Congratulations
The following PhD students recently passed their vivas:

Layla Abdulaziz Alhyas
Thesis title: Quality of Diabetes Management in the UAE.

Carmen Tsang
Thesis title: Patient safety in English general practice - use of routinely collected data in detecting adverse events.

Carina King
Thesis title: Can routinely collected electronic health data be used to develop novel healthcare associated infection surveillance tools?

At a glance...can you guess which PCPH doctor features in this new textbook for GPs?

Head of Department’s Message

I was very pleased to hear that Dr Elizabeth Muir, Senior Lecturer in General Practice, won a Personal Tutor Award. Undergraduate teaching in primary care will play an increasingly important role within the Faculty of Medicine to reflect the shift from inpatient to more ambulatory-care based services. Dr Sonia Kumar, the department’s new Head of Undergraduate Primary Care Education will be taking this work forwards supported by Dr Graham Easton and the rest of the teaching team. Some of the research published by the department was covered extensively by the media. This included the work of Professor Sir Brian Jarman on the Inquiry into the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust and research by Dr Chris Millett on the impact of the public smoking ban on asthma admissions in children. Finally, the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust is currently going through a restructuring. We hope that the Trust maintains a strong commitment to primary care and public health, which will be essential if it is to retain its premier position in London’s NHS.

Report of General Practice in London

Staff within PCPH have contributed to a new report commissioned by NHS London from The King’s Fund and Imperial College that shows there are significant variations in the quality of primary care in London. The report was featured by a number of media outlets including the BBC and Pulse.

The report highlights areas of excellent performance - for example, some deprived parts of the capital have the highest rates of child immunisation in the country, and London practices have made good progress in adopting new information technology. However, Londoners also report lower levels of satisfaction with GP services than patients elsewhere in the country - for example, they are less satisfied with access to services, the quality of consultations and support for managing long-term conditions. The report argues that major changes are needed to the organisation and delivery of primary care to meet these challenges.

Dr Christopher Millett said: “Improving the quality of primary care in the capital is vital for containing healthcare expenditure and for improving the health of all Londoners. While this report highlights many examples of excellent care, more needs to be done to reduce variations in performance across the capital. The report also highlights the need for far greater focus on disease prevention in London primary care, both by increasing advice and counselling to individual patients and by working closely with local government to reduce smoking, alcohol misuse and obesity in local communities”.

February 2013
Alex Bottle was invited to be the European representative of an expert panel helping the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation create the first public-oriented website for comparing hospitals in Canada (CIHI has one for healthcare professionals). The five-member panel met in Toronto, November 2012, and are now helping the CBC to interpret and present available indicators and to design surveys. The website will go live at the end of March 2013.

Professor Sir Brian Jarman, Director of the Dr Foster Unit, recently appeared on Radio 4 and a Channel 4 News piece regarding the Mid Staffordshire public inquiry, discussing his involvement as an expert witness. A mortality alert system developed within the Dr Foster Unit by Professor Jarman, Paul Aylin and Alex Bottle detected high mortality rates at the hospital. The hospital received written notice of their high mortality rates, but in their evidence to the inquiry, claimed they were unaware of this information. Professor Jarman will be discussing the results of the inquiry on 20 February as part of the PCPH Seminar Series.

The Telegraph also covers Professor Jarman’s role in the public inquiry.

Key publications for the unit include:


A delegation from the China Ministry of Health visited the department. The group were keen to explore collaboration in GP and Health Management Training and also visited CX Hospital.

WLPCC has launched its brand new website: http://www.wlpc.org.uk/

It is a source of information for those interested in getting involved in research activities in primary care as well as for WLPCC partners and stakeholders.

In November 2012, the WHO Collaborating Centre research team and Director, Professor Salman Rawaf, undertook a 2-week WHO assignment to assess the post-conflict health system in Libya.

They welcomed a new member to the Team Ms Marion Chaix, who has taken up the post of Course Coordinator. She is currently working on the upcoming Advanced Leadership & Health Management course scheduled for this March in Cairo and held in partnership with ARADO (Arab Administrative Development Organisation). The course will run again in early April in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to coincide with the 1st Arab World Public Health Conference.

In October 2012, the WHO Collaborating Centre welcomed three new Postgraduate Fellows: Dr Badreyya Al-Harmi from Dubai, who is working in public health epidemiology and from Qatar, Drs. Hissa Al-Muraikhi, interested in screening and health promotion, and Abdul Hameed Al Khenji working on child and adolescent medicine. The Centre is expecting three new Fellows to join in April 2013.

Several members of the Undergraduate Education Unit attended the Madingley conference which was coordinated by Kings College London this year. They presented during the two days and Dr Ros Herbert and Dr Caroline Collins volunteered to chair sessions.
New Head of UG Primary Care Teaching

Dr Sonia Kumar has been appointed as the new Head of Undergraduate Primary Care Teaching the Department of Primary Care and Public Health at Imperial College London. She took up her post in February 2013.

Dr Kumar has worked as a GP in South London for the past 11 years. Her academic interests started about the same time, whilst working as a GP Assistant, at GKT Medical School where she taught on a number of undergraduate courses. This led her to study for a Masters in Primary Care at Kings College, which she completed in 2004 with a Distinction. Her Masters dissertation looked at the effectiveness of PBL as a teaching tool in medical schools.

She then joined the London Deanery 8 years ago working as a local Programme Director for Kings and then 3 years ago was appointed as a Pan London Director for Quality and Innovation. She has been involved in teaching for the Deanery’s Faculty Development Unit and with GP recruitment and assessment Panels. In November 2012, she joined Imperial College, working as a Senior Teaching Fellow.

New Education Manager for Undergraduate Medicine

Susan Farrell is the new Education Manager for Primary Care Undergraduate Medicine. She leads the admin team responsible for all the primary care teaching and placements in the medical curriculum. The team is very busy ensuring the primary care component of the medical school curriculum is a success.

Prior to taking up her post within the department, Susan was the Education Lead for the National Centre for Infection Prevention and Management as part of work-stream 4 “capacity building”. This work-stream is designed to provide a strong multi-disciplinary educational programme in infection prevention to help ensure a sustainable basis for infection prevention research, teaching and clinical care.

Susan also worked for the Cuschiieri Skills Centre, a unit at Dundee University and then moved to NHS Education for Scotland where she ran the Foundation Programme for the East of Scotland Deanery. She holds an MSc in Applied Research Methods from Dundee University and a Masters in Public Health from Imperial College London.

New NIHR Primary Care Research Manager

Dr Austen El-Osta joined the Department in January 2013 to assume the role of NIHR Primary Care Research Manager with NWL CLRN.

His principle aim is to widen access and participation in primary care research by engaging constructively with existing and emerging organisational forms during times of great change as the NHS transitions form one state to another. Prior to joining the CLRN team, Austen worked in a similar capacity south of the river, where he engaged with GP practices to support recruitment into NIHR-portfolio studies with a primary care element.

Austen’s research interests include analysing the policy effect of the H&SC Bill, digital era governance and new tools to enhance clinical research capability via the use of EHR.
One of most innovative programmes within the department, the Imperial GP Speciality programme offers training and education for GP specialist trainees in many new areas such as public health, commissioning, primary care research and teaching, leadership and management.

The unique training scheme, which is run jointly by PCPH and Imperial Healthcare Trust, is a three year programme consisting of two sections. The trainees spend 18 months based in General Practice focusing on developing consultation skills, managing a range of primary care medical problems and completing the Clinical Skills Assessment and Work Based Programme component of the nMRCGP and 18 months based in hospital specialties (e.g. Paediatrics, Obs and Gynae, Medicine, Psychiatry). As part of the educational release programme, run by programme directors Dr Martin Block and Dr Samia Hasan, GP trainees meet for half a day on a weekly basis in this department.

“We are proud to say that this is the first GP training scheme to be based within an academic department of General Practice”.

Currently into the second term of the programme, the first intake of twelve ST1 trainees joined the department in August 2012 and the second intake will be joining in August 2013. The hospital posts have been designed with the specific focus on the educational needs of general practice trainees, to enable the transfer of knowledge and skills that are relevant to the field of general practice.

As Dr Block notes, “We are proud to say that this is the first GP training scheme to be based within an academic department of General Practice. The programme provides a unique opportunity to deepen the relationship between undergraduate and postgraduate General Practice training, and gives trainees an insight into academic General Practice”. The Imperial programme supports the development of the next generation of General Practitioners, who are highly educated and trained, with the motivation to be leaders in the field of general practice and healthcare. These GPs will have the confidence, knowledge and skills to build on the best of traditional UK general practice and be responsive to national objectives, the local context in which GPs work, and the changing needs and expectations of patients.

Members of the department such as Dr Graham Easton and the academic ST4s have provided valuable contributions to the programme with Wednesday afternoon teaching sessions, alongside other speakers from the university and the trust. Dr James Stratford-Martin and Dr Sarvesh Saini are both set to become GP trainers on the scheme. The team is completed by Ms Mona Khatib, who provides administrative support to the programme.

Please contact Martin on m.block@imperial.ac.uk if you are interested in getting involved in the teaching or finding out more about the scheme.
What do you do?

I’m the Administrative Assistant for the Department of Primary Care and Public Health. I joined this friendly department in October 2012. My previous role was Faculty Assistant for the Faculty of Finance at Cass Business School, City University. Prior to that, I worked for the Royal College of General Practitioners within the Certification and Finance Department.

What does your job involve?

I am responsible for the HR, finance and research administration as well as administering the health & safety and premises management for the department. I am also responsible for other administrative activities that facilitate the smooth running of an office.

What are your first impressions of PCPH?

The department made a really good impression on me, I could see and have now learned that the individuals who work within PCPH are so friendly and laid back.

What are your outside interests?

I have a BSc in Psychology as I’m fascinated by human behaviour and learning about the different theories as to why people behave the way they do. In my spare time I enjoy travelling, socialising, exercising and lots and lots of shopping!

What are you looking forward to in 2013?

As I have just got engaged, I’m looking forward to attending a few bridal fairs and trying on a range of dresses. I think we’ll set the date for 2014 so this year would be the perfect year to start planning and getting things in order. I’m also looking forward to learning more about my new role, so that I am able to deal with more queries effectively.
The introduction of smoke-free legislation in England was immediately followed by a fall in the number of children admitted to hospital with asthma symptoms, a new study has found.

NHS statistics analysed by researchers at Imperial College London show a 12.3 per cent fall in admissions for childhood asthma in the first year after the law on smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces came into effect in July 2007. The researchers found that asthma admissions continued to fall in subsequent years, suggesting that the benefits of the legislation were sustained over time.

The effect was equivalent to 6,802 fewer hospital admissions in the first three years of the legislation, according to the analysis published today in the journal Paediatrics.

Asthma affects one in every 11 children in the UK. Before the law was implemented, hospital admissions for children suffering a severe asthma attack were increasing by 2.2 per cent per year, peaking at 26,969 admissions in 2006/2007. The trend reversed immediately after the law came into effect, with lower admission rates among boys and girls of all ages. There were similar reductions among children in wealthy and poor neighbourhoods, both in cities and in rural areas.

Previous studies have shown that hospital admissions for childhood asthma fell after smoke-free legislation was introduced in Scotland and North America. The law in England was also found to have reduced the rate of heart attacks.

Dr Christopher Millett, from the School of Public Health at Imperial College London, who led the study, said: "There is already evidence that eliminating smoking from public places has resulted in substantial population health benefits in England, and this study shows that those benefits extend to reducing hospital admissions for childhood asthma."

"Previous studies have also suggested that the smoke-free law changed people's attitudes about exposing others to second-hand smoke and led more people to abstain from smoking voluntarily at home and in cars. We think that exposing children to less second-hand smoke in these settings probably played an important role in reducing asthma attacks.

"The findings are good news for England, and they should encourage countries where public smoking is permitted to consider introducing similar legislation".

The research has received widespread media coverage on the BBC, and various newspapers including the Guardian and Telegraph.
The number of children admitted to hospital in England for acute throat infections increased by 76 per cent between 1999 and 2010, according to new research published by Dr Elizabeth Koshy and colleagues in the journal *Archives of Disease in Childhood*. The article was covered by a number of media outlets, including the BBC.

Acute throat infection (ATI), which includes acute tonsillitis and acute pharyngitis, is one of the most common reasons for consulting a GP. The majority of ATIs are self-limiting and can be managed at home or by the GP, but a small proportion may require hospital admission.

This study investigated admission rates for children up to age 17 with ATI alongside trends in tonsillectomy rates, between 1999 and 2010. The study was motivated by concerns that the decline in tonsillectomy rates in recent years has led to an increase in hospital admissions for tonsillitis of increased severity. It also investigated whether performing fewer tonsillectomies is associated with higher rates of complications such as quinsy, an abscess that can occur when an infection spreads from a tonsil to the surrounding area.

Dr Elizabeth Koshy, lead study author from the Department of Primary Care & Public Health at Imperial College London, said the rise in hospital admissions for this type of infection was concerning.

"Our findings relating to short hospital stays suggest that many of the children admitted with acute throat infections could have been effectively managed in the community. Our study highlights the need to urgently address the issue of healthcare access, with improved models of integrated care within primary and secondary care, to avoid potentially unnecessary hospital admissions for relatively minor infections in the future".

A recent article in the *Guardian* newspaper by Juliette Jowit discusses the potential impact on patient care on cuts to primary care budgets. The article quotes from Professor Majeed’s experience as a general practitioner in Lambeth.

"People will start to go to A&E: that costs a lot more and puts a strain on hospitals," he said. "And there's evidence from a number of studies that the better access to GPs is, the better you get in terms of low rates of inpatient admissions for things like strokes [and] lung infections. You end up with poorer health, more cases of hospital care and higher costs”.

Professor Majeed also discussed these issues in a recent article in the *British Journal of General Practice*. 
Congratulations to Dr Elizabeth Muir for receiving a Personal Tutor Award. Nominated by students, Elizabeth has been offering her outstanding care for over 10 years to medical and GE students. As a colleague noted, “[Elizabeth] ceaselessly seeks to improve the student experience. In addition to being a Theme and Course leader she actively participates in our personal tutoring system”.

The ceremony took place on 7 November 2012 at the Awards for Teaching Excellence for NHS Teachers, hosted by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Deputy Director of Education, Professor Karim Meeran. Certificates were awarded by Professor Jenny Higham, Deputy Principal and Director of Education.

Elizabeth is well respected and admired at PCH. Dr Graham Easton, Deputy Director of Primary Care Education, noted “Elizabeth has always put students at the centre of her teaching, and goes the extra mile in supporting and advising her personal tutees”.

Students were full of praise for Elizabeth with typical comments of, “She’s always warm, open and welcoming. She listens to everything we have to say, and is wonderful at calming you down about exams and other stresses”.

Dr Graham Easton has co-authored, a new ‘how to’ guide aimed at aspiring General Practitioners entitled General Practice at a Glance.

The book provides an illustrated introduction to the full range of essential primary care presentations. Grouped by system, it equips the student with the skills to make the most of their GP attachment and takes a symptoms–based approach which mirrors the general practice curriculum. Offering ‘one–stop’ coverage of musculoskeletal, circulatory, respiratory, nervous, reproductive, urinary, endocrine and digestive presentations, it highlights the interrelations between primary and secondary care. This accessible introduction and revision aid will help all medical students and junior doctors develop an understanding of the nature and structure of primary care.

William Palmer – a PhD student at the Dr Foster Unit – has been awarded a two–month placement as a visiting researcher at the Brocher Foundation in Switzerland. The Foundation, which supports researchers in areas relating to medical ethics, gives people the opportunity to write up their research – whether a book, article, essay or PhD thesis – on the peaceful shores of Lake Geneva. The visiting positions are a unique occasion to meet other researchers from different disciplines and countries as well as experts from numerous international organizations & non-governmental organizations based in Geneva such as WHO, WTO, WIPO, UNHCR, ILO, WMA, ICRC. There are more details on their website and we look forward to receiving an update from Will in a future newsletter.
Sarah Payne completed the Masters in Public Health course in 2011. The dissertation component of the Masters course gave her the opportunity to visit the Gambia and undertake a research project in conjunction with the MRC unit based in Fajara. Subsequently, her supervisor encouraged her to submit the dissertation (in a much more concise form) for publication in a peer reviewed journal. The difficult, yet worthwhile exercise was a good experience for preparing future publications and Sarah’s hard work paid off - the paper was accepted by her first choice journal. Additionally, the abstract was accepted for an oral presentation by the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPHER) Young Researchers Forum to be held as part of the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) conference in Malta, where she was delighted (and surprised) to win best oral presentation.

Sarah would highly recommend other masters students to submit their abstracts to the ASPHER event in future. She says, “Don’t just put your dissertation away in a drawer and forget about it after the course is over (though I know this is very tempting!), but make the most of the hard work you have already put into it and aim for publication and opportunities to present it wherever you can”.

Brazilian Family Health Strategy Community Health Worker model

Dr Matthew Harris has been promoting the work of the Brazilian Family Health Strategy Community Health Worker model at a variety of locations within the UK. Highlights include:

- A round table discussion at the RCGP conference in Glasgow, October 2012, with Professor Nigel Mathers (Vice Chair of RCGP) and Professor Martin Marshall (Chair of Ethics RCGP) which appeared in GP Online magazine.
- A keynote presentation on the Brazil-UK Memorandum of Understanding at Brazil-Bangor University-BCUHB-Wales International Health Symposium on 31 October.
- A round table discussion at the GP Innovation Forum of NHS London on the 7 November, Earls Court, with Sarb Basi, Managing Director Practice Partners and Ben Richardson, Partner, McKinsey and co.

The Brazilian Community Health Worker model has now featured in two of Matthew’s commentary articles in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine and the London Journal of Primary Care.

In November, he returned to Brazil for a review of the Memorandum of Understanding at the Brazilian Ministry of Health, where the proposed pilot project translation of the Brazilian Community Health Worker model into North Wales was discussed. The Brazilian Ministry of Health are keen to support this activity, and will be involved in a technical visit by a Welsh delegation from the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to Recife, in North East Brazil, in March.

WHO takes to warmer climates during the London chill

In December, the WHO CC for Public Health Education and Training team presented at the 11th Annual Health Conference: Affordable Solutions for Public Health Promotion & Emerging Economies in Amman, Jordan. From there they travelled to Baghdad to attend and present at the 4th Scientific Annual Conference – Human Resources & Training Development Centre/Ministry of Health of Iraq. Dr Mays Raheem was honoured with the Young Presenters Award for her presentation, A strong health System to improve Quality, Safety and population.
**Spring 2013 Seminar Schedule**

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**Seminar Video Archive**

**College Closure**

From 28 March – 2 April inclusively Reynolds Building will be closed. **College Closure Dates 2013/14**

Happy Easter!

**NIHR Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME) programme**

27 February 2013 at the King’s Fund, Cavendish Sq. London

More Information

**VIP Visitor**

On Wednesday 13 February the Department will be visited by the Minister for Tertiary Education of Mauritius.

Full coverage in the summer term Newsletter

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