Welcome to HEHTA’s first newsletter of 2018. It has been a very exciting year so far, with new team members and a number of grant successes. At the tail end of 2017, Glasgow was host to the ISPOR conference where a number of HEHTA presentations were made. Professor Andy Briggs gave a plenary presentation and was presented with an award from ISPOR for his service. HEHTA’s Ciaran Kohli-Lynch was also presented with an award for the best student poster presentation. Amongst other news items, this edition showcases new Global Health research grant success, celebrates PhDs awarded, and introduces new team members including HEHTA’s Qualitative Lecturer, Dr Evi Germeni, previously based at Oxford University. HEHTA have also appointed two new trainees, Francesco Manca and Dikshyanta Rana. Our publications highlight our varied research profile, including a number of Janet Boutell’s many PhD contributions appearing in press.

New research projects won

Professor Emma McIntosh and Eleanor Grieve are leading the health economics components in two new exciting Global Health research grants in Malawi, Uganda and Rwanda.

Emma and Eleanor are part of a wider Glasgow University collaboration with Professor Mia Crampin at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine on a jointly funded project entitled NoToNa: Tackling cardiovascular risk in the adolescent life-course through a schools’ salt-reduction intervention in sub-Saharan Africa. The joint funding initiative is provided by the MRC/DFID/NIHR call for research to improve adolescent health in LMIC settings. The principal research questions to be addressed are as follows:

- Can meaningful reductions in salt intake in Malawian adolescents be achieved through a school-based education package on salt reduction?
- Does this translate into reduction in blood pressure in Malawian adolescents?
- Do schools nutrition programmes in rural and urban sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have the potential to change in the life-course cardiovascular risk in a cost-effective way?

A school-level cluster-randomised educational/behavioural intervention trial in adolescent school attenders will be conducted in rural and urban Malawi. Thirteen intervention schools will deliver a 12-week interactive education package on salt to students (and families) over one term. Thirteen control schools will follow the standard curriculum. Blood pressure and 24-hour urine sodium will be measured at baseline, 12 weeks and one year in students from intervention and control schools (20 per school), and in adults in their households. The within trial economic evaluation and life-horizon model will be reported adopting a societal perspective.

The development of this important research has generated a great deal of interest and enthusiasm in the Malawi Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) community, given that hypertension is considered a major public health problem and yet there are no preventive strategies being implemented other than individual counselling of already hypertensive or overweight individuals. The team have had formative discussions with key stakeholders in Malawi, including the Malawi Ministry of Health and the Schools Health and Nutrition Programme.
The NOVEL project has a number of objectives as follows:

1. Manipulate paper matrices to improve the control of flow dynamics, integrating easier and faster sample processing of diagnostics for schistosomiasis and malaria detection resulting in visually read, quantitative, rapid, specific and sensitive formats;

2. Develop new low-cost ultra-high resolution imaging using mobile phone technologies to create a new acoustic-optic technology with objective-less imaging of microbes and parasite eggs;

3. Develop additive manufacturing technologies to integrate paper based sample preparation with quantitative lateral flow assay;

4. Validate rapid, point of care tests through extensive field trials in both rural and urban endemic environments in East (Uganda) and West Africa (Sierra Leone);

5. Measure the full societal impact of the proposed research by collection of suitable, realistic, collectable metrics, on the potential impacts (including resources, health outcomes, employment and income) of the interventions and feed these into economic models estimating the cost-effectiveness of the technologies;

6. Develop capacity strengthening and public engagement activities – building upon long standing relationships with the University of Makerere (Uganda), Ministry of Health (Uganda) and the University of Rwanda (Rwanda);

7. Adapt and develop health economic models focusing on the potential long-term impact including the creation of a sustainable, not-for-profit entrepreneurial activity around the manufacture of a pipeline of diagnostic products in Africa.
Professor Andrew Briggs was invited to speak as part of the IHW Maurice Bloch seminar series last November. His talk focused on an ongoing joint project he is leading with Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York and a team here in HEHTA on oncology value frameworks in the United States.

The seminar outlined the problems and challenges associated with current value frameworks in the United States and the need for research that looks beyond health when determining a treatment’s value. Andrew highlighted his current mixed-methods project which seeks to identify those treatment attributes valued by different stakeholder groups for inclusion in a new conceptual oncology value framework using discrete choice experiment methodology, and examine if participants are willing to trade some health benefits for these other treatments.

The evidence that is used by decision makers in healthcare is becoming increasingly diverse. ‘Real World Data’ or ‘Real World Evidence’ is now frequently used in research in response to the need to understand the impact of health care interventions in the real-world. In Scotland we are fortunate enough to have a data linkage system providing high quality data, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analyses and follow up. In HEHTA we have a variety of research projects which utilise these linked data. Some recent studies include a newly funded CSO project, which Dr Jim Lewsey is leading on developing a type 2 diabetes policy model for Scotland.

Giorgio Ciminata, one of our PhD students, has been working on a large linkage study of hospital in- and outpatient records, prescribing data, Care Home Census, death records and the Scottish Stroke Care Audit to estimate the comparative effectiveness of direct oral anticoagulants in patients with atrial fibrillation. Another recently funded project (Stroke Association) will also utilise these data to describe the patient journey for stroke survivors. To share our expertise and passion when it comes to working with observational, linked data we are now also in the second year of running our online module on ‘Analysis of linked health data’, which recently started this April.

Maurice Bloch Seminar – 28th November 2017

Professor Andrew Briggs was invited to speak as part of the IHW Maurice Bloch seminar series last November. His talk focused on an ongoing joint project he is leading with Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York and a team here in HEHTA on oncology value frameworks in the United States.

The seminar outlined the problems and challenges associated with current value frameworks in the United States and the need for research that looks beyond health when determining a treatment’s value. Andrew highlighted his current mixed-methods project which seeks to identify those treatment attributes valued by different stakeholder groups for inclusion in a new conceptual oncology value framework using discrete choice experiment methodology, and examine if participants are willing to trade some health benefits for these other treatments.

Dr Camilla Baba and Dr Satu Baylan were successful in gaining a £1000 grant from the College of Medicine, Veterinary and Life Sciences to organise 2 public engagement training workshops aimed at early career research staff here at IHW. The half-day session on the 6th February was delivered by Steve Allman, an independent consultant who supports charities and social enterprises to evaluate impact. The main aim of the workshop was to be accessible to those with some experience of public engagement, as well as those with little or no experience and to provide an overview of potential tools and techniques, including real examples.

On the 26th a ‘test you ideas’ session was arranged for participants to experiment with the new tools learnt and gain insight from peers on their new activities. A further session is planned for April/May with the aim of a couple activities being developed for the upcoming Glasgow Science Festival held in June.

ECR PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Dr Camilla Baba and Dr Satu Baylan were successful in gaining a £1000 grant from the College of Medicine, Veterinary and Life Sciences to organise 2 public engagement training workshops aimed at early career research staff here at IHW. The half-day session on the 6th February was delivered by Steve Allman, an independent consultant who supports charities and social enterprises to evaluate impact. The main aim of the workshop was to be accessible to those with some experience of public engagement, as well as those with little or no experience and to provide an overview of potential tools and techniques, including real examples.

On the 26th a ‘test you ideas’ session was arranged for participants to experiment with the new tools learnt and gain insight from peers on their new activities. A further session is planned for April/May with the aim of a couple activities being developed for the upcoming Glasgow Science Festival held in June.
The HEHTA team had a high profile at the 20th ISPOR European Congress, which took place at the SEC in Glasgow. Approximately 5000 delegates from all around the world including the USA, Australia, Canada, the Middle East, Asia and Europe attended this conference and 22 of the HEHTA team were registered.

Professor Andrew Briggs was co-chair and Professor Olivia Wu, Director of HEHTA along with the senior team decided to invest in this opportunity to promote the group's teaching and research work.

HEHTA took a booth at the event, which was staffed by the team throughout the conference. Visitors to the booth were invited to try homemade Scottish tablet and participate in a competition to win a bottle of Scotch Whisky. Many of the visitors were interested in HEHTA's online distance learning program and potential PhD opportunities as well as our research using Scottish data and our CPD courses.

The conference began with short courses on offer over the weekend of 4th and 5th November.

Five HEHTA staff delivered courses over this period:
- Professor Andrew Briggs
- Professor Olivia Wu
- Professor Neil Hawkins
- Dr James Lewsey
- Andrew Davies
Day one saw podium presentations by Ciaran Kohli-Lynch and Dr Houra Haghpanahan, and a poster presentation by Dr Camilla Baba.

Day two saw Professor Andrew Briggs having a very busy conference leading a plenary session, an educational symposium and a workshop.

Professor Andrew Briggs was presented with an award from ISPOR for his service and at the end of the conference Ciaran student poster presentation.

Also on day two Professor Olivia Wu was one of the leaders on a discussion panel on Women in HEOR/Science.

Left: There were poster presentations by Dr Camilla Baba, Robert Heggie, Ciaran Kohli-Lynch, Dr Mohsen Rezaei-Hemami, Dr Caoimhe Ryan, Janet Boutell, Yiqiao Xin and Nicola McMeekin.

Join our education symposium at ISPOR Glasgow:

Practical Implications of Value-based Pricing and Emerging Value Frameworks in Health Technology Assessment

Tuesday, 7 November | 12:30

Featuring
Andrew Briggs, DPhil, MSc
Visiting Investigator, Center for Health Policy and Outcomes, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY, USA
Our online CPD and MSc portfolio continues to grow in popularity and reputation with new courses proving to be as popular as our existing modules.

Since last summer we have run modules in:
• HTA: policy and principles
• Qualitative research methods for HTA
• Foundations of decision analytic modelling
• Survival analysis for HTA
• Statistical methods for HTA and evidence based medicine
• HTA in a global context
• Outcome measurement and valuation for HTA

The following modules are currently running and are proving to be highly successful:
• Health economics for HTA – 9 April to 22 June 2018
• Analysis of linked health data – 9 April to 22 June 2018

FACE TO FACE COURSES AUTUMN 2018
• Decision Analytic Modelling Methods for Economic Evaluation – 1 to 5 October 2018
• Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Direct, Indirect and Mixed Treatment Evidence – 3 to 5 September 2018

Main picture: Willings Botha returned to Glasgow from his position Research Fellow in Health Economics, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia to graduate and celebrate with colleagues including Professor Andrew Briggs who was one of his supervisors.

Top: Claire Williams successfully defended her thesis and is pictured above celebrating after her Viva with some of the team.

March saw HEHTA run their online ‘Introduction to HTA’ MOOC for a second time to great success. Course creators, Dr Camilla Baba and Dr Jim Lewsey were delighted to see that the material was positively received and that students engaged in the discussion boards and were impressed by the sheer breadth of the work done here at HEHTA. We will be running the course again over the summer months so if you would like more details please get in touch or look at the course profile page:

www.futurelearn.com/courses/health-technology-assessment
What attracted you to come to HEHTA?
I guess the thing that attracted me the most was the opportunity to contribute to a rapidly evolving and multi-disciplinary field of study, while being part of an international and vibrant group of people. The idea of moving to Glasgow was also very appealing, although, I have to admit, I underestimated how rough Scottish winters can be!

What’s your background?
I am a qualitative health researcher, with a background in Psychology, Communication and Media Studies, and Health Communication. Over the last ten years, I have conducted both primary qualitative research and qualitative evidence syntheses across a range of topics and clinical areas. Before joining HEHTA, I held postdoctoral research fellowships at the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences of the University of Oxford, at the Institute of Health Research of the University of Exeter, and at the Institute of Communication and Health of the University of Lugano in Switzerland. At HEHTA, I am currently leading the Incorporating Perspectives and Experiences (IPE) research programme, which utilizes qualitative approaches to provide an in-depth understanding of stakeholders' needs, values, and experiences, as well as contextual aspects of evaluations and HTA. Specifically, work conducted in this programme seeks to provide a patient-centred assessment of complex health technologies, by investigating, for instance, whether a technology that has shown to be effective and cost-effective, is also acceptable to its target audience, or issues related to the implementation of the complex technology in context.

Tell us one surprising thing about you
I’m a music geek – or at least I used to be! I have a vast collection of vinyl records and CDs, and my first job was writing for a music blog…

DIKSHYANTA RANA

What attracted you to come to HEHTA?
I was aware of HEHTA, University of Glasgow’s renowned reputation and when I came across the job advert I felt like I had found a position where I can see myself be happy in the future. I was attracted to the fact that in HEHTA I will be guided expertly and be presented with ample responsibilities and opportunities. It is truly a vibrant place to be in and I believe that one can really make an impact in the world. When I came to York from Nepal, I never imagined that a year later I would be here. To be here in such a supportive environment is simply unbelievable.

What’s your background? (Are you new to Health Economics and HEHTA)?
I come from a social science background. For my undergraduate degree, I majored in Economics with minors in Psychology and Sociology. Recently, I graduated with MSc in Health Economics from the University of York (UoY). I also completed my placement under the Mental Health and Addiction Research Group at UoY where my dissertation was on "Systematic Review of Economic Evaluation of Digital Mental Health Interventions".

Tell us one surprising thing about you (i.e. hobby we would not expect, previous awards, life experience, and extreme sport)
A memorable life experience was when I went cliff-diving in India during a school trip. I actually did it twice because I could not believe that I had done it the first time! It is also memorable because I got to experience white water rafting and zip line from the top of a hill to another. Apart from this, I am pretty much a normal Millennial who loves to try out new music/cuisines and believes that we are living at the best point in modern history!

HEHTA has been extremely fortunate to welcome three new members of staff: Dr Evi Germeni who will be leading HEHTA’s qualitative theme and two new trainees; Dikshyanta Rani and Francesco Manca. We did a 5 minute interview with each to get to know them!
What attracted you to come to HEHTA?

I should start saying that I have my master and bachelor in economics though I was interested more in applied economics fields rather than pure economics areas. Thanks to my past experiences in development economics and international cooperation and my parents’ professions (they worked in the health sector), I developed an interest in the health fields of economics, specifically related to health inequalities in both developed and developing contexts. Going forward, after a short experience in a consultancy IT company in Milan, which helped me to confirm my previous interests in Health, I decided to look for further studies or jobs in Health Economics or Public Health and HEHTA caught my interest. HEHTA attracted me because it combines, within a prestigious academic framework, the research and training sides of a field which is very interesting, but still new for me, allowing me to develop my professional and research career.

What’s your background?

My academic background is in Economics, I specialized my master path mainly in econometrics and research methodology.

Tell us one surprising thing about you

I do not think I have one in particular but I love traveling and almost in every travel had funny episodes. During my travels, I always bring the scarf of the football team of my hometown (SPAL) which I support around the world and taking pictures with it. The last travel I had was The Way of Saint James in Spain where I walked few hundred miles. I also like cooking which is relaxing for me.

What training or skills did you gain?

In addition to developing my PhD project, during the time I was at HEHTA, I was able to improve my skills in using of evidence synthesis and decision analytical modelling methodologies to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of new health technologies. I had also the opportunity to participate in the training course in decision analytical modelling and, to complete multiple online training modules in HTA methodologies. In short, I gained a lot of knowledge in health economics and HTA during my time at HEHTA.

What did you think about Glasgow?

Glasgow is a fantastic city with lots of facilities and events going on throughout the year, so there is always something to do. I loved Glasgow because is a city with lots of open green spaces and people here are incredibly friendly.

FERNANDO ZANGHELINI

What attracted you to come to HEHTA?

As an international student, when I was looking for a university to develop part of my PhD project, the first thing I considered was reputation. The University of Glasgow is one of the top 100 universities in the world and has many facilities to support students academically.

Lots of my friends and colleagues recommended HEHTA to me as a centre for excellence in health economics and HTA – and I’m glad I took their advice! Another personal motive is the remarkable mixture of researchers with different professional backgrounds, research projects, different nationalities and cultures, all working in the same department (HEHTA) makes collaborations incredibly easier and conducive to multidisciplinary research. The possibility of developing my PhD research project in HEHTA, along with renowned researchers, was just the icing on the cake.

When I arrived at HEHTA on the first day, everyone I came across, both staff and students, was so welcoming, that I felt it was indeed the right place to study. And now I’m recommending HEHTA to everyone I know!

What research were you involved with at HEHTA?

As a PhD student in Therapeutic Innovation at the Federal University of Pernambuco (Brazil), I was awarded a scholarship to develop my PhD research project at HEHTA. This research project aims to determine the cost-effectiveness of early palliative care in terms of improved quality of life, survival, and cost-save in patients with advanced cancer. The project was proposed regarding the need to increase the certainty of evidence and to guide health professionals and policymakers to better decision making. The study was conducted under the supervision of Professor Olivia Wu. In addition, during this period I worked alongside other HEHTA colleagues and supported a research project evaluating the cost-effectiveness of HCV screening.

We also sadly had to say goodbye to a visiting PhD student, Fernando Zanghelini from the Federal University of Pernambuco in Brazil. We asked him to tell us a little bit about his experience here at HEHTA.


Bouttell J. Workshop to Laboratory Medicine Grand Round. Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow UK. Nov 2017.


Xin Y., Lewsey J., McIntosh E. Too broad to be sensitive? Exploring the responsiveness of the ICECAP-O capability wellbeing measure compared to the EQ-5D-3L to the change of clinical and QoL aspects in people with Parkinson’s. ISPOR 20th Annual European Congress, Glasgow, UK. Nov 2017.


Grieve E and Briggs A. A Methodological Approach for Measuring the Impact of HTA.


