Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to HEHTA’s winter newsletter. 2018 has been a very productive year for HEHTA on many fronts. 2018 has seen us expand our team and diversify our portfolio of projects. In particular, there has been a substantial increase in our work in global and one health economics. Our team have travelled the globe this year from Sweden, Brazil, Argentina, Tanzania to Thailand to name but a few. Following on from the success of our HEHTA trainee scheme we have recruited an additional trainee this year, Dr Rafael Venson joined trainees Dikshyanta Rana and Francesco Manca. HEHTA’s GHESS seminar series with Glasgow Caledonian and Strathclyde Universities has seen a wide range of speakers including Jeremy Lauer, HEHTA’s own Dr Manuela Deidda, Dr Itamar Megiddo and Dr Julia Frost. HEHTA hosted a symposium on disinvestment in April and this has developed into a programme of work on this topic. 2018 saw the launch of HEHTA’s first NIHR Global Health group, led by Prof Emma McIntosh and expertly project managed by Moira Sim. We have also been thrilled to see a number of HEHTA staff and students graduate with PhD’s including Dr Yiqiao Xin, Dr Nicki Boyer, Dr Shadrach Dare, Dr Pattara Leelahavarong and Dr Willings Botha. Other highlights included the inaugural lectures of Profs Emma McIntosh and Neil Hawkins and Jim Lewsey’s promotion to Professor. We are also proud to witness our team’s many personal milestones including ‘big birthdays’, marathon success, weddings and engagements.

DR BOYD INVITED AS KEYNOTE SPEAKER TO THAI HEALTH PROMOTION FOUNDATION CONFERENCE

HEHTA’s Dr Kathleen Boyd visited Bangkok in July, hosted by the Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Program (HITAP) group, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand, to present at the Thai Health Promotion Foundation Conference, 23 – 25th July, 2018.

Kathleen gave a key note speech on ‘Economic Evaluation in Public Health and Complex Interventions: UK & European Perspectives’, participated in a panel discussion on ‘Challenges in Economic Evaluation of Public Health Interventions’, and gave a workshop presentation on recommendations for developing guidelines for the evaluation of health promotion intervention in Thailand. During her visit Kathleen caught up with various HEHTA alumni including Dr Pattara Leelahavarong (HITAP’s Program Leader & the Head of Research Unit) and former MSc HTA graduate Panida Yoopetch.
In-Vitro Fertilisation for NHS Scotland: Setting a Reference Cost

Dr Kathleen Boyd and Dr Rafael Venson from HEHTA, have received funding from the Scottish Government to explore the cost of an IVF and ICSI cycle in Scotland and recommend a standard tariff.

Scotland is leading patient access to conception services in the UK, being the only country which offers 3 full cycles of IVF for eligible patients on the NHS. Recent years have seen numerous improvements and innovations in processes, equipment and facilities throughout Scottish fertility services, with improved access for patients and vastly improved success rates. The 2016 report from the National Infertility Group noted these successes in Scotland, accompanied by increase in demand, yet also highlighted rising and variable costs across the Scottish services, and a need for transparency. Despite this there is currently no standardised tariff for NHS conception services. There are four NHS assisted conception centres in Scotland, which each have variable but rising demands, and with differences in patient needs, service procedures and costs. NHS conception services are part funded by NHS Boards, the rest being subsidised by the Scottish Government, with funding agreements varying with each NHS commissioning Boards.

Given the current challenging financial climate, rising costs and increased patient expectations, there is mounting pressure on assisted conception services in Scotland, and a need for standardised, transparent and fair charges. This project will collect data from the 4 assisted conception centres in Scotland to calculate the cost of an IVF and ICSI cycle in each centre, and recommend a standardised tariff for the Scottish NHS. This project will provide the NHS and the Scottish Government with transparent, accurate, and reliable values for the real cost of the service and has potential impact for setting an NHS reference costs for IVF treatment in Scotland.

NIHR Global Research Group holds its first meeting in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania

A multidisciplinary team from the University of Glasgow led by HEHTA’s Professor Emma McIntosh attended the launch meeting of their recently funded NIHR Global Health Research Group on estimating the prevalence, quality of life, economic and societal impact of arthritis in Tanzania. On October 11th-12th the team from Glasgow and Newcastle met with colleagues at the Kilimanjaro Clinical Research Centre (KCRC) in Tanzania for two days of project meetings. A number of external advisors also attended the launch including representatives from the non-communicable diseases department of the Tanzanian Ministry of Health. The meeting was very successful, and we look forward to developing research, teaching and training capacity in the social sciences, rheumatology and epidemiology at KCRC over the next 3 years.
This paper describes the economic evaluation conducted alongside the SiTless RCTs—an ongoing, multi-national, three-armed randomised controlled trial (RCT) investigating the short and long-term cost-effectiveness of a complex intervention (Exercise Referral Schemes enhanced by Self-Management Strategies) to increase Physical activity (PA) and reduce Sedentary Behaviour (SB) in older adults from four European countries. The substantial economic impact of an inactive lifestyle highlights the need to investigate cost-effectiveness of interventions directed towards both increasing PA and reducing SB. This is especially true for the elderly population, for which the economic implications of PA and SB are magnified, leading to a higher burden of cost for national health systems and society.

In addition, this is the first RCT which takes a multi-country setting into account, whereas existing studies refer to interventions implemented in a specific context. The multi-country nature of the study poses additional methodological challenges for the economic analysis. However, a multinational RCT has the potential to increase the generalizability of the results, thus providing the policy maker with useful guidelines on the value for money provided by complex interventions such as SiTLESS.

HOW DO YOU MAXIMIZE THE CHANCES OF YOUR PAPER BEING PUBLISHED?

Professor Mike Drummond – Co-Editor in Chief of Value in Health gave a really interesting and very useful seminar to HEHTA and Public Health Staff as well as some colleagues from University of Strathclyde and Glasgow Caledonian University on 19th October.

A major activity of health service researchers is the publication of their research in peer-reviewed journals. There is a myriad of journals with different requirements, but little is known about the ways in which journals interpret their requirements and the criteria that submissions should meet in order to be accepted. Value in Health is an established health services research journal, receiving around 1000 submissions per year, with an impact factor of 5.49. During the seminar, Professor Drummond shared his thoughts on the criteria the journal uses to assess papers and the key features of the assessment process that potential authors should be aware of.

Whilst he was visiting Glasgow members of the team and some of HEHTA’s collaborators were able to meet Mike for dinner where they had an opportunity to further discuss some of the issues facing Health Economists in having their work published.
Dr Camilla Baba attended the 2018 HDCA conference on ‘Human Development and Social Inclusion in an Urbanizing World’. She presented methodological findings from 2 projects here at HEHTA as part of a specialist thematic panel session on ‘Developing, adapting and testing outcome measures for assessing capabilities in different settings: experiences for Bangladesh, Germany, UK and Uganda using mixed-methods’. Dr Baba was one of three panellists in the session alongside Dr Giulia Greco from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Dr Judith Simon from the Medical University of Vienna. The session covered the complexities of capturing capabilities for inclusion in economic evaluation and how the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies can inform future studies in both LMIC and HIC, where researchers face different challenges.

Our PhD student, PingHsuan Hsieh, attended the 78th FIP World Congress in Glasgow and 8th ISPOR Asia Pacific conference in Tokyo from 2nd to 6th and 8th to 11th in September, respectively. FIP is the global federation representing four million pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists worldwide. While ISPOR Asia Pacific was increasingly attended with more than 1600 delegates from over 60 countries. The ISPOR conference focused on transforming healthcare and leveraging digital health for better health, real-world evidence, and risk-sharing agreements in Asia Pacific region. More than 780 presentations were given at this conference in the form of plenary sessions, spotlight sessions, issue panels, workshops, forums, podium presentations, poster presentations and symposia. PingHsuan gave poster presentations of his work: “The evolving cost of illness of rheumatoid arthritis: a systematic review” in both conferences. Shawn is supervised by HEHTA Profs Olivia Wu and Emma McIntosh and Dr Claudia Geue.
Dr Evi Germeni attended the 16th International Conference on Communication in Healthcare (ICCH), which was held from September 1-4, 2018, in the beautiful and historic World Heritage site coastal city of Porto, Portugal. The conference brought together researchers, practitioners and policy makers from around the world working to explore and improve all aspects of communication in healthcare from a variety of perspectives. Dr Germeni gave an oral presentation on: “Tackling inappropriate antibiotic prescribing for ARTIs in primary care: What can we learn from published qualitative research?”. She also participated as a Senior Colleague in the “Pairing with Colleagues” program, which sought to provide a formal way for less experienced colleagues to network and discuss their teaching and/or research issues with more experienced persons in the field.

At the FIP congress in Glasgow HEHTA was represented with an exhibitor stand where we had the opportunity to discuss our MSc HTA and our CPD courses with delegates from the world of Pharmacy. We ran a competition on how well delegates knew Glasgow with first prize of a Bottle of Whisky and had a number of visitors to the stand over the 4 days of the event.

Pictured to the left is Lorena Rocha Ayres, a professor of Pharmacy in Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo Brazil and who has expressed a keen interested in returning to work and study with HEHTA in future.
HEHTA experts are feeding into the update of the Medical Research Councils (MRC) Complex Interventions Guidance. In May 2018 Dr Kathleen Boyd and Prof Jim Lewsey joined international scientists and researchers in London for an expert workshop to inform the forthcoming update. The expert workshop was hosted by the Medical Research Council in London where experts from multidisciplinary fields participated in a series of focus groups and workshops to help identify gaps and shortcomings in current guidance, and identify key developments in the last decade which should be included in the updated guidance. HEHTAs Kathleen Boyd and Emma McIntosh continue to work with the MRC in writing the economic content of the forthcoming Complex Interventions Guidance.

ISPH CONFERENCE 2018

Two members of the HEHTA team, Eleanor Grieve and Dr Houra Haghpanahan, attended the 12th biennial International Society on Priorities in Health (ISPH) conference in Linköping University, Sweden from 13th -15th September. Formed in 1996, the society is a leading international forum where health researchers, clinicians and managers involved in priority health setting assemble to strengthen and exchange theory and practice.

161 delegates attended the conference, 97 oral presentations were given and 6 posters were presented. The keynote speakers addressed topics like ‘when and how can we set limits in welfare states?'; ‘priority setting with economic constraints- what’s the opportunity cost?'; ‘the role of emotion in hard decisions'. Eleanor Grieve presented her work on “The Value of Health Technology Assessment: A Mixed Methods Framework” while Houra Haghpanahan presented her work on “Are Tobacco Control Mass Media Campaigns Effective and Cost-effective? A Population-level Analysis”.

Both our members were delighted with the small yet beautiful city. Linköping is also known for its university and high technology industry. The city boasts of unfathomable natural scenery- apple trees spread all over the city, green areas in the old town, Silver Birch trees of Gamla, other Swedish national trees and varieties of mushrooms.
Congratulations are in order for the four students who successfully completed our Health Technology Assessment MSc this summer. Special mentions go to Tracy Duff, who received a distinction grade, and Melodi Kosaner Kliess, who received a merit grade, the first students to do so with the online distance learning format.

Some of our MSc students and faculty at the Decision Analytic Modelling Course on October.

Funded PhD Opportunity

Applications are now being taken for a fully funded PhD studentship with the MRC Doctoral Training Program in Precision Medicine. Assessing the value of high-priced novel treatments in oncology in an era of precision medicine: methodological and policy tools.

PhD project summary:
Health systems around the world are struggling to accommodate the increasing cost of new cancer treatments. In the UK a new version of the cancer drugs fund has recently been initiated and both the European Society of Medical Oncology (ESMO) and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) have recently published ‘value frameworks’. This PhD will explore both methodological challenges in showing value for new oncology products (such as: use of surrogate endpoints; the need for extrapolation; biomarker/subgroup analysis; adjusting for cross-over) and policy tools designed to improve the value of these new treatments to the health systems (such as: cancer drugs fund in UK; patient access schemes; outcomes-based contracting in US; use of value frameworks, application of stratified/precision medicine). A unique feature of this PhD will be the opportunity to collaborate not only within the University of Glasgow, but also with researchers at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York through international collaborative links with that organisation. Research into the value of cancer therapies is timely and this PhD represents a real opportunity to address a contemporary health care policy problem from an international perspective.

Application deadline 7th January 2019

This MRC programme is joint between the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow and all applications should be made via the University of Edinburgh. Link to application website

Contact Andrew.Briggs@glasgow.ac.uk or Kathleen.Boyd@Glasgow.ac.uk to discuss before making any application for more information

Continued Popularity of HEHTA CPD Courses

HEHTA have run two face-to-face course this autumn starting with the return of the popular EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS FOR HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT: SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND (PAIRWISE AND NETWORK) META-ANALYSIS OF TREATMENT EFFECT EVIDENCE in September. This 3 day was course led by Professor Oliva Wu and Professor Neil Hawkins last ran in 2015 and was relaunched for 2018 with new and updated content. The course was very well received by the participants with excellent feedback and is planned to run again in late spring/early summer 2019

In October almost 70 delegates from 12 countries gathered at the Hilton to learn about Decision Analytic Modelling for Economic Evaluation. Now in its 8th year this highly sought after course is led by Professor Andrew Briggs and is run over 5 days with the first two days offering the Foundation level and the final three days offering the Advanced level.

Delegates had the opportunity to socialise and to meet members of the team at the course dinners and also at the drinks reception which took place in the renowned Hunterian Art Gallery. Once again feedback following the course was very positive with many delegates saying they would recommend it to colleagues.

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Visiting PhD student Mhaira McKenzie joined the team this autumn. Mhairi will be based with the team for the next 10 months while she works to complete her PhD thesis. Mhairi’s thesis is looking at the mental health of siblings of children with a chronic illness or condition, with a particular focus on Cystic Fibrosis. She joins the team from UCL where she completing this work with Professor Roz Shafran at UCL Great Ormond Street of Child Health. Prior to her PhD Mhairi gained her MA (Hons) in Economics from Dundee University, and completed her MSc in International Health Policy (Health Economics) at LSE. While at the institute Mhairi will be working with Professor Emma McIntosh supporting an evaluation of a parent intervention for children with ADHD.”

BIG BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Laura wood who is one of our admin team celebrated a milestone birthday and her colleagues made sure she couldn’t forget it by decorating her desk for her arrival. She was presented with gifts and a card at a special coffee morning where delicious cakes were also consumed.

HEHTA TEAM MEMBER WINS STAR BAKER AWARD FOR SECOND YEAR RUNNING.

The University of Glasgow’s Institute of Health and Wellbeing held their annual coffee morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support on 10th October 2018. As usual it was well attended with lots of cake and home baked goods eaten and games played; raising an impressive total of £300. HEHTA’s very own Francesco Manca won second prize in the raffle and Nicola McMeekin won star baker for the second year running. Amount raised now £610.50.
Friday 28th September saw the inaugural lecture of Professor Emma McIntosh. The event took place in Glasgow University’s Senate Room and was attended by several of Emma’s current and previous colleagues from Aberdeen and Oxford University as well as her friends and family.

Emma’s lecture was entitled “A hitchhiker’s guide to health economics: a methodological, anatomical and philosophical journey” and was a very entertaining and inspiring account of Emma’s career so far.

HEHTA Career Development workshop

Following on from Professor McIntosh’s inaugural lecture, HEHTA delivered a career development workshop. Research policy leads from Glasgow University provided the HEHTA team with invaluable advice and guidance on a number of areas including promotion, REF, use of metrics and general tips.

HALF MARATHON ACHIEVEMENT

Windswept and rosy-cheeked, HEHTA’s Janet Bouttell completed her first Great Scottish Run on Sunday 30th September. The 13.1 mile course is mostly flat and takes competitors on a scenic route through both Pollok and Bellahouston parks. After a couple of showers along the way, the sun came out for the final 3 miles along the Clyde to a welcome finish on Glasgow Green.
**PUBLICATIONS**

**Heggie, R., Murdoch, H., McIntosh, E., Cameron, C., Smith-Palmer, A., Boutell, J.** Cost-impact study of rotavirus vaccination programme in Scotland. Journal of Human vaccines and immunotherapeutics


