Happy new year and welcome to our first newsletter of 2018,

Once again the past 12 months have flown by with a number of significant achievements – not least the celebration of the Academic Unit of Health Economics’ 10 year anniversary. It was great to welcome friends and colleagues to our ‘birthday bash’ in September. More details are included on page 3 but I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to everyone who attended and to all those we have worked with over the last ten years. I would also like to thank Judy and Lucy Wright for the fabulous cake.

This newsletter includes details of some of our new projects including our growing portfolio of research in haematology. There are also details of our recently completed research in diabetes and learning disabilities – congratulations to John O’Dwyer who has taken this work forward as part of a NIHR Doctoral Fellowship which he starts this month (see page 2). Congratulations also to Bethany Shinkins and Silviya Nikolova both who have won international travel grants. Beth will be spending time at Karolinska Institutet in Sweden whilst Silviya will be travelling to The Netherlands to work with the Erasmus Medical Centre. Beth, alongside Bryony Dawkins and myself, is also part of the new Global Health Research Group in Surgical Technologies based here in Leeds. The group are working with partners in Sierra Leone and India (Coimbatore District) to identify the barriers to surgical care, characterise and prioritise the unmet surgical needs, develop technological solutions, and implement change and evaluate the effect on healthcare systems. This is of particular importance given over 90% of the population in low and middle-income countries do not have access to safe, affordable surgical care. The Research Group sits alongside the recently funded NIHR Surgical Medtech Co-operative also led by Prof David Jayne. The health economists from our Test Evaluation Group also play a pivotal role in the recently funded NIHR Leeds In Vitro Diagnostic Co-operative. Both the Surgical and Diagnostic centres will hold launch events in the spring – keep an eye on our website and twitter feed for details.

Finally congratulations to our MSc students who graduated last month – we wish them all the best for their future careers.

Claire,
Director of the Academic Unit of Health Economics
Growing portfolio of haematology projects

FITNEsS (Myeloma XIV) is a UK Myeloma Research Alliance Trial and the most recent project to be added to our growing portfolio of haematology projects. FITNEsS is a phase III trial which aims to improve outcomes for patients with newly diagnosed multiple myeloma who are not suitable for stem cell transplant by investigating whether using prospective dose adjustments (of ixazomib, lenalidomide and dexamethasone) dependent on patient frailty will improve patients’ ability to remain on therapy, lower toxicity and improve outcomes. It also aims to investigate whether two agents as maintenance therapy, compared to one agent, improves outcomes without increasing toxicity.

Other projects currently in our haematology portfolio include: TEAMM, MUK8 and FLAIR. The health economics components of these projects include within trial cost-effectiveness analyses, decision modelling of long term outcomes and early economic modelling to inform appropriate treatment pathways.

David Meads and Bryony Dawkins will work on these projects and Gurdeep Sagoo will also work on FLAIR. Haematology outcomes have improved vastly in the last 10-20 years. However, this was from a low base and improvements have been less marked in older/less fit subgroups. The importance of continuing this positive trajectory in outcomes for all patients is recognised through the continued investment into research in this area.

The success of this research initiative has been driven by the strength of the specialist team from around the UK and their ties with Leeds as the co-ordinating centre for the Myeloma UK Early Phase Clinical Trials Network and the Cancer Research-UK funded late phase Myeloma CLL portfolios.

AUHE Seminars Series

9th January 2018
Bryony Dawkins
AUHE
Distributional cost-effectiveness analysis in low and middle income countries: A case study of Rotavirus vaccination in Ethiopia

23rd January
Edward Webb
AUHE
Clinical decision making in augmentative and alternative communication technology for children – a best-worst scaling and discrete choice experiment

6th February
Siobhan Bourke
Bangor University
Societal preferences for funding orphan drugs

20th February
Chris Sampson
Office of Health Economics
Title to be confirmed

6th March
Samuel Frempong
University of Birmingham
Early economic evaluation of a hypothetical diagnostic test

AUHE Seminars are open to all and take place on Tuesdays from 1 - 2 pm.

For updates about the seminars, please visit our webpage.

AUHE Christmas Party 2017

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**INTRODUCTION TO THE HEALTH ECONOMIC EVALUATION OF TESTS COURSE**

In October 2017, Bethany Shinikins and Andrew Sutton ran our Introduction to the Health Economic Evaluation of Diagnostic Tests course for the first time. In addition to researchers, the course attracted individuals from a wide range of careers, including those working at NICE, clinicians, information specialists and research managers. Attendees learnt about the nuances and challenges in evaluating the cost-effectiveness of diagnostic tests. In addition to taught material, attendees were guided through a series of exercises, allowing participants to get hands on experience in building economic models for the evaluation of tests. The feedback from the course has been very positive, and has also highlighted a need for a more advanced course, which we will be running in July this year.

**OK-Diabetes: Managing with Learning Disability and Diabetes**

OK-Diabetes is a three year NIHR HTA funded project, which aimed to test the feasibility of running a randomised controlled trial (RCT) of a supported self-management intervention for Type 2 diabetes in adults who have a mild to moderate learning disability.

The objective was to undertake a feasibility RCT of supported self-management vs. treatment as usual. The intervention was standardised supported self-management delivered by diabetes specialist nurses together with treatment as usual, compared to treatment as usual alone. Feasibility outcomes included recruitment and retention rates, intervention acceptability and feasibility, and data collection and completeness for physiological state and values for primary outcomes.

Claire Hulme and John O'Dwyer completed the health economics component of this research. Participants were adults over 18 years with a mild or moderate learning disability with Type 2 diabetes, living in the community. The team recruited people from 60% of general practices (GPs) in West Yorkshire, interviewing 171 adults with a learning disability and Type 2 diabetes (plus their main supporter) about their diabetes. For the RCT, 82 people with LD and type 2 diabetes were recruited into a trial of supported self-management. Collection of the health economics data proved time intensive and difficult despite two methods being trialled (GP completed and participant completed). Many participants had difficulty completing the three-level EQ-5D highlighting the appropriateness of using this measure in its current form in research with this population. The challenges of use of the EQ-5D will be examined further by John O'Dwyer as part of an NIHR Doctoral Research Fellowship, supervised by Claire Hulme, examining methods to measure quality of life of adults with mild to moderate learning disabilities.

**AUHE’s Tenth Anniversary Celebration**

Monday 4th September 2017 was a big day for AUHE as we held a special celebration event to mark the tenth anniversary of the unit. Around 70 attendees enjoyed lively presentations from AUHE researchers and collaborators past and present. Prof. Chris McCabe (AUHE’s founding Director and now CEO of the Institute of Health Economics in Alberta, Canada) gave the opening talk which was followed by an AUHE Research showcase including presentations by Dr Beth Shinkins, Lecturer on streamlining cross-sectional imaging pathways, Charlotte Kelly, PhD student on travel time to healthcare, Dr Armando Vargas-Palacios, Research Fellow on modelling capacity constraints, Carolyn Czoksi Murray, Senior Research Fellow on the Pressure Ulcer Utility Measure, and Judy Wright, Senior Information Specialist on acute kidney injury diagnostics. We then welcomed Dr Michael Messenger, Deputy Director and Scientific Manager of the NIHR Diagnostic Evidence Co-operative Leeds, who gave a presentation on in vitro diagnostics and personalised medicine. The event closed with an Inaugural Lecture by Prof. Paul Kind, who was awarded the prestigious ISPOR Avedis Donabedian Outcomes Research Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017.

**Paediatric Hip Conditions**

The understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of Paediatric Hip Conditions is rapidly evolving. A variety of novel hip preserving surgical techniques are now utilised worldwide. However this is still an underserved patient group where the full social, economic and QoL impact of living with these conditions over the life course has not been explored.

This is an emerging research area and Sandy Tukef and Andrew Long (School of Health Care) recently participated in a series of workshops with collaborators from the University of Cardiff and the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital in Birmingham.

The ESRC-funded seminar collaboration brought together researchers from diverse academic and clinical backgrounds and countries. Six, one-day interactive seminars were organised in Cardiff, Leeds and Birmingham and debated issues concerning diagnosis, treatment decision-making and post-surgical care and evidence-based practice and measurement of what matters to persons with a PHC and their family. The reports of each seminar and the final ESRC report are available on the AUHE website [here](#).

The research network aims to continue beyond the seminar series with the generation of a multi-disciplinary academics, patients and clinicians international research network.

**MSc in Health Economics**

Congratulations to our 2016-17 cohort of MSc Health Economics students who successfully graduated. They presented very interesting research work for their dissertations last September including a cost-effectiveness of diagnosis techniques for sexually transmitted infections, a cost-effectiveness of adjuvant treatment in postmenopausal women with breast cancer, an early cost-effectiveness analysis of molecular profiling for treatment choice, and an applied econometrics analysis of the health care usage of elderly migrants in Europe. We wish them good luck in their careers as health economists!

**Applied Health Econometrics Group**

The Applied Health Econometrics Group is a collaborative initiative at the University of Leeds between the AUHE and the Leeds Institute for Health Sciences (LIHS). It was founded in 2011 and is led by Chris Bojke. If you are interested in becoming a member or presenting in the modelling group please contact us or visit our webpage.

**Decision Modelling Group**

The Decision Modelling Group is a methodological group organised by the AUHE to provide a forum for methods development and peer support focused on the area of health economic decision modelling and simulation.

The group is led by Armando Vargas-Palacios and Alison Smith, and meets at least once a month.

If you are interested in becoming a member or presenting in the modelling group please contact us or visit our webpage.
Seminars and Conferences

Dami Adyanju, Firdaus Hafidz, and Sandy Tukeb attended the 4th European Health Economics Association PhD Student-Supervisor and Early Career Researcher Conference held in Lausanne, 6-8th Sept.

David Meads chaired a session on economic evaluations at the 19th European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel Annual meeting in Belfast in 20-22 Sept.


Beth Shinkins, Judy Wright and Alison Smith presented AUHE research exploring different aspects of uncertainty at The Uncertainty in Value Assessment of Precision Medicine conference in Calgary, 12-13th Oct.

Judy Wright presented ‘Review strategies to inform research prioritisation of biomarkers: AKI Diagnostics case study’ at the 8th Evidence-Based Health Care conference in Taormina, 27th Oct.

Chris Boje and Alison Smith had posters at the ISPOR 20th Annual European Congress in Glasgow, 4-8th Nov. Alison’s poster was entitled ‘Bringing molecular diagnostic tests into clinical practice: Mapping the evidence pathway’ and Chris’s boiled into ‘Using regression models to accommodate heterogeneity and address cohort imbalance in parametric survival models for use in HTA’.

Alison Smith had a poster at the 1st European Alliance of Personalised Medicine (EAPM) Congress in Belfast, 27-30th Nov.

Sandy Tukeb visited the Public Health Research Institute (IRSPUM) at the University of Montreal on 5-12th Dec. She gave 2 lectures, a seminar, and participated to a panel discussion at the Centre for Interuniversity Research and Analysis of Organizations (CIRANO) on issues about changes and challenges associated with cost-utility studies in health.

Chris Boje spoke at the ‘NHS Productivity: Delivering Better Value Care’ conference in Manchester, 13th Dec.

Three AUHE PhD students Paulo Candiò, Charlotte Kelly, and Alison Smith attended the HESG Winter 2018 conference at City University of London and we had a share of a picture of the HESG 2018 version of the Spice Girls. Obviously a better version than a picture of the HESG 2018 version of the Spice Girls.

Recent Publications


AUHE working papers: http://medhealth.leeds.ac.uk/info/637/working_papers