Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to HEHTA’s spring 2019 newsletter. Headlining this edition is the work by Professor Jim Lewsey on the impact of minimum unit pricing (MUP) on ambulance call outs. MUP is an important public health initiative and we look forward to reporting the full results of Jim’s latest research at a later date. HEHTA are also celebrating the impressive achievements of HEHTA’s Professor Andy Briggs who has been named on the Clarivate Analytics list of Global Highly Cited Researchers 2018 as one of top 1% worldwide for number of citations in the field of Economics and Business. Congratulations also go to Dr Kathleen Boyd whose “Intelligent liver testing” research project has been shortlisted in the Digital Innovation category for the 2019 BMJ Awards. Our Glasgow health Economics Seminar Series (GhESS) has seen a number of excellent speakers over the past few months including Dr Emma Frew (University of Birmingham), Christine Mpundu-Kaambwa, PhD Student from the Health Economics Institute for Choice, University of South Australia, Dr Cally Rick (University of Nottingham) and HEHTA’s own Dr Manuela Deidda. We have had a number of methodological and applied health economics and HTA papers published including research published by HEHTA members Houra Haghpanahan, Jim Lewsey and Emma McIntosh in The Lancet on evaluating the impact of lowering the blood alcohol concentration limits. Finally, Yiqiao Xin and Andy Briggs published their within-trial cost-effectiveness of the landmark DiRECT trial in Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology to go alongside the main clinical findings published in The Lancet which showed that almost half of participants receiving intensive weight management within routine primary care achieved remission to a non-diabetic state and off antidiabetic drugs.

New Alcohol policy evaluation Project

Last January, Professor Lewsey jointly with other researchers from the University of Stirling and University of Sheffield, won a grant for a study on an alcohol policy evaluation in Scotland. Specifically, the study named “The Impact of Minimum Pricing of Alcohol on Ambulance call-outs in Scotland”, aimed to determine whether the introduction of the minimum unit pricing (MUP) for alcohol in Scotland, increasing the price for cheap alcohol, had an impact on alcohol-related ambulance call-outs.

The study will likely have significant public health relevance, especially providing real world evidence of the policy effects of a much talked about law. The study will try to detect not only the overall ambulance calls difference due to the MUP, but also the related economic effect (direct costs or cost saving), and the main characteristics of the population calling the ambulances (e.g. sex, age and socioeconomic status).

After his successful project and high impact paper on drink-driving policies in Scotland, Professor Lewsey is broadening even further his expertise and research portfolio in this area, analysing how new alcohol-related policies could affect citizens lifestyle and healthcare expenditure.
On 13th December 2018 the College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences hosted HEHTA’s Professor Neil Hawkins inaugural lecture entitled ‘How to be a better critic: three principles for the reasonable synthesis of scientific evidence’. Attended by colleagues (current and past), family and friends, in the lecture Neil reflected on his career to date, which has spanned basic pharmacological research, clinical development, and epidemiological research. He discussed the need for ‘good’ evidence and how the work being done by HEHTA supports the “reasonable” synthesis of evidence.

The ‘Intelligent Liver Testing’ project was funded by the Chief Scientist Office for Scotland, and was led by Professor John Dillon from the University of Dundee with HEHTAs Dr Kathleen Boyd from University of Glasgow leading the health economic analysis. The project developed a functional intelligent Liver Function Test system (iLFT) for detecting and diagnosing abnormal LFTs, conducted a step wedge trial to evaluate it and undertook an economic evaluation to assess the cost-effectiveness of the new iLFT pathway compared to conventional management of abnormal LFTs. The project leads will travel to London on Wednesday 24th April 2019 for the BMJ Awards 2019 judging day where they will give a brief presentation on the project and undergo a Q&A session with the judging panel. Results will be announced later that evening at the awards ceremony.


Congratulations to HEHTA’s Professor Andy Briggs, who was named as one of 10 highly cited researchers in the University of Glasgow. He is in the top 1% worldwide for number of citations in his field (Economics and Business) in the last 11-year window. Andy holds the William R Lindsay Chair in Health Economics after joining the university in 2005. His interests cover all aspects of Health Economics, in particular statistical methods for cost-effectiveness analysis.
On 17th January, Dr Emma Frew, Reader in Health Economics, University of Birmingham visited HEHTA and gave a guest lecture as part of the Glasgow Health Economics Seminar Series (GhESS).

Her topic was “Supporting local government decision makers to tackle childhood obesity”

We were delighted to hear about Emma’s work with local decision makers, their perspectives and Emma’s work in incorporating these into economic evaluations.

On 7th November Manuela Deidda, Research Associate at HEHTA discussed her recently published paper “A framework for conducting economic evaluations alongside natural experiments” as part of the Glasgow Health Economics Seminar Series (GhESS). The paper outlines the challenges inherent to the design and conduct of economic evaluations of PHIs alongside NEs, providing a comprehensive framework and outlining a research agenda in this area.

On 22nd November Cally Rick from the University of Birmingham Clinical Trials Unit delivered a very informative seminar at HEHTA on the subject of ‘Patient, carer and public involvement in trials’ where she used her work on Parkinson’s as an example.

On 10th December Christine Mpundu-Kaambwa, PhD Student from the Health Economics Institute for Choice, University of South Australia who had been spending a month at HEHTA gave a very interesting talk as part of the Glasgow Health Economics Seminar Series (GhESS). Her topic was “Mapping the PedsQLTM onto the CHU9D: Assessing the external validity of existing mapping algorithms in disparate sub-groups” and Christine presented the methods and results of an exercise that sought to assess the external validity and generalizability of five existing mapping algorithms for predicting preference-based Child Health Utility 9 Dimension (CHU9D) utilities from non-preference-based Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory (PedsQLTM) scores in children and adolescents in the general population with and without disabilities/medical conditions. The mapping algorithms, which were based on the robust MM estimator, generalised linear, beta-binomial and ordinary least squares regression models, were externally validated on data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (n=6,623). This work highlights the importance of applying mapping algorithms in populations that are similar to cohorts used to develop these algorithms in the first place.
HEALTH ECONOMICS:
WHAT CAN WE AFFORD TO PAY?
BASIC ASPECTS OF DESIGNING AND EXECUTING STUDIES

From the 7th to the 9th November 2018, Dr Rafael Venson attended the 7th COSIMP - Mercosul’s Pharmaceutical Sciences Congress. The conference took place in Cascavel, Brazil, a beautiful city in the west of the state of Paraná in Brazil. The conference included over 200 attendees from Brazil and other countries from Mercosul, including Argentina, Chile, and Paraguay. During the event, more than 400 research studies were presented, in both poster and oral formats.

Rafael led the workshop entitled “Health Economics: What can we afford to pay? Basic aspects of designing and executing studies”, attended not only by members of academia, but also managers from SUS, the Brazilian National Health System. The mixture of attendees from SUS and academia changed the breadth of the discussion, making it highly engaging. Rafael also spoke on the “Internationalisation of Knowledge and Research in the UK” during the opening ceremony, where further cultural presentations took place.

The whole conference allowed people from different fields of pharmacy to interact and exchange information, and people with the same field of interest to enhance their knowledge. Lastly, after enjoying 3 days of hard work and a lot of science, many of the attendees made sure to visit one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature, the Iguassu Falls, which is less than 90 miles away from Cascavel!

HESG

This year’s Winter HESG meeting was hosted in York by the Centre for Health Economics, University of York from 7th-9th January. It took place at the Principal York Hotel with evening events at the Yorkshire Museum and the Merchant Adventurers Hall, all wonderful locations. Four members of HEHTA attended the meeting and participated as chairs, discussant, poster presentations and having draft papers discussed.

Manuela Deidda had her manuscript ‘Methodological challenges of conducting economic evaluations alongside natural experiments: the Healthy Start Voucher case study’ discussed. This manuscript was written with co-authors Ruth Dundas, Noemi Kreif, Claudia Geue, Giorgio Ciminata and Emma McIntosh (the latter three from HEHTA).

Jose Antonio Robles-Zurita had his manuscript, written with HEHTA co-authors Neil Hawkins and Janet Bouttell, ‘The value of diagnostic information with endogenous uptake behaviour’ discussed.

Ciaran Kohl-Lynch and Nicola McMeekin presented posters on ‘Effectiveness and Cost-Effectiveness of Implanon in South Africa’ and ‘A methodological framework for developing conceptual models in economic evaluation’.
HEHTA staff were much in evidence at the Institute of Health and Wellbeing Away Day on 26 February at the Grosvenor Hilton, Glasgow. Over 200 staff attended the event, which showcased the breadth and depth of our collaborative research.

Professor Jim Lewsey presented an overview of studies from across the Institute assessing the impact of the Minimum Unit Pricing legislation for alcohol. PhD students Karl Ferguson and Janet Bourett also presented their work. In his thesis, Karl is exploring the use of directed acyclic graphs (DAGs) to understand parental influences on adolescent alcohol behaviours. As part of the three-minute thesis (3MT) competition, Janet presented her work on development-focused health technology assessment. Professor Emma McIntosh was also congratulated on the achievement of the largest grant in the Institute this year – The NIHR Global Health Research Group on estimating the prevalence, quality and life, economic and societal impact of arthritis in Tanzania.

Asha Costigan, head of administration for the Institute of Health and Wellbeing, agreed to be wired up as part of Changewave’s demonstration of using breathing to control nerves before speaking in public. A highlight of the day was the network analysis presented by Mark McCann. His presentation demonstrated graphically the scale of collaborations across the Institute of Health and Wellbeing in both publications and grant applications. Cross-disciplinary collaboration had grown markedly since the formation of the Institute. Clear evidence of the value of events like the Away Day in bringing this diverse group of active health researchers together.

On the 7th of February Dr Manuela Deidda and Francesco Manca attended a course on how to evaluate public health interventions at the University of Newcastle. The course, taught by Dr Heather Brown was an introduction to a wide range of techniques from mainstreams economics and health economics that can be applied to evaluation of public health policy and public health issues.

Currently, developments in computer technology jointly with the use and the generation of data from the internet and our connections increase the feasibility to collect, store and analyse large datasets. Secondary or observational data can play an important role in public health and can have some advantages compared to the classical control trials. Specifically, they are cheaper, with larger sample size and they can guarantee a greater external validity of the study. Furthermore, in observational studies, additional variables for linking different administrative source could be used to enrich the power and reliability of the research.

The course divided into two sections, a general introduction and a more complete description of the evaluation methods, could be useful for a diversified audience. It could be a detailed review of the main methods for researchers already confident with natural experiments on observational studies, or it could be a short but complete overview for those not familiar with observational data.
On 26th November, it was time for graduation celebrations with our PhD student, Pattara Leelahaverong who is now HITAP’s Program Leader & the Head of Research Unit in Thailand is pictured with her supervisors Andrew Briggs, Olivia Wu and Jim Lewsey.

We also celebrated the graduation of two of our MSc students. Yankier Pijejira Perez and Melodi Kosaner Kliess are pictured opposite with some of the HEHTA team.
My Visit to HEHTA

Name: Christine Mpundu-Kaambwa
Title: Doctoral candidate
Institution: University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia
Visited HEHTA in month year: November 2018

Why did you choose HEHTA
I chose HEHTA because of its high-quality research and academic excellence. Another reason was my interest in best-worst scaling methodology and discrete choice experiments in health economics of which Professor Emma McIntosh is a leader.

What did you learn during your visit?
During my visit at HEHTA, I had the opportunity to present work on my PhD around econometric modelling of child health measures at HEHTA Seminar Series where I was able to receive valuable feedback. I also took part in workshops which were very informative including one on career development.

Do you have any plans to collaborate with HEHTA in the future?
Without a doubt. During my visit at HEHTA, I built networks with researchers and health economists in the team and generated discussions regarding future collaborative publications.

OUR UPCOMING CPD COURSES

Online courses starting 8th April for 10 weeks
Health economics for HTA
This course aims 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.

Data Science
This course aims 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.

FACE TO FACE COURSES
1st-3rd May 2019
Evidence Synthesis for Health Technology Assessment: Systematic Review and (Pairwise and Network) Meta-Analysis of Treatment effect evidence
Course participants will gain hands-on experience of conducting pairwise and network meta-analyses, and an understanding of contextual issues through the analysis of case-studies.

23rd - 24th September 2019
Decision Analytic Modelling Methods for Economic Evaluation – Foundation Course
This course is aimed at health economists and those health professionals with experience of health economics who wish to develop skills and knowledge in decision analysis for purposes of cost effectiveness analysis. It is designed for participants who are familiar with the basic principles of economic evaluation who wish to build, interpret and appraise decision models.

25th-27th September 2019
Decision Analytic Modelling Methods for Economic Evaluation – Advanced Course
This course is aimed at health economists and those health professionals with experience of health economics who wish to learn about recent methodological developments in cost-effectiveness analysis. It is designed for participants who are familiar with basic decision modelling who wish to learn how to use more advanced modelling methods. It is particularly suitable for those who have attended our Introduction to Modelling Methods for Health Economic Evaluation.

More information on all our CPD courses and on our online MSc is available by contacting our administrators
ihw-hehta@glasgow.ac.uk
or on our website
https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/healthwellbeing/research/hehta/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/
HEHTA and Public Health team had their annual Christmas party on 14th December 2018.

The event started as usual with some drinks and nibbles. One could see few members peeping under the massive Christmas tree for secret Santa gifts. Game time consisted of activities such as making a gingerbread house with a blindfold on, ‘Don’t Buzz The Wire’ and guessing the name of the Christmas movies/music while HEHTA’s own instrumental band played the tunes. Next was dinner from The Ashoka’s- a famous Indian restaurant in the West End. Everyone was delighted to have some special snacks such as Haggis Pakoras. The evening continued with secret Santa reveal, more drinks and games. Some members took the liberty to play different 80s music too. The day was also Save The Children’s jumper day. Everyone was advised to wear their best Christmas attire. Some of the members dressed to the nines in their elf costumes, bell sweaters and hats while some got creative with fairy lights around their torso and temporary tattoos. The best costume award went to Professor Jim Lewsey and his ‘fire breathing, pizza-eating reindeer replacement dinosaur and Santa’ sweater. The Christmas spirit was so contagious that even our canine friends were wagging their tails in their Christmas outfits. Thank you, Margaret Ashton, Prof. Olivia Wu and Dr Danny Mackay and everyone involved for organising such a special party.

As Winter is coming to an end few of us here at HEHTA have recently begun a little hiking group. So far our trips have taken us to Glen Coe, The Cobbler (Arrochar) and Ben Each. Although I think we set a record for the longest time taken of anyone to ever ascend the Cobbler (about 7 hours, for what should have been a 2 hour trip), everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. Now that the weather is improving (supposedly), we are looking to go a little higher and experience some snowy peaks and some of Scotland’s best scenery. Stay posted for updates!
Presentations


Venson R. Health Economics: What can we afford to pay? Basic aspects of designing and executing studies. 7º COSIMP - Mercosul’s Pharmaceutical Sciences Congress. Unioeste (University of West Parana), Cascavel, Brazil. November 2018.


Publications

2018 publications from October 18


