Welcome to HEHTA’s winter newsletter. I write this introduction on March 23rd 2021, a full year since the start of lockdown 2020. The pandemic has affected everybody in so many different ways, and as I wrote in my last welcome, Olivia and I are so grateful to see this year out with our team in good health. We are looking forward to being able to see our colleagues and students face to face soon.

While it has been a challenging time for many being isolated and separated from families and spending too much time on ‘zoom’ we are also hearing positive impacts within our team from those increasing daily steps/exercise and enjoying greater family (& pet!) time due to reduced commuting.

Despite the pandemic we had a productive winter on many fronts. I was personally thrilled to hear that my NIHR Global Health group’s sponsored MSc Global Health student Nateiya Yolongo was awarded an MSc in Global Health with distinction. In February, Dr Claudia Geue was appointed as our new Senior Lecturer in Health Economics and HTA and Janet Bouttell was awarded her PhD following a successful Viva. New research led by Public Health Scotland and involving HEHTA’s Jim Lewsey shows that alcohol sales in Scotland fell by 6% in 2020 as a result of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

Looking forward, we are thrilled to be offering our flagship course ‘Maximising the Value of Clinical Trial Data’ for the second year, in November 2021. Finally, HEHTA welcomed three new PhD students, Tzu-Jung Lai, Hanin Farhana Binti Kamaruzaman and Fabiola Lemus Villafuerte.

LOCKDOWN ALCOHOL SALES FALL BY 6% IN SCOTLAND

New research led by Public Health Scotland and involving Jim Lewsey and Public Health colleague Danny Mackay shows that alcohol sales in Scotland fell by 6% in 2020 as a result of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

The study found that the spread of COVID-19 and corresponding lockdown measures reduced alcohol sales and people’s ability to socialise, leading to lower-than-expected consumption based on pre-COVID-19 figures. However, average weekly alcohol sales during the period studied, which stood at 17.5 units per adult in Scotland, still remained in excess of the UK Chief Medical Officers’ guideline of 14 units per week.

‘The impact of COVID-19 and related restrictions on population-level alcohol sales in Scotland and England & Wales, March–July 2020’ concluded: ‘Improved understanding of how the COVID-19 restrictions have affected consumption across different population sub-groups is now needed, given the evidence that drinking at hazardous levels may have increased for some.’


Viva Success for Janet!

On the 25th of January, years of hard work paid off for Janet Bouttell, who successfully defended her thesis ‘Methods of early health technology assessment in precision medicine’. Janet, along with viva convenor Emma McIntosh and examiners Lotte Steuten and Janneke Grutters, were able to join the team for a post-viva celebratory Zoom where everyone was keen to congratulate Dr Bouttell on her achievement.

Janet completed her MSc in Health Technology Assessment at HEHTA in 2015 before starting her PhD supervised by Andrew Briggs and Neil Hawkins. During this time Janet also became one of our research assistants before being promoted to research associate last year.

Well done, Janet!

Contact us

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

**HEALTH ECONOMICS FOR HTA**

19th April - 2nd July

**Aim:** To provide students with a critical understanding of health economics, its value and limitations. It will familiarise participants with the application of economic theory to health and health care issues, the principles of health economics and the techniques of economic appraisal.

Course Coordinators: Kathleen Boyd & Nicola McMeekin

Book on our website: [www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/healthwellbeing/research/hehta/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/healtheconomics/#](http://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/healthwellbeing/research/hehta/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/healtheconomics/#)

**DATA SCIENCE - IDENTIFYING, COMBINING AND ANALYSING HEALTH DATA SETS**

19th April - 2nd July

**Aim:** To equip students with the necessary analytical skills to analyse linked health care data and to be aware of issues around clinical and information governance relating to their use.

Course Coordinator: Claudia Geue

Book on our website: [www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/healthwellbeing/research/hehta/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/datascience/#d.en.419725](http://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/healthwellbeing/research/hehta/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/datascience/#d.en.419725)

**FLAGSHIP COURSE IN SECOND YEAR**

**Maximising the Value of Clinical Trial Data: [Advanced] Analysis for Economic Evaluation and Modelling.**

Given that the first run of this course was so successful last year, we are delighted to announce that this course will run again in November 2021.

This course is a natural follow-on from advanced modelling courses and covers the fundamental concepts and practice of the key advanced analytic techniques that are required when determining appropriate approaches and estimating parameter values for cost-effectiveness models. It is also highly relevant to those seeking to improve the relevance of trial based cost-effectiveness.

Some feedback from last year included:

‘Extremely responsive lecturers, tutors and coordinators. Very open to questions and prompt in answering questions/doubts.’

‘The course material provided a good summary of methods, and the online format worked well.’

If you wish to register your interest for this course for November 2021 please email us at: ihw-hehta@glasgow.ac.uk

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**Claudia Geue Announced as New Senior Lecturer**

On February 4th we were thrilled to announce that Claudia Geue had been appointed as our new Senior Lecturer in Health Economics and HTA.

Emma McIntosh said: “This is an exciting development for HEHTA’s ambitions in the use of real word evidence in HTA and we are delighted that Claudia will be leading the way.”
Major Review of C-19 Studies in BMC Medicine

The proliferation of Covid-19 research in major medical journals has led to a review of these studies being published in BMC Medicine.

Led by Terence Quinn (ICAMS) and including Claudia Geue, Ryan Field, Ping-Hsuan Hsieh and Dikshyanta Rana, the team conducted a study comparing methodological and reporting quality of Covid-19 and other research from the first wave of the pandemic.

Last year, there was a substantial increase in the publication of biomedical research related to Covid-19 in many prominent journals. The urgency in obtaining evidence and the looming fear worldwide accelerated its dissemination through scientific and public platforms such as social media and lay-press. Subsequently, concerns were raised regarding the integrity and quality of these rapidly published researches.

The paper, published by BMC Medicine, reports that “the Covid-19 research published in major journals during the first wave of the pandemic had methodological and reporting issues that ultimately compromise the utility of the research and may cause harm”.

Click here to read the full study: https://bmcmedicine.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12916-021-01920-x

NIHR Global Research Group (Arthritis) Updates

Extension

At the beginning of 2021 it was announced that the ‘National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Global Health Research Group on estimating the prevalence, quality of life, economic and societal impact of arthritis in Tanzania: a mixed methods study at the University of Glasgow’ had been granted a costed extension.

The new phase of this programme will capitalise on existing research with the addition of two natural extensions: Study 1) Evaluation of a new rheumatology clinic and Study 2) Identifying culturally relevant attributes of the Global Health Research Programme.

In addition to the existing team, the group welcomes Professors Joanna Coast (University of Bristol) and Amelia Crampin (MEIRU Malawi) as co-investigators. Dr Hareth Al Janabi/Dr Philip Kinghorn join as advisory board members and Dr Alonge (Johns Hopkins) joins as advisor to the clinic evaluation.

The group had a productive first meeting on January 19th, bringing together experts in capability wellbeing, health economics, qualitative methods, epidemiology and medicine.

Science Day

On November 30th, group director Emma McIntosh and Blandina Mmbaga, director of Kilimanjaro Christian Research Institute (KCRI), hosted the Global Health Research Group (Arthritis) Science Day. There was a fantastic line up of talks reporting the group’s qualitative results, analysis plans for community and hospital survey and social science training.

Nateiya Yongolo Awarded Global Health MSc

In November, Dr Nateiya Yongolo from KCRI was awarded a MSc in Global Health with distinction. Nateiya had spent a year in Glasgow completing her masters under very difficult circumstances and we are delighted at what she was able to achieve under the 2020 lockdown! Well done, Nateiya!

IHW & IBAHCM train 100 Cameroonian biologists in data analysis

A new cross-institute collaboration led by Jim Lewsey aims to address research challenges in Cameroon by training students and early career researchers (ECRs) to better analyse important data on health, agriculture and environment.

The project, announced in December and supported by the Global Challenges Research Fund, will use R to teach participants online statistical courses as well as run mini workshops. It builds on a previous workshop held by co-investigator Dr Luke Powell from the Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health and Biodiversity (IBAHCM).

Jim Lewsey and Daniel Mackay from the Institute of Health and Wellbeing are principal investigator and co-investigator, respectively.

Co-Investigators in Cameroon: Dr Kowo Cyril (University of Buea), Moses Libalah (University of Yaoundé) and Francis Alemanji Forzi (Partners for Sustainable Development (PSD).

The project will run until July 2021
TIMELINE OF EVENTS

26 November
Suzanne Freeman from the University of Leicester delivers a talk to the team.

30 November
Global Health Research Group Science Day takes place, hosted by Emma McIntosh and Blandina Mmbaga.

2 December
It is announced that NIHR CRSU contract is now extended to 30th November 2021.

10 December

15 December
Sophie Westrop is awarded a grant in collaboration with VIA Scotland titled 'Developing and evaluating the feasibility of a theory-based intervention to increase walking in adults with intellectual disabilities'.

17 December
We receive recognition from SAMH for raising £190 even though we were not able to do our Kelpies run.

The HEHTA Christmas party takes place with lots of the team in attendance before we break for Christmas!

18 December
Our latest annual report is published and we break for the festive period.

4 January
We are joined by new PhD student Hanin Farhana Binti Kamaruzaman.

6-8 January
Nicola McMeekin and Houra Haghpanahan have abstracts included in virtual HESG2021 and others team members attend the conference, hosted this year by LSHTM.

10 January
Neil Hawkins’ new PhD student Fabiola Lemus Villafuerte joins the team.

19 January
The first meeting of our the new NIHR Global health capability wellbeing study, in collaboration with MEIRU, KCRI and Bristol University takes place today, chaired by Emma McIntosh.

25 January
Janet Bouttell successfully defends her thesis.

28 January
Important NIHR-funded research by Robert Heggie, Jim Lewsey & Neil Hawkins finds that ‘people with diabetes with a low risk of developing foot ulcers can be screened less often’.

4 February
Claudia Geue is appointed as our new Senior Lecturer in Health Economics and HTA.

New research associate Nishant Jaiswal joins the team.

16 February
Stuart Wright, research fellow at Manchester Centre for Health Economics, delivers the first GhESS seminar of 2021 on ‘Quantifying the impact of health system capacity constraints in economic evaluations using value of implementation analysis’.

25 February
The first team quiz of the year is a close call between the ‘besoms’ and the ‘bunnies’!

SOCIAL CORNER

CHRISTMAS PARTY FUN

On the 17th December the team gathered on Zoom (where else?!) to get together for one final time before the festive break. Our ‘party’ included a quiz, ‘guess the baby’, Guess Who -and some pretty awful singing! Great fun was had by all but the team were glad to be getting ready to log off of Zoom for a while over Christmas!

HAPPY 60TH BIRTHDAY, MOIRA!

Happy 60th birthday Moira from everyone at Lilybank Gardens

The team convened on Zoom on 11th November to wish Research Coordinator Moira Sim a very happy 60th birthday!

FIRST QUIZ OF 2021

In November we had our final Big Quiz of 2020 which saw Jim’s Trainees see off the competition with an overall score of 121 points, closely followed by Invisible Giorgio and Breakout Room 1 with 115 and 114.5 points respectively. We hope to be able to hold our quiz league in person next year!
After successful completion of her MSc HTA last year, we were delighted that Tzu-Jung Lai was able to start her PhD ‘Methodological Challenges of Health Technology Assessment for Medical Devices’ under the supervision of Jose Antonio Robles-Zurita and Kathleen Boyd in December.

Hanin Farhana Binti Kamaruzaman, a medical doctor from the Ministry of Health in Malaysia, joined HEHTA in January as a new PhD student of Olivia Wu. Her thesis title is ‘Disinvestment of health interventions and practices through health technology assessment: towards sustainable health care through effective resource allocation’.

Fabiola Lemus Villafeurte, a new PhD student of Neil Hawkins, joined us on a scholarship from CONACyT, Mexico, in mid-January. Fabiola is a health economics specialist with expertise in pharmacoeconomics, health technology assessment and clinical research.

New research associate Nishant Jaiswal joined the team on February 4th to work with CRSU and Olivia Wu. Nishant is a medical doctor and has a PhD from the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) in Chandigarh, India.

Publications


Haghpanahan H. Developing a Scottish Type 2 Diabetes Policy Model and a Web-based Decision Aid dashboard (co-authored by Jim Lewsey, Claudia Geue, Robert Lindsay, David McAllister, Elaine Betterly, Jesus Rodriguez Perez, Sarah Will, Peter McMeekin). HESG. 7 January 2021.


Presentations


Haghpanahan H. Developing a Scottish Type 2 Diabetes Policy Model and a Web-based Decision Aid dashboard (co-authored by Jim Lewsey, Claudia Geue, Robert Lindsay, David McAllister, Elaine Betterly, Jesus Rodriguez Perez, Sarah Will, Peter McMeekin). HESG. 7 January 2021.