HEHTA is pleased to announce the launch of its eighth theme, The Economics of Precision Medicine, which will be led by Professor Neil Hawkins. Population health will be improved by identifying treatments that have favourable risk-benefit or cost-effectiveness ratios for individual patients by using the right treatment for the right patient at the right time. To complement the University of Glasgow’s focus on precision medicine, exemplified by the opening of the Stratified Medicine Scotland Innovation Centre (a £20m collaboration between Academia, industry and the NHS) HEHTA is introducing a new research theme entitled “Economics of Precision Medicine.”

One of the challenges of precision medicine is to distinguish between chance variation and ‘real’ reproducible subgroup effects. Unreliable subgroup analysis may harm patients and waste scarce resources – not least through futile confirmatory trials. HEHTA is hosting an MRC funded research project that will address this challenge. We will investigate the use of fully Bayesian methods to increase the reliability of subgroup selection. We are also investigating the use of early stage health technology assessment to identify promising candidate precision medicine candidates in order to increase the productivity of clinical development. Finally, we will be investigating the implications of precision medicine for study design and technology pricing.

To mark the introduction of this new theme, HEHTA is hosting an afternoon workshop, Improving the focus of Precision Medicine: the role of Health Technology Assessment (HTA), on 20th January 2017. The workshop will comprise a series of talks given by invited speakers. For further details please email ihw-hehta@glasgow.ac.uk.
New CPD courses
(online distance learning)

- Statistical methods for HTA and evidence-based medicine
  9 January – 24 March 2017
- Foundations of Decision analytic modelling
  20 February – 24 March 2017
- Survival analysis for HTA
  9 January – 10 February
- HTA in a global context
  9 January – 24 March 2017

Three new courses started in September/October:
- Outcomes measurement and valuation for HTA
- HTA: Policy and Principles
- Qualitative research methods for HTA

For further details of all courses, see our website
or contact our admin team at ihw-hehta@glasgow.ac.uk

Glasgow health Economics Seminar Series (GhESS)

HEHTA’s seminar series (which is run in conjunction with Glasgow Caledonian University) has seen a very busy few months. On 20th September we welcomed John Cairns from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, who gave a presentation entitled ‘A novel method for collecting health state information from children.’ Professor Philip Clarke was our guest speaker on 23rd September, when he presented on ‘Economic Evaluation: a brief history.’ At the most recent event we welcomed Hareth Al-janabi from Birmingham University, who gave a seminar entitled ‘Including carers’ quality of life in economic evaluation.

Professor Andy Briggs chaired a seminar hosted by the Institute of Health & Wellbeing when Professor James Robinson presented on ‘Medical Innovation in an Era of Health Care Spending Constraints.’ Professor Robinson is Director of the Berkeley Center for Health Technology (BCHT) at the University of California at Berkeley. The talk focussed on the impact of reference pricing on consumer choices, employer spending, and health outcomes for inpatient and outpatient surgery, laboratory tests, diagnostic imaging, and pharmaceuticals.

Society for Medical Decision Making (SMDM) success for HEHTA PhD student

One of HEHTA’s PhD students, Ciaran Kohi-Lynch, won a prestigious award for his poster presentation at SMDM’s 2016 North America meeting. Ciaran was awarded the Lee B Lusted student prize for outstanding presentation of research for his poster on ‘Signalling Demand: PCSK9 Inhibitors for Statin Intolerant Individuals’.

HEHTA’s public engagement activities

Entitled ‘The Health Minister’s Dilemma’, HEHTA has been promoting its headline-making research and engagement in public discussions and activities demonstrating the impact of health economic research on daily lives and health.

Explorathon

HEHTA was selected to host a research station at Glasgow Science Centre on the evening of 30th September 2016 during Explorathon ‘16. http://www.explorathon.co.uk/ The event was part of European Researchers’ Night, held simultaneously across Europe on the last Friday in September to celebrate research and researchers, and funded by the European Commission under the Marie Sklodowska-Curie actions programme.

Festival of Social Sciences

Promoting our alcohol-focussed research, the team and collaborators from NHS Scotland (Mark Robinson and Matthias Heydtmann) set up stall in the Barras as part of the ESRC nationwide funded Festival of Social Science.

Watch this space for activities in 2017.
HEHTA hosts CONITEC visitors from Brazil

The Brazilian Public Health System has been undergoing major change in the last few years since the creation of the National Committee for Health Technology Incorporation (CONITEC). CONITEC defines the criteria and deadlines for technology incorporation in the public health system in Brazil. The Committee is responsible for advising the Brazilian Ministry of Health in the incorporation or disinvestment of health technologies into the health care system and development of clinical guidelines. HEHTA were delighted to host a group from CONITEC to discuss differences in HTA between the UK and Brazil.

ISPOR Asia-Pacific : 3-6 September, Singapore

HEHTA was represented at ISPOR in Singapore by Jim Lewsey. As well as presenting a paper on ‘Development of an alcohol policy model that predicts life years, QALYs and health care costs accounting for alcohol use disorder identification test’, Jim welcomed many visitors to our stand at which there was much interest in our MSc in HTA course as well as our suite of online CPD courses.

HEPA Europe

Manuela Deidda presented at the 12th Annual Meeting and 6th conference of HEPA Europe, which took place between the 28th and 30th September at Queen’s University Belfast. Manuela’s presentation was entitled ‘Reducing sedentary behaviour among older adults – the SITLESS Project health economic approaches to evaluating international sedentary behaviour interventions’. SITLESS is a Horizon 2020 project comprising 4 sites across Europe with the health Economics work-package led by Professor Emma McIntosh.
From priority-setting decisions to health impact: new explorations of a complex translation process

Members of the International Decision Support Initiative (iDSI), including HEHTA, organised a panel session on evaluating the impact of priority-setting decisions and health technology assessment at the International Society on Priorities in Health conference held in Birmingham 7-9th September. The panel aimed to illustrate the complex relationship between priority-setting processes, decisions and impact using a combination of case studies from individual priority-setting exercises, and conceptual overviews of systems within which HTA operates.

Institutionalisation of HTA is moving forward in many countries making the journey towards universal health coverage. This has been bolstered by commitments at a global level, such as the World Health Assembly resolution in 2014 which recognised the role HTA and robust priority-setting processes can play in making fair resource allocation decisions and sustaining health systems’ performance.

However, even in countries where HTA programmes are well-established, research identifying their outcomes and impact in terms of health gains is limited. Past evaluations and studies from the UK and international literature mainly focus on the effect HTA has on policy processes and decision-making, rather than outcomes. In the UK, recent evaluations of the NIHR’s HTA programme confirmed that impact on knowledge generation is more easily quantified than that on policy outputs or especially health gain. For countries with greater capacity constraints, how decision-making interacts with ‘context’ leading to health outcomes is even less explored and arguably of critical importance. Measuring health in terms of health gains necessarily requires implementation to be addressed; however, it is also evident that this is the least researched area of HTA.

The session discussed the expected benefits of HTA for priority-setting, and what is needed to realise these benefits beyond the existence of evidence and policy will.

The initial presentation was on HEHTA’s work developing a methodological approach for measuring the impact of HTA on the uptake of best practice. This method uses the outcome of net health benefits (NHBs) to compare the potential→ population health benefit and realised population health. The approach involves the use both of economic decision models to quantify the magnitude of impact, and of theory-driven approaches to generate and test contextual explanations for a gap between expected and actual gains in population health.

A second presentation by the Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Program in Thailand (HITAP) focused on case studies from specific priority-setting exercises which have estimated the extent of this gap.

Finally, a presentation from Itad demonstrated how priority-setting initiatives can incorporate the factors affecting implementation and impact into reflections on their work. Itad have developed indicators to describe key enabling and constraining aspects of the policy environment which are used for ongoing learning and monitoring of iDSI’s country-level and international activities.

For more information on iDSI: http://www.idsihealth.org/
Staff Profile
Willings Botha

Tell us about some of the research you’re working on at the moment:

I am working on my PhD research which is concerned with the development of a broader economic evaluative space for a public health intervention. In order to carry out an empirical analysis, I am using the Woods In and Around Town (WIAT) project in Scotland, which is an environmental improvement intervention for mental well-being. Given that the outcomes of a public health intervention can be broad consisting health and non-health related outcomes, as such, they do not fit into the traditionally used and favoured appraisal framework of quality adjusted life years (QALYs), my research explores the use of an integrated approach.

What is the most challenging aspect of your work?

The most challenging aspect of my work has been the complexity of the case study that I am using for empirical analysis. There are so many interrelated aspects that require detailed analysis. However, this is not unique to my study. Public health interventions are generally considered complex, hence the challenge in undertaking their economic evaluations. Perhaps, that’s why there is a PhD in it.

What attracted you to the field of Health Economics and HTA?

It was when I was studying for my recent postgraduate qualification that interest in Health Economics and HTA developed. I wanted to apply my knowledge in business modelling and economics to health, hence my dissertation was on ‘sustainable e-health business models for the Sub-Saharan region’.

Where would you most like to visit?

I have travelled to many countries but have never been to the US. This is where I would most like to visit.

What are your hobbies?

I like walking and visiting natural environments. Partly because of my PhD which looks at the benefits of nature on our well-being.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I spend time with my family. A good outdoor walk if the weather is good or just chill at home while roasting chicken wings.

What is a book you think everyone should read?

‘How the west was lost’ by Dambisa Moyo - It illustrates how developed countries have squandered their dominant position through flawed policies and how China has taken advantage of this to its favour. It is a very good read.

Staff News
PhD success!

A big congratulations to Camilla who successfully defended her PhD at her viva subject to minor corrections on 25th August and to her supervisors, Prof. Emma McIntosh and Prof. Carol Tannahill (GCPH)!

Staff Update

September saw the departure of two members of staff. Zahid Quayyum had been with HEHTA for two years, working on a number of projects. Miranda Trevor joined HEHTA in 2014 as a trainee researcher, and has left to commence her medical studies at the University of Newcastle. We wish them both much success in their new positions!

Visiting affiliate member of staff

We were delighted to welcome Dr Carlos Wong, Research Assistant Professor of the Department of Family Medicine and Primary Care at the University of Hong Kong. Carlos received his PhD from the University of Hong Kong for his work on health-related quality of life of colorectal cancer and economic evaluation of colorectal cancer screening. Prior to his PhD, He graduated with Bachelor and MPhil degrees from the Department of Mathematics at HK University of Science and Technology. His research interests are patient-reported outcome measurement including quality of life, and health services research, particularly retrospective administrative database research and cost-effectiveness analysis of health care interventions. He has published more than 90 articles in peer-reviewed journals in field of quality of life, health economics, evaluation of primary and secondary care interventions. He was recently appointed as a member of the editorial board of journal ‘The Patient - Patient-Centered Outcomes Research’.

Carlos spent two months with us, learning more about our research and teaching. During this time, he worked on two research projects, one which aims to evaluate the cost-effectiveness analysis of renal replacement therapy among end-stage renal disease patients in Hong Kong; and a second which will explore whether there are ICER thresholds in the decision on accepting emerging health technology in Hong Kong.

What is the most challenging aspect of your work?

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This summer Jennie decided to go and work on a dairy farm for a week! The photos are to prove that she did indeed get stuck in and get her hands dirty. She was interested to learn more about organic farming and the organisation WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) provided a great opportunity to do so. She was impressed by the local farmers’ dedication to a cause they believed in, despite the reduction in revenue going organic has meant for them. Through the experience she learnt more about the seriousness of the organic cause, about the process of making cheese and she also managed to pick up some hand-milking skills!

Huge congratulations to Robert Heggie who completed the Mont Blanc marathon on 24 June!

WHOOF!

Presentations

- ‘Development of an alcohol policy model that predicts life years, QALYs, and health care costs accounting for alcohol use disorder’ Jim Lewsey, ISPOR 7th Asia-Pacific Conference, Singapore, 5.9.16.
- ‘A cost-utility analysis of different antiviral medicine regimens in patients with chronic hepatitis c virus genotype 1 infection: an economic micro-simulation decision model’ Mohsen Rezaei, ISPOR 7th Asia-Pacific Conference, Singapore, 4.9.16.
- ‘How NICE appraisal supports the rational access to new and expensive medication’, Olivia Wu, 45th ESCP Symposium on Clinical Pharmacy jointly organised with NSF: “Clinical pharmacy tackling inequalities and access to health care”, Oslo, Norway, 5-7.10.16.
- ‘Statistical Methods for Pharmacoeconomics & Outcomes Research’, short course, Jim Lewsey, Gerd K Rosenkranz. ISPOR Europe, Vienna, Austria, 29.10.16.
- ‘Introduction to the Economic Analysis of Diagnostics’, short course, Andrew Briggs, John E Schneider. ISPOR Europe, Vienna, Austria, 30.10.16.
- ‘Health Economics in End of Life Care’, Claudia Geue, ICAMs – Institute of Cardiovascular and Medical Sciences, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, 3.11.16.


