March 2014 saw the launch of the new NIHR CLAHRC Programme for NW London. This is a very exciting project that aims to improve health care delivery and population health in NW London. We were also very pleased to receive support from Health Education NW London to allow our GP Teaching Unit to develop some innovative teaching methods. Our research continued to attract media coverage. We also held a very lively debate on the NHS care.data programme in a session for our MPH students. In other developments, we are aiming to expand our international work in the areas of teaching, training and research.

Text Messages Can Help Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

Professor Azeem Majeed was part of a research team at Imperial whose work was recently published in The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology. Their study, in conjunction with the India Diabetes Research Foundation, discovered that text messages which encourage the recipient to eat healthily and exercise can help prevent type 2 diabetes in people at high risk. Over 500 men were recruited in South-East India with impaired glucose tolerance, a condition that commonly precedes type 2 diabetes. Half received frequent text messages reminding them to eat healthily and be physically active, while the other half had standard care from their doctor.

After an average of 20 months’ follow-up, 18 percent of the text message group developed type 2 diabetes, compared with 27 percent of the control group. The findings were published in the journal Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology. The messages included practical tips for healthy eating and reminders about the importance of exercise. They were also tailored to the individual’s behaviour. Those with the most unhealthy lifestyles were given information about the benefits of good habits, such as: “Active life makes you live longer”. Those who followed doctors’ advice were given encouragement to continue, such as: “Hope you had a healthy week”!

The findings from this research study also have implications for the management of other chronic diseases. Text messaging (SMS) is cheap, quick and simple; and it can also be scaled up to be used in large numbers of people.

The study was funded by the UK India Education and Research Initiative and the World Diabetes Foundation.
The DFU has received funding for two exciting new projects. The first is a one-year NIHR funded project for £100,000 which will quantify the risk of non-obstetric surgery during pregnancy, allowing mothers, surgeons and anaesthetists to make better informed decisions and provide answers to questions regarding the risks involved.

The second grant is also NIHR funded. This two-year grant of nearly £650,000 aims to improve the understanding of the Unit’s national hospital mortality surveillance system. It involves evaluating the impact of the alerts in reducing avoidable mortality within English NHS hospitals.

Dr Rajvinder has joined the Centre for Patient Safety stream of the Unit. Her work involves developing and piloting patient safety indicators in primary care.

Global eHealth Unit

Dr Josip Car has joined Imperial College’s new Medical School in Singapore for three years to lead the formation of a new Institute of Health Services and Outcomes Research. Fortunately for the department, he will maintain his role as Director of the Global eHealth Unit. He will, however, step down from his role as Director of Public Health and Primary Care at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.

The Unit will shortly release a report entitled ‘eLearning for Undergraduate Health Professional Education: A Systematic review informing a radical transformation of the health workforce development’.

The Unit is leading a ‘Health & Wellbeing (HWB) Post-Master Education’ project funded by the EIT ICT. This Pan-European project will provide state-of-the-art skills, knowledge and attitudes to students, researchers and professionals from a wide range of sectors. Currently, four universities – Technical University Eindhoven in the Netherlands, University of Tampere in Finland, University of Trento in Italy and Imperial College London in the UK – are taking part in the programme. Students attend eLearning courses in HWB-technologies and attend summer/winter schools at different European locations.

The second project funded by the EIT ICT is a ‘Professional Learning Program’. This is a selection of cutting-edge courses on ICT technology, especially adapted to the needs of professional engineers, experts, and middle-level managers, delivered in an innovative blended format. The activity is led by KTH Stockholm with the Unit also contributing to it.

WHO CC for Public Health Training & Education

The WHO CC’s Health System Development Course, as part of the Masters of Public Health (MPH), is planning a trip to Geneva in mid-June to visit the WHO Head Quarters and the UN. The aim of the trip is to introduce the students to both Global Health institutions and to expose them to the dynamics of work on an international scale.

WHO CC has launched its new website which provides regular updates on the Centre’s activities.

UG Primary Care Education

The Department have been awarded just over £100,000 in a CEPN pilot scheme starting this August. This will uniquely combine 30 Year 3 medical students with 30 nursing students overseen by a GP educator and nurse educator. The student pairs will have their own caseload in the community giving them longitudinal exposure to patients and health coaching skills that they can then use in their future careers.

In January the Unit launched a peer support group which provides an opportunity to meet and discuss what GPs want from the Unit and how best to support students in difficulty. Please contact Gemma Brennan for more information and dates of future meetings.

Child Health Unit

Dr Sonia Saxena presented a keynote address to Westminster Parliamentarians at the Westminster Food and Nutrition Forum in February. The unit has been publishing a flurry of papers showing parents of overweight children are not responding to the national childhood measurement programme and GPs are not integrated into the process. (See Media Mentions pages for more info).
The Athena SWAN Action Plan

In March, Professor Elio Riboli and Dr Sonia Saxena discussed the Athena SWAN Action Plan that was submitted in November. They shared with colleagues what has been achieved so far, received feedback about the plans for the School and discussed ideas for further improvements. The session was an opportunity for staff to learn about the changes that will be made to departmental culture and organisation.

The Athena SWAN action plan is a process aimed at creating a positive working environment to support career progression. It will provide career development opportunities and ensure the School can attract, keep and promote staff so they feel supported and motivated in their work.

Athena SWAN Opportunities Committee

As noted above, the Athena Swan Opportunities Committee submitted the School’s application for renewal of its Silver award in November 2013. The results will be revealed in April 2014.

Meanwhile, the committee is planning events across the 2014 calendar which includes campus visits to take forward school-wide consultations and the School’s action plan. There will also be a School of Public Health Showcase event to celebrate effort and achievement, and a programme of career development and social outings.

To find out more explore our web pages.

Imperial Maternity Monitoring Scheme

An Imperial maternity mentoring scheme has been launched, available to all staff who are pregnant, on maternity leave or have returned from maternity leave.

All mentors are mothers who can provide advice and support to help women on maternity leave make a smooth transition back into work. Staff wishing to use the mentoring scheme should contact any of the mentors listed on the website directly to arrange a confidential meeting.

Staff due to go on paternity leave, or recently returned to work, who would be interested in taking part in a similar scheme should contact Su Nandy.
Using Bariatric Surgery to Treat Obesity

Over two million people in England may be eligible for surgery to treat obesity, according to research published in JRSM Open by Dr Sonia Saxena and colleagues. However, fewer than 7000 patients underwent these procedures in 2011.

Carrying out more bariatric surgery procedures would help to reduce obesity-related ill health, the study authors from Imperial College London said, but the NHS may need to invest in more resources to meet demand.

Despite clear guidelines outlining who can undergo such surgery with the NHS, and evidence that these procedures are cost-effective in the long run, less than one per cent of those eligible have weight loss surgery each year. The researchers say this raises questions about why more procedures are not currently being carried out.

Those eligible are more likely to be women, be retired, have no formal education and be from a lower socio-economic status than the general population.

“Performing more operations could be very good for the population in terms of improving patient health. You could cut down on a number of very severe conditions and extend life expectancy in patients who are likely to suffer significant problems as a result of their obesity... [However] The NHS would be overwhelmed because there isn’t the resource to actually carry out this number of operations”. Dr Sonia Saxena, PCPH.

Parents Fail to Recognise Childhood Obesity

Following an editorial on confronting child obesity Dr Saxena presented a keynote to Westminster Parliamentarian's at the Westminster Food and Nutrition Forum in February. She and her team have continued to publish papers showing parents of overweight children are not responding to the national childhood measurement programme and GPs are not integrated into the process.
Millions of children in the UK are potentially receiving penicillin prescriptions below the recommended dose for common infections, according to new research led jointly by researchers at King’s College London, St George’s, University of London and Imperial College London. The authors are calling for an urgent review of penicillin dosing guidelines for children - which at the time of study had not changed in over 50 years - after discovering wide variation in current prescribing practice.

The research adds to growing concern about the global threat of antibiotic resistance, whereby misuse of antibiotics leads to the emergence of bacteria that cannot be controlled by available medicines.

Published in the April edition of the *British Journal of General Practice*, the study is the first to examine actual prescriptions of oral penicillin, the most commonly prescribed antibiotics for children worldwide, by GPs in the UK.

The study, funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Biomedical Research Centre at Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust and King’s College London, also looked specifically at prescriptions for ear infection, the most common condition in childhood that can lead to the prescription of oral penicillin, and found that children under the age of 1 were the only group who received the recommended dose of amoxicillin. For children aged 4-15 years the prescriptions equated to approximately 33 per cent of the recommended dose.

Another problem with the current guidelines, according to the researchers, is that they do not take into account how the average weight of children has changed over time. Due to the rising prevalence of childhood obesity, prescriptions based on age-bands could lead to doses prescribed at too low a level to produce a therapeutic effect (sub-therapeutic dosing).

Dr Sonia Saxena, co-author from the School of Public Health, Imperial College London and a practising GP, said: “It is important now to understand why GPs are prescribing sub-therapeutic levels of penicillin. Some GPs may be erring on the side of caution, prescribing low doses to avoid errors or side effects”.

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**Penicillin Prescriptions Risk Under-dosing Children**

**News Links**

[**KCL News**](#)

[**BBC**](#)

[**Mail Online**](#)
The Dr Foster Unit was established in 2002 and is co-directed by Dr Paul Aylin, Clinical Reader in Epidemiology and consultant in Public Health, and Professor Sir Brian Jarman, Emeritus Professor of Primary Care. The unit is funded through a grant from Dr Foster Intelligence and also receives NIHR funding for other research projects. While you may not see the unit in action at Charing Cross as it is based near Blackfriars station, the unit has an enviable publication record and a clear impact on improving the quality, service and safety of healthcare both in the UK and internationally.

**Research to Identify measures of quality of healthcare delivery**

The unit uses routinely collected clinical and administrative data to examine and monitor variations in quality and safety in healthcare via its work with Dr Foster Intelligence. Analytical tools based on the unit’s methodological research are used by managers and clinicians in over two-thirds of NHS hospital trusts. According to Dr Paul Aylin, Co-Director of the Dr Foster Unit, ‘It is the expertise and experience in the analysis of routinely collected health data, together with access to massive NHS administrative datasets that makes the unit unique. This combination allows the translation of research through collaboration with Dr Foster Intelligence which has impacted policy changes and high profile discoveries’.
The results of the unit’s analyses helped detect problems at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and triggered the initial investigation and subsequent Public Inquiry with wide ranging recommendations. More recently the out of hours analysis carried out by the unit received wide media coverage and contributed to the NHS’s 7/7 campaign.

It is due to this high profile work that has led to what Dr Aylin believes is the unit’s biggest achievement: increasing the use of data and analyses within the NHS, through uptake of analytical tools within primary and secondary care, based on methods originating from the unit.

“It is the expertise and experience in the analysis of routinely collected health data, together with access to massive NHS administrative datasets that makes the unit unique”.

However, the logistics of handling massive amounts of data securely is one of the unit’s biggest challenges. The maintenance of patient confidentiality is of the utmost importance to the unit, and data are held in a highly secure environment with strict control over who accesses the data and what analyses are permitted.

NIHR Patient Safety Translational Research Centre

The unit has NIHR funding for a stream of work within the Imperial NIHR Patient Safety Translational Research Centre. The PSTRC is one of two in the country and is a five year partnership between Imperial College London and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust. The major research programme uses multidisciplinary expertise in scientific advances to drive improvements to patient safety.

Risk modelling using machine learning and comorbidity measures

Hospitals looking to improve the quality of their care need reliable information on their performance. To compare hospitals fairly, it is important to measure and adjust for patient factors such as age and comorbidities using the most appropriate statistical models that get the most information from the data.

Alex Bottle led a recently concluded three-year NIHR-funded project that built risk models with administrative information to predict mortality, readmission, future hospital bed days and outpatients non-attendance. The project also produced a systematic review of comorbidity indices, an assessment of the (modest) usefulness of machine learning methods with administrative data, and analyses that question the use of 30-day all-cause readmissions in quality improvement and pay for performance schemes for heart failure patients.

The future

The Dr Foster Unit has recently received funding for two additional projects. The first is a one-year project working with obstetricians estimating the risk of adverse events in birth outcomes for pregnant women following non-obstetric surgery. The second is a 30 month project evaluating the impact of the monthly mortality alert letters the unit sends and its impact as an intervention to reduce avoidable mortality.

With its continued success in analysing large quantities of data and turning it into useful information, it is clear the unit plays a key factor in improving the quality and care that patients receive from the NHS health service, thus helping to save lives every day.
The MPH--an Overview

The Master of Public Health (MPH) is a postgraduate course that has been running at the School of Public Health since 2006 and is directed by Prof Azeem Majeed & Dr Filippos Filippidis. The current cohort is comprised of 40 students from 14 countries and various academic disciplines from biological sciences and medicine to the social sciences. It currently attracts the highest number of applications among postgraduate courses in the Faculty of Medicine.

The course offers a comprehensive introduction to public health for students intending to practice in public health or related fields. It has shared modules with the MSc in Epidemiology and the MSc in International Health Management and it offers a separate stream for students who are interested in Global Health.

Staff from the Department of Primary Care and Public Health is involved in the course as module leaders, lecturers, personal tutors and supervisors of the students’ summer projects.

The MPH at Imperial College has a strong research component and, as a result, several MPH graduates have stayed in the Department as PhD candidates or researchers throughout the years and even more have published the findings from their research dissertations.
MPH Student Presentations on the NHS Care Data Programme

As part of a session on primary care data in the Health Informatics module, on the Imperial Master of Public Health Programme, students were asked to work in two groups to present arguments for and against the NHS Care Data programme.

Care.Data is an NHS programme that will extract data from the medical records held by general practitioners (GPs) in England. The Care.Data programme takes advantage of the very high level of use of electronic medical records by GPs in England. After extraction, data will be uploaded to NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC). The data will then be used for functions such as health care planning, monitoring disease patterns and research. The programme has been controversial with proponents arguing that the programme will bring many benefits for the NHS and the population of England; opponents argue it is a major breach of privacy.

During the session MPH students who supported NHS Care.Data argued that it will promote public health by identifying patterns of disease and health needs of the population, as well as the most effective ways to prevent and manage the most prevalent diseases. On the other hand, other students raised concerns about privacy and questioned if the public has been adequately informed.

Lord Crisp leads Workshop for MPH Students

In December, Lord Nigel Crisp gave a workshop to the MPH students on the topic of Learning from Other Countries. Lord Crisp was Chief Executive of the NHS (2000-2006). He is currently a Cross-Bench peer in the House of Lords, and the Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Health.

For the last few years, Lord Crisp has asked the very simple question – what can the UK NHS learn from Low and Middle Income country health systems? This has led to the Turning the World Upside Down movement, collating examples of lean innovations from surprising sources. The students also benefitted from the experience of Prof Jane Noyes, from Bangor University, who has been leading a ‘Reverse Innovation’ project to adopt the Community Health Worker model developed in Brazil for the North Wales context.

The MPH Global Health module is organised by Dr Matthew Harris, Clinical Lecturer in Public Health, and examines the organizational landscape in Global Health from non-profit, governmental and academic perspectives.
Primary Care and Public Health made a strong showing at the 2014 annual SAPC regional meeting. As well as the high profile success of the Primary Care researchers, the GP teaching team made important contributions.

Tara Stewart presented an e-poster describing how to harness the power of GP role models in a new inspirational video for students. In other e-posters, Elena Barquero outlined her research into students' experiences of their GP attachment; Sian Powell described how she’s developed and evaluated a new clinical reasoning session for Year 6 students; Elizabeth Muir presented an evaluation of her project in which students collect feedback on their professional behaviour from patients and colleagues using i-Pads.

In longer oral presentations, Jo Harris gave an update on her project using junior doctors to teach final year students; Mydhili Chellappah presented the latest findings from her survey about medical students' career choices, and two final year students, Frances Dixon and Harriet Davidson, gave an excellent presentation of their audit of GPs documentation of using chaperones for intimate examinations. They found that over two thirds of patients felt that chaperones should be offered, but that less than a third would actually ask for one.
Emma Richards, an academic GP ST4s, sparked some lively debate with her presentation on the validity of NHS Choices data about GP opening hours. Geva Greenfield also deserves recognition for his part in the final competition and his presentation that was praised by the judges.

Thomas Cowling was presented with the Early Career Researcher Award for his research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). Tom’s presentation was "Access to General Practice and Attendances at A&E Departments in England" and it is part of his Doctoral Research Training Fellowship.

Many colleagues from the department were also involved in the process of scoring abstract submissions or chairing sessions. It was great to see former Deputy Director GP Teaching Dr Stella Major at the conference, all the way from the Gulf. Overall the department was extremely well represented — congratulations go to all who took part!
After six years as the Department Manager, Alex Haighton moved on to a post with the Faculty of Engineering in March 2014. She will be very much missed.

Alex implemented some major improvements to the department, both in the office space we occupy and in procedures and policies. She was always helpful and fought hard on behalf of the department.

Alex also gave a lot of personal support and advice to members of the department, often helping them negotiate their way through Imperial College policies or helping them in their relationships with line managers and colleagues. We wish Alex the best in her new post. I am sure she will be a great success.

Azeem Majeed

In February, the department was pleased to welcome Miss Doli Aina as the new Department Admin Officer. Sitting in room 308, Doli is there to lend a hand in HR matters, grant applications and all the many bits in between. Doli comes to us from Richmond Fellowship - a mental health organisation and has a background in Psychology. Be sure to stop in and say “Hello Doli!”

We are also delighted to announce that Ms Barbara Cerutti joins us as the new Department Manager. Barbara started with the department on a part-time basis in March, and will be full-time from 26 May. She comes to us from the Imperial MOSAIC project which looks at influenza and is part of the NHLI at St Mary’s. Her background is in research applications, having previously worked for the College in the Joint Research Office.

We look forward to working closely with both Barbara and Doli.
On Tuesday 4 March 2014, the NIHR CLAHRC for North-West London launch took place at the Royal College of Physicians of London. NIHR Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRCs) undertake high-quality applied health research focused on the needs of patients and support the translation of research evidence into practice in the NHS. The department contributes to CLAHRC via PCPH staff Dr Chris Millet and Dr Vasa Curcin.

CLAHRCs are collaborative partnerships between a university and the surrounding NHS organisations, focused on improving patient outcomes through the conduct and application of applied health research. They create and embed approaches to research and its dissemination that are specifically designed to take account of the way that health care is increasingly delivered across sectors and a wide geographical area.
WHO Collaborating Centre Training

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Public Health Education and Training has played host to a variety of senior academics from around the world on its acclaimed training courses.

In November 2013, the Centre welcomed a group of senior academics from Iraq, China, Oman and Saudi Arabia to Imperial College London.

Representing various specialties within Medicine, 18 university staff were invited, in conjunction with the Iraqi Cultural Attaché and Ministry of Higher Education for Science and Research (MoHERS), to undertake an intensive four-week training programme. The aim of the programme was to strengthen current skills and teaching methods at an international level. This high-level visit also establishes the opportunity for greater collaboration between MoHERS Iraq and Imperial College.

With planned visits to NICE, the BMJ/BMA, the Faculty of Public Health, PBL Learning, the Centre for Clinical Practice, St George’s Medical School and Chelsea Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, this specially tailored training programme was designed to meet their needs and offered the visiting academics a useful insight into standards of good practice to share with academic colleagues back home.

Round-up of the visitors PCPH have had the pleasure of meeting
WHO Collaborating Centre Training

In February, the WHO CC training course on Advanced Academic Skills ran for its sixth time. The course is designed to train participants in modern teaching methods and student assessments—both undergraduate and postgraduates and research methodologies. Additionally, the course focused on academic leadership styles, communication skills and curriculum development. Thirteen participants from Iraq and Libya attended the course.

Matthew Harris presents to Brazilian delegation in Windsor

In March, Dr Matthew Harris, a NIHR Clinical Lecturer in Public Health, gave a keynote presentation on the UK Primary Care system and NHS structure and governance at Windsor Castle. Attending were a high level delegation of Brazilian State Secretaries for Health at the invitation of UKTI, Healthcare UK and the Department of Health. The symposium was also attended by Jane Ellison MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Public Health, Nick Tomlinson Department of Health International Division, and Howard Lyons Director of Healthcare UK.

Building links with Saudi Arabia—PCPH go abroad with the School of Public Health

A delegation from the School of Public Health comprised of Professor Elio Riboli-Director, School of Public Health, Professor Azeem Majeed-Head of Primary Care and Public Health Department, Professor Salman Rawaf-Director World Health Organization Centre, and Dr Josip Car-Director of Global eHealth Unit made an official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in March. The one-week visit was with counterparts in King Saud University in Riyadh, and aims to build collaborations and links between both institutions, particularly in research generation and capacity building. Further exciting developments with the university are expected. Watch this space!
Dr Jo Harris – Director of Curriculum and Assessment in the School of Medicine

The School of Medicine has undergone a restructuring process with the three Deputy Directors of Education now replaced by a board of 10 members. Dr Joanne Harris has been appointed to this board as Director of Curriculum and Assessment.

This new School structure has been established to provide clearer leadership and to strengthen the links within the academic departments and NHS colleagues. It provides the opportunity to build on Imperial’s strengths, including its strong science brand, to develop in areas such as medical education research, and to respond positively to the changes occurring in health and education. A key objective is to develop the students’ sense of belonging to a world class organisation.

This key appointment follows on from Dr Harris’s appointment late last year as the Deputy Director in Primary Care Education in the department.

Dr Elizabeth Muir and colleagues highly commended for their Supporting Carers DVD at the 2013 BMA Medical Book Awards

The RCGP Supporting Carers in General Practice DVD has been highly commended in the BMA Medical Book Awards in the digital and online resources category. Feedback received includes: “a well-produced resource which demonstrates its research background. It is professionally produced and engagingly presented that will go a long way in increasing awareness of the work of carers”.

This training DVD for GPs and their practice teams enables training for supporting carers to be fitted around work and other commitments by providing an interactive resource that can be used in-house for practice training and for CPD. It gives the rationale behind increasing awareness and support for carers, whilst highlighting areas that can be commonly be improved, or changed to the benefit of both carer and practice. The DVD content has been transferred onto the RCGP Online Learning Environment and is available for all to access online.

Dr Aisha Newth Appointed as New Faculty Development Lead

Dr Aisha Newth has taken on the role of Faculty Development Lead in the Undergraduate General Practice Teaching Unit. Dr Newth has been working in the Department of Primary Care & Public Health for 9 years and has been co-lead on the Year 5 GPPHC course for the last 4 years. In her new role Dr Newth will develop community teaching and support our GP teachers in NW London.

Some of the new projects for the unit include creating a GP peer support group and offering peer teaching observations to community teachers. The unit is also researching what further opportunities there are for students to learn more about medicine in a community setting and any novel settings for teaching that may be available to students.
Survival of the Sickest: An innovative pilot in primary care, using health coaching by nursing and medical students to reduce the burden on acute services

Dr Sonia Kumar, Director of Undergraduate Primary Care Education, has secured just over £100,000 from Higher Education North West London (HENWL) to fund an innovative one year teaching pilot project which will begin in August. The project involves pairing thirty medical students with thirty nursing students, in primary care, to oversee a caseload of patients with chronic conditions at high risk of hospital admission. Students will be given health coaching skills which is new to the undergraduate curriculum. Two new educators—one medical and one nursing—will be appointed to supervise these students. The impact this model of learning may have on patients and students will be studied and there will also be an associated student led quality improvement project.
Why do patients attend GP-led urgent care centres rather than their own general practice?

A paper published in the *Emergency Medical Journal*, by Professor Azeem Majeed and colleagues investigated why patients with ‘minor’ illnesses choose to attend a GP-led urgent care centre rather than their own general practice. A self-completed questionnaire was administered among patients aged 18 years or over who were triaged with a ‘minor illness’ on arrival to an urgent care centre, co-located with an emergency department in London. The research concluded that GP-led urgent care centres are similar to walk in centres in attracting healthy young adults, who were mostly registered with a GP and used services because of convenience and ease of access rather than satisfaction levels with their GP.

Diabetes in the Middle-East and North Africa: An update for 2013 for the IDF Diabetes Atlas

An article by PCPH colleagues in the journal *Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice* looks at the current state and future predictions of diabetes in the Middle-East and North Africa. In recent decades, the prevalence of diabetes has risen dramatically in many countries of the International Diabetes Federation’s (IDF) Middle-East and North Africa (MENA) Region. Enhanced research on the epidemiology of diabetes in the MENA Region needs to be combined with more effective primary prevention of diabetes; and early detection and improved management of patients with established diabetes, including an increased focus on self-management and management in primary care and community settings.

Effect of financial incentives on delivery of alcohol screening and brief intervention in primary care

Alcohol screening and brief intervention (ASBI) is effective but often under-provided in primary care. Financial incentives may help address this. A team of researchers within PCPH assessed the impact of a local pay-for-performance programme on delivery of ASBI in UK primary care in a longitudinal study using data from 30 general practices in North-West London from 2008 to 2011. The study was published in the *Journal of Public Health* and concluded that financial incentives appear to be effective in increasing delivery of ASBI in primary care and may reduce hazardous and harmful drinking in some patients. The findings support universal rather than targeted screening.

Blood pressure study points to more equitable care in England than America

In the USA patients on low incomes with high blood pressure have their condition managed poorly compared with those who earn more. A study within the department comparing blood pressure management in the US and England found that although there is little difference between the two countries overall, the level of socioeconomic inequality is much higher in the US, with wealthier Americans more likely to meet targets for bringing their blood pressure under control than poorer patients. The study was published in the journal *PLOS ONE*.

Socio-economic deprivation and Sickle Cell Disease

A study involving PCPH colleagues on socio-economic deprivation and Sickle Cell Disease has been published in the *Journal of Public Health*. According to their study, patients with Sickle Cell Disease living in more deprived areas are more likely to be admitted to hospital again. Taking data from Hospital Episode Statistics, the study followed up almost 8,000 patients admitted to hospital for SCD in 2005/06 for the next five years. The study also found that patients in more deprived areas were more likely to die over the period.
What is your role within the department and how long have you been here?

I work as the PA/Administrative Officer for the Head of Department, Professor Azeem Majeed, and 4 other senior team members. I previously worked for 4½ years as a PA in Respiratory Medicine at Imperial College, St Mary’s Campus. I also have over 10 years of experience working in insurance and banking in the City.

What does your job involve?

As well as looking after my 5 senior staff members, my varied duties include monitoring department budgets, processing payments, organising departmental Christmas and summer parties, occasional away days and conferences. I also take minutes of meetings and deal with HR issues such as new starters and interviews.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

I really enjoy working with my colleagues in the department whom I find inspiring and interesting. I also find my new role refreshing as I am more involved with HR, finance and admin rather than travel arrangements. Working in the university world has been a real bonus.

Tell us about outside interests

I have always enjoyed sports (basketball, tennis, aerobics and skiing), unfortunately limited by a bad leg. I keep fit by going to the gym 3-4 times a week and swimming, not forgetting the relaxing steam room! I love to go for walks and find some beautiful areas with interesting old trees and a variety of birds. I am a keen gardener and have worked tirelessly in our garden to improve it – some further improvements are under way this spring but this time with a help of a professional! I have a special interest in birds - all because of my dad’s influence. He is a semi-professional at making bird boxes and I am proud to have one in our garden where we have blue tits nesting every spring (sometimes they do 2 nests in one summer!).

My husband, Martin, and I love travelling. He is always enthusiastically planning new adventures and finding good flight deals! A highlight has been the whale-watching town of Hermanus on the Western Cape of South Africa. We went on a trip and saw a Southern Right Whale with her calf in Walker Bay. Mothers arrive in the warm waters of the bay to give birth, and there are usually 15-20 of them in June/July. Our hydrofoil quietly followed a whale and her calf for half an hour – from 20 meters away we could see and hear the mother blowing the air out and showing her tail to us a couple of times. It was a truly unique and exciting experience. I was also lucky to see a cute baby seal with whiskers, swimming, sunbathing, and eating sea kelp. He was very close to my canoe as I observed him warming himself in the sun.
PhD Student Win

Congratulations to PCPH PhD student Mustafa Elmonstri. His poster, Risk Perception in Libya: An Overview, was selected as one of the 2013 Student and International Award Winners at the Society of Risk Analysis Annual Meeting. He received a $600 prize for his winning poster.

New General Practice Society

Imperial College School of Medicine now has a General Practice Society.

An enthusiastic group of students have created a society to spread the joy of Primary Care and ensure more Imperial students consider General Practice as a career. Operating under the name ICGPS (or ‘GPsoc’) it aims to host internal events as well as inform members of relevant external events. Further information about the group can be found on the Facebook page.

If you have any suggestions for events, or would like to advertise relevant events with them, please contact ICGPS.

Imperial Festival 9-10 May

Save the date and volunteer for the Imperial Festival.

PCPH Summer Seminar Series

The Summer PCPH Seminar Series will be organised by Dr Michael Soljak. Please contact him if you have suggestions for speakers.

SharePoint

ICT are offering SharePoint user training. Requirements are being collated and courses will be run for those interested. Please register your requirements. Note all future courses will be for SharePoint 2013. SharePoint Help.

Website Redesign

The Imperial website redesign is well underway. You can find out more at their website and if you are an early adopter, there is also the opportunity to get involved with testing it.

The Trussell Trust would like to thank all those who donated food at Christmas for the Food Bank.

“Thank you so much for undertaking this collection. We were open this morning, and one older lady left saying, ‘I arrived here crying, and I’m leaving now singing’. That’s the kind of difference your gifts will make! Please extend a huge thank you to everyone who donated and organised your gift!”.

We welcome feedback on the newsletter and are taking submissions for future issues. Email your news, events, achievements and stories to us.

Javier Gallego
Sherry Morris

PCPH eMagazine Team

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