HEHTA & SIGN CO-DEVELOP COVID-19 GP GUIDANCE

Janet Bouttell, Olivia Wu, Kate O’Donnell and colleagues from HEHTA and General Practice and Primary Care (GPPC) worked with the Scottish Inter-collegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) to co-develop guidance on COVID-19 for primary care practitioners.

From a suggestion made to Professor Kate O’Donnell by GP colleagues working in the front line of COVID-19 assessment hubs to the publication of the results of a rapid review took just 14 days. A team effort between HEHTA, GPPC and SIGN, this guidance updates primary care practitioners about the signs, symptoms and risk factors associated with severe disease in COVID-19. Evidence came mainly from unpublished papers and researchers had to work quickly to keep up as up to 100 new papers a day are being added to preprint site MedRxiv.

Although the evidence base was too weak and emergent to make definitive recommendations there were some key findings. Shortness of breath was the only symptom which was associated with severe disease. Characteristics associated with severe disease were older age, male sex and Asian ethnicity. Comorbidities/risk factors most associated with severe disease were hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, stroke, chronic pulmonary disease, chronic kidney disease and cancer. Clinical signs associated with severe disease were low oxygen saturation levels, low blood pressure and high respiratory rate.


STUDY EXAMINES EASING OF COVID-19 RULES ON PUBS & CLUBS

Jim Lewsey and Francesco Manca from HEHTA are part of a study led by Professor Niamh Fitzgerald from the University of Stirling on the understanding of how the easing of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on pubs, nightclubs and restaurant can be effectively managed to protect emergency services.

The study, funded by the Scottish Government, is aimed to assess and compute how the lifting of restrictions on these licensed premises can have an indirect impact on the ambulance service. The study will also try to evaluate how different policy options can lead to different behaviours and precautions of the local these premises to protect customers and staff from the virus.

Jim and Francesco will be responsible for the quantitative part of the research, aimed to assess whether there are different trends in alcohol-related ambulance call-outs after the lockdown and whether this could undermine the capacity of the Scottish ambulance service in its response to COVID-19 pandemic. In Scotland, alcohol-related ambulance calls are a substantial component of the overall ambulance call-outs. Understanding how they can affect an efficient response of the health care system to the pandemic can be crucial for future policy direction.

Read more here.
UPCOMING COURSES

ONLINE

Survival Analysis for HTA
22nd February - 26th March 2021
Aim: To demonstrate how survival/time to event data is used to inform health economic analyses within health technology assessments.

Statistical Methods for HTA and Evidence-Based Medicine
11th January - 26th March 2021
Aim: To deliver the fundamentals of statistical methodology that underpin health technology assessment and evidence-based medicine.

HTA in a Global Context
11th January - 26th March 2021
Aim: To examine HTA in different contexts, exploring geographical variation between high-income countries as well as looking more in-depth about how and why decision-making in healthcare may differ in low- and middle-income countries.

Foundations of Decision Analytic Modelling
11th January - 12th February 2021
Aim: This course aims to equip students with the necessary skills so they can design and conduct decision analytic modelling.

NEW COURSE for 2020

Maximising the Value of Clinical Trial Data: [Advanced] Analysis for Economic Evaluation and Modelling
21st October – 5th November 2020
This course will delivered using a blend of live lectures and exercises. It will cover:

- Regression analysis to estimate costs and utilities based on trial data, including the use of appropriate techniques for analysing panel data with repeated measures per patient, dealing with differential follow up, censoring, missing data and skewed data
- Survival analysis techniques including the use parametric survival analysis, competing risks analysis, cure models, and multi-state modelling
- Treatment switching techniques such as rank preserving structural failure time (RPSFMT) inverse probability of censoring weights (IPCW) and two stage estimation models.

Email ihw-hehta@glasgow.ac.uk to register your interest

More information on all our CPD courses and our online MSc is available by contacting our administrators at ihw-hehta@glasgow.ac.uk or on our website.

Course Spotlight

INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH ECONOMICS & HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT MICROCREDSIDENT: ONLINE DISTANCE LEARNING

This summer we are proud to launch a 10-weeks microcredentials course on Introduction to Health Economics and Health Technology Assessment hosted on the FutureLearn platform. The course is one of the seven online courses delivered by the university to prospective learners who want to upskill and contribute to their professional development.

Since the course meets the quality standards set by the Common Microcredentials Framework (CMF), the 10 credits obtained can also be used towards further study. HEHTA is fully equipped to provide this step as it has been hosting a distance learning MSc Health Technology Assessment (HTA) as well as various continuing professional development (CPD) courses for years.

The course, starting on 27th July, has so far proven to be popular and has received many applicants. Some of the Scottish-domiciled applicants have had the opportunity to undertake the course fully funded by the Scottish Funding Council, on a first come, first served basis. HEHTA is positive that this will be a flagship course held annually to showcase the team’s diverse work and world-class academics.

You can find out more about the course here or email ihw-hehta@glasgow.ac.uk

KATHLEEN BOYD PROMOTED TO READER

In August Kathleen Boyd’s contribution to HEHTA was recognised when she was made Reader. At the forefront of many of HEHTA’s teaching and CPD activity, as theme lead for ‘Economic evaluation alongside clinical trials’ and her more recent impactful work in population health, Kathleen contributes across the full spectrum of HEHTA’s activities.

As one of the first team members recruited to HEHTA by Andrew Briggs, Kathleen has developed an enviable reputation for methodological rigour and this is reflected in her substantive NIHR grant portfolio and impressive list of publications.

Congratulations, Kathleen!
New Grants

INCISE Project

In July it was announced in the MVLS college newsletter that HEHTA will be involved in a "£3.37m project to transform bowel cancer screening in the UK by developing a precision diagnostic tool that uses artificial intelligence to predict which patients will develop future polyps and tumours". Neil Hawkins and Olivia Wu are involved in the INtegrated teChnologies for Improved polyp Surveillance (INCISE) project, “made possible with £2.3m of government funding provided through UK Research and Innovation’s Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund and a further £1.1m from University of Glasgow and industry partners – will improve cancer detection while reducing the number of people needing repeated colonoscopy – a procedure patients find unpleasant, which also carries a risk of complications. It will also improve access to colonoscopy for others and reduce costs to the NHS.”

The INCISE project is a collaboration between University of Glasgow, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and Industry (Canon, BioClavis, OracleBio), which aims to deliver a tool to more accurately predict which patients with pre-cancerous growths in their bowels, called polyps, will develop further polyps.

Precision Healthcare Comes Home

Professor Emma McIntosh is involved in a new precision healthcare grant awarded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and led by Professor Jonathan Cooper from the university’s School of Engineering.

‘Quantum Imaging for Monitoring of Wellbeing & Disease in Communities’ proposes using ‘new-generation quantum-inspired cameras’ to carry out ‘remote detection and monitoring of parameters such as gait, macro and micro-movements, blood flow, heart rate and potentially even brain function’. The sensors have the potential to identify the onset of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and also aid recovery from NCDs or surgery through personalised rehabilitation programmes by feeding the information into machine-learning models.

‘Quantum Imaging for Monitoring of Wellbeing & Disease in Communities’ has been awarded £5,625,020 and will run from September 2020 until August 2025.

Full details of the grant can be found here.

Lead Investigator: Professor Jon Cooper
Other Investigators: Professor DFA Faccio, Professor MA Imran, Professor LF Muckli, Dr R Killick, Professor R Murray-Smith, Dr T Quinn, Professor F Mair, Dr A Vuckovic, Dr KI Gallacher.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

4 April
Ping Hsuan Hsieh publishes his article ‘Economic burden of rheumatoid arthritis: a systematic review of literature in biologic era’ in high impact journal Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases (British Medical Journal)

7 April
SIGN guidelines to advise on the assessment of COVID-19 in primary care are published. HEHTA input included lead author Janet Bouttell, Olivia Wu, Robert Heggie, Dikshyanta Rana & Ryan Field.

7 May
HEHTA virtual away day held via Zoom.

10 May
Scottish-government-funded study examining the impact of lifting of COVID-19 pub and nightclub restrictions on the Scottish Ambulance Service is published, attracting significant media attention.

18-20 May
Some of the team attend virtual ISPOR 2020

10 June
‘Evaluating the impact of minimum unit pricing (MUP) on sales-based alcohol consumption in Scotland: Controlled interrupted time series analyses’, involving Jim Lewsey, is published by Public Health Scotland.

24 June
Research assistant Giorgio Ciminata graduates to be the latest ‘Dr’ in the team.


25 June

1 July
‘How methodological frameworks are being developed: evidence from a scoping review’ by Nicola McMeekin, Olivia Wu, Evi Germeni & Andrew Briggs is published in BMC Medical Research Methodology.

6 July
Estimating the rate at which people with diabetes change risk of diabetic foot ulceration over time by Robert Heggie, in collaboration with NHS Fife, is published in Diabetic Medicine.

7 July
Janet Bouttell, Neil Hawkins & Houra Haghpanahan are promoted to Research Associates.

16 July
Regular monthly team quiz held via Zoom, with Jim and The Trainees taking the lead.

23 July

24 July
Some of the team meet for the first time since March for a socially distanced walk in the Botanic Gardens.

27 July
New microcredentials course ‘Introduction to Health Technology Assessment’ kicks off, running for the next ten weeks.
**SOCIAL**

**VIRTUAL AWAY DAY 2020**

Due to COVID-19, our away day quiz and bingo took place online this year! The winning team was led by Jim Lewsey, who was also triumphant at bingo along with Dikshyanta Rana. After a successful virtual away day we decided to make the quiz a monthly event with three teams getting together regularly to battle it out on Zoom.

**CONGRATULATIONS, DR GIORGIO CIMINATA!**

Research assistant Giorgio took part in the University of Glasgow’s summer graduation in June after successfully completing his PhD titled ‘Cost-effectiveness of new anticoagulant drugs using real world data within the Scottish population’. Well done, Dr Giorgio!

**ELEANOR’S ENQUIRING MIND**

A mid finishing her thesis, research associate Eleanor Grieve found a few spare moments to appear on Question Time on the 28th of May as part of the Glasgow audience which probed Ian Murray, John Swinney, Alex Massie and Layla McCay. You can watch the episode here.

**PUPPY LOVE**

Professor Emma McIntosh welcomed new pup Izzy the cockapoo into her household in April. We hope Izzy has been a good lockdown companion so far, Emma!

**GOODBYE!**

We bid farewell to our much-loved staff member Dr Rafael Venson who left lovely Lilybank for his new job as a Lecturer in Forensic Toxicology/Pharmacology (Forensic Medicine). Good luck on your new journey, Rafael!

**PROMOTION SUCCESS**

At the beginning of July it was announced that Janet Bouttell, Robert Heggie and Houra Haghpanahan had been promoted to Research Associates by the University’s Promotions Committee, with effect from 1 August 2020.

Olivia Wu had a few words to say about our newly promoted colleagues: “Robert was one of our first trainees and joined HEHTA in 2014. Always eager to learn new skills, Robert has been involved in a wide variety of projects and has produced an impressive list of outputs from this work.

“Janet was one of our MSc HTA students, and we were delighted when she joined the team on completion of her MSc in 2015. Since then, she has been carrying out top-quality research, initially on natural experiments and synthetic controls, and currently on developer-focused HTA.

“Houra joined HEHTA in 2017 following a collaboration on a project on mass media campaign and smoking between HEHTA and Stirling University. Building on her econometric skills, Houra has produced highly impactful research on drink-driving and is currently working on the Scottish diabetes model.

“In addition to their research activities, Robert, Janet and Houra are great support for the team. They are generous in sharing their knowledge with fellow team members, supporting our teaching activities, and postgraduate supervision. I am delighted that their hard work has been recognised by the University.”

**OH, BABY, BABY!**

Twins arrived early on March 20th for Reader Kathleen Boyd. Welcome to the world, Aidan and Matthew!
VIRTUAL ISPOR & EUHEA

Although many academic conferences have been cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic this year, the team managed to attend those being hosted online instead.

Our PhD student Ping Hsuan Hsieh and Olivia Wu attended the Virtual ISPOR conference 2020, which took place between 18-20 May via Zoom. Without taking a long flight and running through venues to join different sessions, Ping Hsuan enjoyed the engaging presentations and their live discussions in his living room. Ping Hsuan attended many interesting sessions focusing on various topics, including advanced CEA in decision making, real world evidence and network meta-analysis, machine learning and artificial intelligence in healthcare. Noticeably, the COVID-19 pandemic was a hot topic touched on in many of the conference’s sessions.

Dikshyanta Rana, Claudia, Geue, Francesco Manca and Nicola McMeekin were part of the 800 participants who attended Virtual EuHEA 2020, originally intended to be held in Oslo. It is scheduled to take place in the Norwegian capital in 2022 instead.

This year it was a one-day virtual conference hosted to foster knowledge exchange during the COVID-19 lockdown period. Several of our team members had their abstracts selected.

The keynote speeches focused on long term health impacts and prospects for health economics research related to COVID-19. It also focused on lessons to learn from the response of the US healthcare system during the pandemic. Many attendees recognised this to be a suitable topic as health economists can play a paramount role in navigating the post-pandemic landscape. The organised sessions covered topics like behavioural experiments in health landscape. The organised sessions covered topics like behavioural experiments in health landscape. The organised sessions covered topics like behavioural experiments in health landscape. The organised sessions covered topics like behavioural experiments in health landscape.

Editorial Team

Editor: Emma McIntosh

Writers: Francesco Manca, Nicola McMeekin, Alieda McKinney, Dikshyanta Rana, Miniam Yentumi

MAY 2020


JUNE 2020


JUNE/JULY 2020

Hawkins N & Lewsey J. Antithrombotic treatments in patients with chronic coronary artery disease or peripheral artery disease: a systematic review of randomised controlled trials. Cardiovascular Therapeutics.


R Heggie, K A Boyd et al. When should we admit for preterm labour? An economic evaluation of the QUIPS prognostic model. EuHEA Conference. 9 July.


JULY 2020
