common cause. The European Developing Countries Trials Partnership of Horizon 2020 has announced a €5.9 million grant to prevent newborn infections in Uganda.

The project (Babylgel), led by Professor Andrew Weeks from the University of Liverpool, brings together experts in the field from the UK, Uganda and Norway. Antonieta Medina-Lara from the University of Exeter leads the Health Economics and Inequality work of this large randomised trial that will take place in Mbale District, eastern Uganda over the next five years.

Staff news

We have a number of current student placements in HEG, including Ben Dethridge on a placement year from BSc Med Sci, and also Imogen Fleishman & Sophie Dodman both completing final year projects. We are delighted to be welcoming Louise Crathorne back to HEG in June and are pleased to have welcomed a number of new members to the HEG team:

Clare Hulme joined the team in September, as Professor of Health Economics. Claire’s research includes economic evaluations, large data analysis and qualitative methods, with particular interests in complex interventions in the health and social care sectors and health inequalities and the impact of ill-health on employment.

Professor Richard Smith joined the team in September, as Professor of Health Economics, and Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Exeter Medical School. Richard’s research interests are varied, but a specific focus is on the economics of public health, spanning aspects related to food and nutrition, agriculture and environment, and wider relationships between health and the economy.

Nia Morrish joined the Exeter HEG in September, as a Graduate Trainee Assistant, after completing an internship with the team. Nia will be assisting on a number of projects across the department, and you can read more about her work in this issue’s “Spotlight on…”
News HEGlines

• Professor Tracy Comans (University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia), Dr Kim-Huong Nguyen (University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia), and Dr Ron Handsel (University of Maastricht, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden) joined Professor Colin Green in a QUEX Initiator Grant Event hosted by Exeter HEG. The event discussed the key issues in economic evaluation (cost-effectiveness analysis) in Alzheimer’s disease/dementia.

• Colin Green and Annie Hawton attended the European Huntington’s Disease Network Plenary Meeting, Vienna, in September, presenting ‘Quality-Adjusted Life-Years (QALYs) and Huntington’s Disease: Estimating health state values using data from EHDN’.

• Dr Jeff Round (Institute of Health Economics, Alberta, Canada) visited in October to present a seminar discussing Health Technology adoption in Canada

• Anne Spencer has been appointed to the editorial board of Health Economics

• Colin Green has joined the NIHR HTA Funding Committee (General).

• Claire Hulme has joined the NIHR PGfAR Panel.

• Colin Green, Anne Spencer and Richard Smith attended the HESG Meeting, York, in January.

• Anne Spencer attended the Early Diagnosis Research Conference 2019, Birmingham, in February.

• In March, Richard Smith shared useful advice and insights on time management via his webinar for iHEA, entitled “If you don’t manage your time, someone else will”: Yes, but how?, which can be viewed at https://youtu.be/_Mui-RnvebE

• Also in March, Claire Hulme delivered a workshop on Health Economics in Research for the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility.

• The Patient Safety Collaborative Evaluation Study (PiSCEs) was presented on behalf of Antonieta Medina Lara at the International Improvement Research Symposium, Glasgow, in March.

• Anne Spencer collaborated with Beth Shinkins in Leeds to deliver a HE modelling workshop for the CanTest International Summer School in Cancer Detection held at Cambridge University, in April. Paolo Landa and Rebekah Hall assisted in workshop discussions.

• Paolo Landa and Rebekah Hall gave oral presentations of their work at the CanTest International Summer School in Cancer Detection held at Cambridge University, in April.

CANTEST Study - Early Diagnosis in Primary Care

The CanTest international collaboration (www.cantest.org/) aims to develop the next generation of methodologists and primary care researchers to evaluate interventions to expedite early cancer diagnosis. The award is led by Willie Hamilton in Exeter and Fiona Walter in Cambridge, and links with researchers in the Netherlands, Denmark, US and Australia. Anne Spencer leads the Health Economics work programme of the CRUK CanTest international collaborative which has funded over 10 PhDs and Post-Doctoral Research Fellows, and runs the annual International Summer School in Cancer Detection, held at Jesus College, Cambridge University in April.

Please look out for the organised session hosted by Antonieta Medina-Lara, Rebekah Hall and Anne Spencer at the next iHEA conference (Basel 2019). In this session we will be joined by research teams from the UK and Netherlands that are part of the CanTest collaboration, with others from China and US, and will consider the evidence base that is developing to inform the health economics case for early cancer detection.

HEG at upcoming conferences

MS Frontiers, MS Society Conference, Bath. 4-5 Jun 2019.
• A workshop on Health Economics for Informing Policy Decision-Making

Alzheimer’s Assoc International Conference, Los Angeles, 12-18 Jul 2019
• Presentations on an Open-Source Modeling Framework to Assess Cost Effectiveness of Early Intervention in Alzheimer’s disease; the Reliability of Health-Economic Models.

iHEA, Basel, Switzerland, 13-17 July 2019
• Presentations on Occupational, Sectoral and Firm Level Sorting Among Overweight and Obese Individuals in the UK Labour Market; A Systematic Review of DCEs in Colorectal Cancer Screening; Market reaction to the UK Soft Drinks Industry Levy announcements; The challenge of Antimicrobial Resistance.
• Chairing sessions on the Impact of Loneliness on Unemployment; Economics of Obesity Special Interest Group.
• Organised sessions on Developing the Health Economics Case for Early Cancer Diagnosis in Primary Care; Evaluating Taxes on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages; Antimicrobial Resistance.

Joint European Congress of Epidemiology & SSM Annual Scientific Meeting, Cork. 4-6 Sep 2019
• Presentation on Recent Changes in Socio-Economic Inequalities in the Sugar Content of Food Purchases.

Staff Wellbeing Initiatives at St Luke’s Campus

Over the last 6 months, colleagues across St Luke’s Campus have established a number of initiatives aimed at enhancing the wellbeing of staff. Members of HEG have got involved, with varying degrees of success.

Leila caused quite a stir among the Cloisters Crafting Circle by creating a replica Viking hat, although her traditional Scandinavian nålebinding needs a bit more practice. Liz has signed up for St Luke’s Volunteer Garden (aka “SLUG”) but it’s still a bit chilly out, so she has limited her participation to reading their email updates so far. She might join them for some light weeding in June (footwear permitting). Meanwhile, although the prospect of a bunch of health researchers bursting into song may seem the very antithesis of wellbeing, Tristan assures us that our new campus choir’s repertoire is extremely uplifting (particularly their renditions of classic Spinal Tap numbers). We remain to be entirely convinced that this is a Good Thing, but with folks going the extra mile to bring real heart and soul into the social life of the St Luke’s community, it’s pretty hard to be cynical.
Nia joined the Health Economics Group in September 2018 as a Graduate Trainee Assistant following completion of a Masters in Economics at the University of Exeter. Prior to pursuing Health Economics she gained experience in the Department for Communities and Local Government Integration and Community Rights team, and in the Department of Public Health at Somerset County Council. These placements helped form her research interests in mobilising community, loneliness and well-being. Nia also has interest in prospect theory and the role of risk aversion in medical decision making and the success of healthcare interventions. Nia completed her MSc dissertation investigating the impact of loneliness on health and wellbeing through its effect on unemployment as an intern with the Health Economics Group and is currently developing this research for publication. Her paper ‘What is the impact of loneliness on unemployment in European Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) member countries?’ written with Dr Antonieta Medina-Lara will be presented at the 2019 IHEA World Congress. Since joining the team Nia has worked on a systematic review of discrete choice experiments and evaluated the responsiveness of the EQ-5D and SF-6D through calculation of the standard effect size and standardised response mean.

**Spotlight on Nia Morrish**

- Nia also has interest in prospect theory and the role of risk aversion in medical decision making and the success of healthcare interventions.
- For more details and to apply please visit: https://bit.ly/2IOGgxu

**HEG publication highlights**

- **Marten R, Kadandale S, Nordström A, Smith RD.** Shifting global health governance towards the sustainable development goals. Bull World Health Organ 2018 Dec 1;96(12):798-798A.
- **Spencer A, Tomeny E, Mujica-Mota R, Robinson A, Covey J, Pinto-Prades JL.** Do Time Trade-off values fully capture attitudes that are relevant to health related choices? Eur J Health Econ 2018 Dec 31. [Epub ahead of print].
- **Spencer A, Tomeny E, Mujica-Mota R, Robinson A, Covey J, Pinto-Prades JL.** Do Time Trade-off values fully capture attitudes that are relevant to health related choices? Eur J Health Econ 2018 Dec 31. [Epub ahead of print].
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