People, Policy and Practice

RESEARCH FOCUS CONFERENCE

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Abstracts
Mixed methods evaluation of Schools Intergenerational Dementia Project

Teresa Atkinson & Jennifer Bray

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ABSTRACT

The Association for Dementia Studies was commissioned to evaluate a pioneering approach to educating young people about dementia in a bid to dispel myths and create a more compassionate and informed society.

Emerging from current Government Policy, the Prime Minister’s Challenge On Dementia was launched in March 2012 and identified 22 Pioneer Schools to participate in an intergenerational dementia awareness raising project. Teachers embraced this challenge as part of their curriculum, devising ways to improve understanding of dementia in pupils from both primary and secondary schools. A range of innovative curriculum activities have been devised which are brought to life in this presentation where footage of pupils will be shared with the audience.

The methodology adopted a combined qualitative and quantitative approach. Pre and post intervention questionnaires were designed in order to capture changes in pupil knowledge and understanding. From the emerging data three case study sites were identified, each of which exemplified a novel approach to curriculum delivery and offered insights for future teaching.

This presentation will share the challenges of the evaluation approach and its methodology. It will also consider the various approaches to introducing this sensitive material into the curriculum and discuss findings including pupils changing attitudes towards dementia and the implications for the wider community.
Is abstinence a sexual health option for young people?

Clare Bennett, Natalie Farquharson and Sue Lillyman.

Institute of Health and Society

ABSTRACT

Historically, British parents have found it difficult to discuss sex and relationships with their children (Turnbull et al., 2008) and the education system has been relied upon to address these issues. However, concern regarding sexual risk taking practices amongst young people and the associated unintended pregnancies (DoH, 2011) and sexually transmitted infections (HPA, 2010) in the UK have raised questions regarding the efficacy of the UK’s current approach to sexual health promotion. The UK literature has reviewed various methods of promoting sexual health such as peer education, partnership working and educational methods. However, in contrast to the international literature, there is a dearth of work that has explored abstinence as a sexual health option for young people.

This presentation, therefore, reports on the findings of an exploratory study which sought the views of 169 first year students, using a qualitative questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two questions which asked respondents to comment on whether they felt that sufficient emphasis is placed on abstinence as a sexual health promotion option in the school-based ‘sex education’ curricula and whether abstinence is something that young people would be interested in hearing about as part of their sex education at school. Thematic data analysis, using NVivo, was used to facilitate thematic analysis which demonstrates a desire amongst young people for greater emphasis to be placed on abstinence as a sexual health option within the school-based sex education system. The impact for policy and practice will be presented in the analysis of these findings.


“Bless her”: A deconstruction of mothers’ attitudes towards their daughters’ menarche

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ABSTRACT

Menarche is a significant milestone for young women representing, for many, an important juncture between girlhood and maturation (Lee and Sasser-Coen 1996). With it comes a number of consequences that may impact on the individual socially, physically and emotionally (Chang et al. 2010). Internationally, studies suggest that many girls and adolescents struggle with the transition (Beausang and Razor 2000, Marván et al. 2002, Uskul 2004), with many being unprepared for the onset of menstruation (Chrisler and Zittel 1998, Costos et al. 2002, Kalman 2003a and 2003b, Cooper and Koch 2007). At present there is a paucity of literature which explores the role of significant others’ responses to menarche. However, the empirical studies that do exist (Uskul 2004, Lee 2008) suggest that a mother’s reaction is perceived as very significant in the eyes of her daughter (Chang et al. 2010). Furthermore, structural equation modelling suggests that women who perceive menstruation positively feel more confident about their bodies, are more sexually assertive and subsequently take fewer sexual risks (Schooler et al. 2005).

This paper aims to advance thinking within this little recognised sphere of sexual health promotion by illuminating adolescents’ experiences of menarche. A postmodern critique, using a Derridian deconstructive analysis, of a ‘Mumsnet’ discussion thread is presented to reveal tensions within the discourse such as cycles of shame and a lack of competency and knowledge on the part of parents. The policy and practice implications of the findings of this critique will be argued, particularly in relation to perceived menstrual shame and its impact on sexual decision making.
An exploration of attributable factors on healthy life expectancy...the public’s perspective.

Helena Darby, Dominic Upton, Penney Upton, John Leah

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ABSTRACT

Background:
Healthy life expectancy is defined as the number of years that an individual will live in good general health. Although this concept is of increasing importance within government and NHS agenda, research considering the public’s perception of healthy life expectancy is scarce.

Method:
Semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals from the Telford and Wrekin area of the West Midlands. Grounded theory analysis was undertaken using Charmaz’s framework as a coding technique. This enabled important themes to emerge from the data.

Findings:
This grounded theory study revealed several themes documenting attributable factors on healthy life expectancy, in addition to themes pertaining to the understanding of the concept. Generally, the term healthy life expectancy was not recognised by the public and confusion was evident between the term life expectancy and healthy life expectancy. Despite this, respondents were found, in the main, to view healthy life expectancy as a holistic concept which is influenced by health behaviours. Although long term health was considered in most cases to be influential, participants documented several reasons for not taking steps to attempt to influence their healthy life expectancy. Additionally, themes emerged relating to the importance which individuals place on their current and future health.

Conclusion:
The findings will provide health care professionals with valuable information to better equip health promotion strategies aimed at influencing healthy life expectancy.
Pilot study to investigate whether magnesium food supplements can support the reduction of hot flushes in menopausal women

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ABSTRACT

Objectives:
The most characteristic symptom of the menopause is the hot flush and it is the symptom for which women most often seek help. A recent study reported that the majority of breast cancer survivors had found relief from hot flushes using a magnesium supplement. The objective of this study was to assess whether magnesium citrate would reduce hot flushes in menopausal women.

Methods:
Generally healthy women aged between 45 and 60 with at least 14 self-diagnosed menopausal hot flushes per week were recruited. Participants completed paper diaries recording hot flush frequency and severity for one week prior (baseline) and four weeks of treatment during which participants took 300 mg magnesium citrate daily. Hot flush score (frequency x severity) was compared between baseline and end of treatment.

Results:
Eleven participants were enrolled and all completed the study. Compliance was excellent. The mean weekly hot flush score was 127.4 (SD 89.9) at baseline and 86.5 (SD 82.2) at week five, a reduction of 30.5% (p=0.021). Three participants experienced a greater than 50% reduction in hot flush score, six experienced a greater than 25% reduction and two experienced an increase in hot flush score at the end of the study compared with baseline.

Conclusion:
Short-term supplementation with magnesium citrate, at the dose given, may lead to reductions in menopausal hot flushes in some generally healthy women. However, the findings must be considered to be tentative and cannot be generalized to other groups of women. Further research is warranted.
Characteristics supporting successful completion of Flying Start in NHS Scotland

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ABSTRACT

Flying Start is a web-based development programme for all newly qualified nurses, midwives and allied health professionals (AHPs) starting work within NHS Scotland. The programme aims to support staff in the transition from student to effective practitioner through a structured programme of online work packages and an associated mentoring scheme. Whilst the programme was well received and seen to be useful, concerns were raised about the low completion rates in some areas. This evaluation aimed to understand the key characteristics that supported successful completion of the learning outcomes Flying Start for newly qualified practitioners.

A qualitative approach was used to gather the views of 56 health professionals from five health boards in Scotland, using a series of semi-structured telephone interviews and focus groups. Participants included nurse and AHP directors, learning and development leads, managers and mentors, and newly qualified practitioners who had either recently completed the Flying Start programme or were due to complete the programme within six months. Three main themes emerged from the analysis: understanding what completion meant; incentives and motivating factors; and characteristics supporting completion. Key factors leading to successful completion included clear communication and signposting, up-to-date and relevant content, links with continuing professional development frameworks, effective mentor and peer support and appropriate IT access. Recommendations from this evaluation are being addressed at both a national and local level, and have formed the basis of an action plan focusing on engagement, monitoring and content that is currently being developed by the Scottish Government.
The ALCOVE Project: Informing EU Policy and Practice for Diagnosis of Dementia

Simon Evans, Dawn Brooker, Jennifer Bray, Jenny la Fontaine.
Association for Dementia Studies, University of Worcester

ABSTRACT

This presentation reports on ALCOVE, a Joint Action co-financed by the European Commission to produce evidence based recommendations for policy makers on dementia. The Association for Dementia Studies was commissioned by the Department of Health to lead the work on diagnosis of dementia. A questionnaire was completed by experts from 24 EU countries detailing current practice for dementia diagnosis. In addition, evidence was reviewed from scientific, policy and qualitative research encompassing the technical issues in diagnosis and the processes at a personal level for those with possible dementia. An iterative process of reflection, clarification and verification was carried out with people with dementia, family carers and health and social care professionals. Our findings suggests it is desirable to have access to diagnosis at a time when people can use this information to make sense of what is happening to them, to support them in making lifestyle changes and planning for the future. The term timely diagnosis is used to reflect this approach. We present our recommendations and discuss their relevance for policy makers across the EU in improving timely diagnosis and benchmarking progress at a local, national and European level.
Nurse Non-Medical Prescribing in palliative care.

Natalie Farquharson and Jane Perry

Institute of Health and Society, University of Worcester

ABSTRACT

Non-medical prescribing for nurses was brought about in 1992, for District nurses and Health Visitors. This led to further legislative changes to allow extended, supplementary and independent prescribing rights in 2002, 2003 and 2006 respectively. A literature search was conducted to examine the input and views around non-medical prescribing for nurses in relation to an increasingly important healthcare issue, palliative care. This is due to an increasing ageing population living with chronic and terminal conditions.

The literature revealed that nurse prescribing within palliative care could improve service quality and efficiency through prescribing for commonly occurring symptoms in palliative care, such as pain and also constipation due to the use of analgesics, without the need to wait for a GP or doctor to prescribe. A more holistic approach is taken towards patient’s needs and symptoms. Positive attitudes have been shown from GP’s and other medical staff. Nurses have increased levels of autonomy and responsibility as well as being shown to operate within their levels of qualification. However, prescribing course content for specialised nursing is an issue, as well as support from medical staff and concerns over confidence to prescribe and increased responsibility.

In conclusion, non-medical prescribing for nurses in palliative care appears to have a positive outcome for patients, services and the nurses themselves. However, these positive outcomes need to be highlighted to promote non-medical prescribing and facilitate effective education and clinical support for future cohorts of non-medical prescribing nurses.
Understanding of the relationship between nutritional knowledge, habits and attitudes of non-elite competitive cyclists

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ABSTRACT

Objectives
It is widely accepted that sports performance can be enhanced by nutrition, and athletes are interested in sports nutrition, however their diets remain inadequate. The main aim was to advance the understanding of the relationship between three variables - nutritional knowledge, habits and attitudes of non-elite competitive cyclists with a view to formulating strategies for improving their dietary practice. It was predicted there would be relationship between the three variables and that women would score significantly higher.

Methods
The variables were measured using a modified web-based Likert-scale questionnaire. Data was statistically analysed using SPSS; correlations to identify the relationship and t-tests to identify any significant difference in the variables.

Results
Scores were high, particularly for attitudes, however key areas of inadequate knowledge were identified and participants failed to put knowledge into practice. There were positive correlations between knowledge and habit ($r = .36, n = 53, p< .01$), knowledge and attitude ($r = .50, n = 53, p< .001$) and habit and attitude ($r = .57, n = 53, p< .001$). Attitude had a partial mediating effect on the strength of relationship between knowledge and habit in women. Although women scored higher in men in all three variables, a significant difference was only found in the attitude scores ($t (53) = -1.77$, $p = 0.042$).

Conclusion
Method of recruitment may have influenced the positive results with self-selection from those with more knowledge. Conflicting knowledge and misconceptions may account for gaps in knowledge, therefore there is a need to promote a professional service to improve nutritional strategies of competitive athletes.
The returned traveller. A systematic literature review highlighting the need for a multi-faceted policy change.

Paula Heath
University of Worcester

ABSTRACT

In the last ten years academic literature regarding the management of travellers’ diarrhoea centres on chemoprophylaxis, is predominately on the use of fluroquinolones. However there is a paucity of evidence to assist clinicians’ decision-making on the traveller who has returned with diarrhoea.

Clinicians’ practices are varied, unsurprisingly because of misinformation and not one single source of literature to draw from. Occasionally management is pragmatic; offering supportive measures such as the BRAT diet. Others intervene with antibiotics without isolating an organism often due to unrealistic patients’ demands who are misinformed by web-sites. This, combined with managing expectations inefficiently for fear of complaint and time pressures, serves to frustrate both clinician and client.

As an advanced nurse practitioner, observing practice in both primary and secondary care sectors in the last few years, has highlighted to me the need for a multi-faceted review of policy regarding antibiotic use nationally; rather than regionally in line with European agendas and WHO guidance to decrease antibiotic use in primary care with pragmatic pathways for such a presentation. The review should include consideration of QOF targets on private travel clinics where the unlicensed use of fluroquinolones is commonplace as well as regulation of evolving internet sites; which claim to advise patients on how best to manage this and many other clinical presentations.
Developing Professional Identity: from methods to messages

Colin Howard, Alison Kington, Linzi McKerr & Wendy Messenger

Institute of Education, University of Worcester

ABSTRACT

This presentation focuses upon the ways in which the interactions between practitioners’ professional work and lives, and the extent to which they are able to manage changes in these can affect their sense of professional identity.

Drawing on examples from four related research projects, we will discuss the influencing and mediating factors which interact positively and/or negatively on identity at different career stages. We also aim to illustrate, through two key themes, how identity is an important determinant in influencing practitioners’ work/life balance, well-being and effectiveness.

Theme one focuses on the evolution of professional identity – for example, we found that a dichotomy of thinking in relation to identity and status frequently led to an ‘identity struggle’ and the evolution into a new kind of practitioner in order to overcome this struggle and work effectively within a particular context. Theme two examines the ways in which professional identity is associated with other concepts – for example, commitment, job satisfaction, career phase, environment and culture.

Finally, we will relate the combined findings of these projects to policy, showing how research has had an impact on shaping changes relating to practitioner development, effectiveness and school improvement.
Do new school buildings programmes make a difference to teaching professional lives

Colin Howard

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ABSTRACT

The research centre’s on Labour Government’s Policy to create new school buildings in the United Kingdom linked to former initiatives such as Building Schools for the Future. The research seeks to examine whether national aspirations linked to the creation of these new schools have had the prescribed outcomes on teaching professionals, how they have influenced their professional lives and how they have affected their motivation, morale and job satisfaction.

This longitudinal, qualitative, interpretative, research study used semi structured interviews to question head teachers, teachers, teaching assistants, local authority inspectors and architects linked to the creation of these new schools. The location for this study has taken place in two new schools in a semi-rural target authority located in the West Midland. School A was a small rural, village primary and School B a larger than average urban primary school. Ethical considerations addressed related to securing confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents and their schools within this study.

The findings from this study supports the notion that in these schools national aspirations have been met at a local level and that these schools promote the desired outcomes stated by government literature. Alongside this the schools have positively affected teachers’ in terms of their motivation, morale and job satisfaction. They have also led to changes in teachers professional identity’s and in this study influenced levels of retention within these schools.

Given that the state of some current school buildings still provides major concerns for school stakeholders this study is timely in so much that it allows an insight into the positive influence that new schools can have upon teaching professionals beyond that of new facilities.
The Class Dynamic in the Psycho-therapeutic Relationship

Miriam Isaac

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ABSTRACT

In counselling and psychotherapy the issue of class is neglected both theoretically and in practice. This qualitative research addresses the class dynamic in the therapeutic relationship. Premised on an analysis of the three major concepts of class, the inquiry focuses on how the working class participants perceive therapists, how the counsellor participants perceive class, and how both manage class difference.

Class is complex and multidimensional. Therefore, no one theory about class offers a complete account. The position taken is that two of the analysed concepts, class as a relational phenomenon, and class maintained and reproduced through habitus, capital and dispositions provides a means by which the class dynamic can be analysed.

The empirical inquiry constitutes a theory driven, constructionist, thematic, focus group analysis, cross referenced to individual counsellor interviews. The data was gathered from thirty two participants in six focus groups, situated in Sure Start Children Centres across the West Midlands, and five counsellor interviews. Each centre was located within the highest percentile of nationally delineated factors of deprivation.

The research findings suggest that:
1. Participants called on latent socio-cultural accounts of class in relationally defining themselves in opposition to others;
2. The power dynamic in the therapeutic relationship is constructed differently between the working class participants and the counsellors;
3. Therapists symbolise a homogenous middle class to the working class participants;
4. The cultural capital of the therapist is resisted by the working class clients;
5. There are implications for practice.

Class as addressed in this study indicates it is an issue in primary processing, confirming its centrality to the therapeutic relationship.
The Hive in Worcester: supporting people, policy or practice?

Chris Leck

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ABSTRACT

The Hive is a joint public and University library, history centre and customer service centre. It is the first venture of its kind in Europe. Despite having been conceived and financed prior to the recession, this multi-million pound investment was completed during a period of cost cutting and job losses. It is therefore critical that associated value (actual and potential) is understood, maximised and made apparent.

The policy context underpinning the Hive concerned the development of tangible links between the city and the University that were intended to benefit multiple stakeholders. This paper identifies the principal stakeholder groups, outlines the arenas in which the Hive might be anticipated to facilitate change and highlights associated challenges.

Despite attracting almost a million visitors during its first year of operation, and winning various national awards, the Hive has not always been portrayed in a positive light in the local media. The paper assesses the extent to which this is justified through consideration of the usage of the Hive and public perceptions of its impact on their own lives and the wider city.

The paper incorporates analysis of questionnaire data provided by over 300 people in Worcester during July 2013. This evidence suggests that, despite various concerns and negative perceptions being presented, the Hive is considered by the majority of respondents to be a useful and valuable resource that benefits both people and place.
Laying Down Foundations for an International Student Journey

Sue Lillyman, Clare Bennett and Natalie Farquharson
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ABSTRACT

The aim was to examine the lived experiences of international students studying within the UK. Through identifying and examining the personal experiences the researchers were able to make recommendations to the University for future provision for international students and to provide useful information to assist potential students.

The project engaged the principles of phenomenology as a focus on the international student’s perceptions and experience through the use of questionnaires. Students identified positive experiences and areas of concern that related to different sections of their journey. These sections included prior to coming, arriving in and studying in the UK.

The main areas identified were a mixture of positive feeling of excitement in gaining further qualifications and opportunity to study and live in the UK. Anxiety in relation to concerns of separation from family and friends and the cost of living prior to coming to the UK. On arrival students identified positive aspects in relation to accommodation and transport whilst others found that strange food and different cultural aspects of life had caused some concerns. It was noted that students developed and adapted quickly with coping strategies in relation to language and were positive in relation to the different approaches to teaching. Limited engagement with social activities of the university was also highlighted.

In conclusion a positive learning experience for international students involves a team approach in relation to the student, academics and administrators involved in the course preparation and delivery and the universities role in providing a positive learning environment.
The impact of nutrition and lifestyle choices on fertility: an examination of the knowledge and behaviour of those wishing to conceive

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ABSTRACT

Aim
The study aimed to examine to what extent individuals, who wish to conceive, believe that nutrition and lifestyle choices may contribute to fertility and to what extent this knowledge is followed.

Methods
Fifteen females completed an online questionnaire which focused on - knowledge of lifestyle and fertility, sources of information and lifestyle habits and modifications.

Results
The majority believed that lifestyle choices could have an impact on male and female fertility. Weight and exercise had the most agree statements while respondents were less sure about nutrition, alcohol and caffeine. Most were following healthy behaviours and twelve were taking supplements including folic acid. Few had been given or accessed information about nutrition and lifestyle although all had consulted health professionals. Respondents who had accessed/received information cited books, the internet and private fertility clinics as the most common sources. Individuals were keen to make further changes and money, health professionals and support groups were identified as mechanisms which would help them to make changes.

Conclusion and Further Recommendations
This was a small scale study which demonstrated that while most women were exhibiting healthy behaviours, many identified further mechanisms to enable lifestyle change. There remains a need for a larger scale study to explore the support needs of those wishing to conceive. The validity of an internet based questionnaire is still in question due to response bias, external validity and response rates.
How has the personalisation of social care impacted on service users with dementia?

Sarah Milosevic, Simon Evans, Dawn Brooker & Dominic Upton

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ABSTRACT

The personalisation agenda is a government initiative aimed at transforming adult social care through giving service users choice and control over the care they receive. A key part of this agenda is the provision of direct payments; cash payments made to individuals eligible for social care services which allow them to manage their own care. Research suggests that direct payments can enable people with dementia to stay in their own home for longer and experience greater choice, flexibility and an improved social life. However very few people with dementia currently access direct payments. The objective of this research was to explore the social care experiences of people with dementia in relation to their access to and use of direct payments. 26 semi-structured interviews were conducted with people with dementia in receipt of social care services in the community, and their carers and social workers, and focus groups held with two community social work teams. It was found that direct payments tended to be seen as a fall-back option, for example as the only alternative to residential care, or as a solution to problems with traditional services. Direct payments appeared to afford particular benefits to people with dementia in terms of flexibility, continuity of care and access to local facilities. It is therefore important that this group are enabled to access direct payments. The second (ongoing) phase of this research comprises the design and pilot testing of an intervention aimed at improving access to direct payments by people with dementia.
Why are we waiting? Research, policy and practice in recruiting and supporting same gender couples in child adoption

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ABSTRACT

The adoption process is renowned for its difficulties, however gay and lesbian couples face unique, additional challenges when choosing parenthood through adoption. The Adoption and Children’s Act (2002), Equality Act (2006) and the Sexual Orientation Regulations act (2007) are some of the recent policy changes aimed at ‘smoothing out’ the adoption process for same-gender couples (Cosis-Brown & Kershaw, 2008). Resultantly, there appear to be more cases of gay adoption than ever before (Equality Britain, 2005), however, anecdotal evidence suggests that across the UK the practice of recruiting and supporting gay and lesbian adopters is inconsistent. Whilst some local authorities encourage and emphasise the importance of stability and high quality care for vulnerable looked after children regardless of parental sexuality (Mallon, 2007); yet case studies of gay and lesbian couples seeking adoption demonstrate the unique challenges they encounter in the adoption process because of religious views (Hicks, 2005) or the attitudes towards same gender parenting of adoption panels and social workers within an unspoken hierarchy (Ahmed, 2008; Dennis, 2006). Government’s drive towards adoption (Unwin and Misca, 2013) of children in care as a favoured alternative should lead to recognition of same-gender couples as an under-utilised resource of potential adopters to be used in the best interest of the children who are looked after.

The poster will present the results of research undertaken by the authors during 2012-13 highlighting how research on same-gender parenthood over the past decades has influenced the recent developments in the adoption policy and practice in the UK and worldwide. The poster will identify areas of potential barriers encountered in translating these policy changes in the current practice of adoption with a particular focus on professionals’ attitudes towards same-gender couples as potential adopters.
Enhancing Health Visitors’ Engagement with New Fathers

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ABSTRACT

Over the last ten years, government policy has increasingly favoured early intervention to help families have as positive an experience as possible of new parenthood. Every Child Matters (DH 2003) stated the need to focus on supporting families and carers, acknowledging their critical influence on children’s lives. The seminal reports by Field (2010), Allen (2011) and Tickell (2011) stressed the importance of the first years of life in laying the foundations for healthy development. While governments must continue to strive to lift every child out of poverty, these reports also stress the importance of the love and care that children receive from both their parents during the first years of life in influencing their wellbeing and resilience.

The importance of fathers in the lives of their children has been neglected until fairly recently when organisations such as The Fatherhood Institute and the controversial Fathers4Justice, have highlighted fathers’ right, alongside mothers’, to be fully involved with their children.

This study, commissioned by The Fatherhood Institute, explores the knowledge, attitudes and practice of health visitors in relation to new fathers. A questionnaire and interview-based study, carried out on 18 sites, it has presented many challenges in terms of working with R&Ds across England and in accessing often overburdened health professionals. Initial results point to considerable gaps in health visitors’ knowledge of the presence of fathers in the lives of their infants, some prejudicial attitudes and a lack of institutional support for engaging more fully with fathers.
Evaluation of a nutrition advice programme for breast cancer survivors: monitoring dietary improvements

Alison Parr
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ABSTRACT

Globally, breast cancer is the most common cancer to affect women and incidence is rising. Diagnosis is a risk factor for recurrence, secondary cancer and co-morbidities however survival rates are improving and evidence substantiates the benefits of healthy lifestyle behaviours for prevention of further disease.

The focus of this qualitative research study was to investigate an intervention programme for breast cancer survivors and to understand the motivations and barriers that this population experiences. Data was collected from participants via telephone interviews using semi-structured interviewing techniques.

The results indicated that practical and psychological barriers to lifestyle changes were experienced.

The main conclusions drawn highlighted the impact of participants’ length of time from treatment on engagement with the programme and the benefits of group support.

Further research to evaluate similar programmes for other populations of breast cancer survivors could be of benefit. Given that timing of the intervention was significant, future programmes may benefit from pre-attendance assessments to capitalise on the best time to engage participants. Furthermore, as such lifestyle advice is relevant to other cancer survivors similar interventions may also offer potential benefits for other cancer survivor populations.
‘Stroll stops Alzheimer’s’? : Challenging ‘panic’ and ‘blame’ in contemporary dementia discourse

Elizabeth Peel

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ABSTRACT

Understanding dementia is a pressing challenge. Societal awareness is increasing, the cost of care is being recognised, and calls for redress of the legacy of research underfunding are amplifying. This paper draws on the ‘Dementia Talking’ project which aims to understand how talk about, and to, people with dementia is constructed, with the goal of improving communication with people living with dementia. One element of interrogating dementia in critical health psychology is exploring how people with dementia are represented in societal discourse. I draw on the construction of people with dementia manifest in two data-sets - a corpus of 350 recent UK national newspaper articles about dementia and qualitative data derived from in-depth interviews with informal carers (n=12). These data were analysed using thematic discourse analysis. A ‘panic-blame approach’ was evident in much of the print media coverage, with dementia being presented as ‘worse than death’ juxtaposed with behavioural change recommendations to ‘stave off’ the condition exemplified in headlines like ‘Take a walk to keep dementia at bay’. Contrary to media discourse, there was scant mention in carers’ accounts of individual responsibility for health, and its corollary blame and accountability for dementia.
Improving practice in dementia – involving the people who matter most

Chris Russell
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ABSTRACT

“Perspectives on the Foundation Degree in Dementia Studies” forms the initial phase of research that aims to understand how people with dementia can contribute as fully as possible to teaching and related activity at Higher Education level.

The University will launch a new Foundation Degree in Dementia Studies in September 2014. The “Perspectives” phase employs small focus groups and questionnaires to investigate what key stakeholders (including people with dementia, carers, families, practitioners, managers and employers) wish to be included within the Course. Stakeholders are asked to relate which values/attitudes are important to underpin the Course, alongside the skills and knowledge that should be promoted.

Although dementia is enjoying wider publicity, and awareness of best practice is growing, people with dementia, their families and practitioners from across all services are facing the challenge of funding cuts and reductions in services. Enduring paternalistic and poorly informed approaches to enabling people to live well with dementia endure. Thus, now more than ever, it is essential to understand what will add greatest value to teaching and training.

The results of the “Perspectives” phase will be used to plan and carry out ongoing research. Specifically; understanding how best people with dementia can contribute to teaching and related activity at Higher Education level.

By October 2013 results from discussions with people with dementia, and 3 groups of staff from different contexts will be known. Differences and commonalities will be explored.
Executive Coaching Research and Practice

Helen Scott and Lorna Stewart
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ABSTRACT

The practice of executive coaching has become a widespread learning and development strategy within global HR practices. However the utility of this approach remains difficult to ascertain. The studies presented here were conducted in the fulfilment of an MSc in Organisational Psychology. They sought to investigate successful coaching outcomes and the conditions required for coaching to successfully transfer into everyday practice.

25 coachees, nine coaches and five organisational stakeholders each participated in an interview to investigate perceptions of successful coaching outcomes. The findings were then used to design a self-report quantitative survey for 110 coachees. Qualitative content analysis revealed coachees, coaches and organisational stakeholders believed coaching outcomes could be divided into three broad areas: personal development, wellbeing and performance outcomes. Transfer of coaching sessions into practice was perceived to involve two stages: application to current practice, followed by generalisation to other areas and maintenance of change. Correlational analysis of the questionnaire data suggested that transfer into practice is dependent upon a range of factors beyond the coach-coachee relationship, such as intended targets of coaching outcomes, coachee motivation and organisational support.

Although exploratory, this study provided some understanding of the influence of the wide range of factors which impact on coaching transfer into practice. The presentation will consider how these findings can be used to stimulate more comprehensive research designs to evaluate coaching practice in the longer term, as well as providing more immediate lessons for practitioners to ensure that valuable learning from executive coaching sessions is not lost.
Evidence-Based Practice in pre-registration nursing education: a comparison of UK and US clinical and academic teaching staff

Laura Scurlock-Evans, Jo Rouse, Dominic Upton, Penney Upton & Kathie Williamson.

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ABSTRACT

Healthcare policies are increasingly said to be evidence-based, both in the UK and worldwide.

With healthcare scandals recently in the news, it is especially important that health professionals be trained to be effective evidence-based practitioners.

Although a growing body of research explores students’ and newly qualified practitioners’ EBP implementation, little research focusses on the EBP use, attitudes and knowledge/skills of those training them. To explore this issue, differences between the EBP use, attitudes, and knowledge and skills of a convenience sample of UK and US academic and clinical nurse educators (N=81) were examined. Participants completed an online questionnaire which included the Evidence-Based Questionnaire (EBPQ; Upton & Upton, 2006).

No statistically significant differences were identified overall between UK and US nurse educators on EBP use, attitudes or knowledge/skills. A statistically significant difference was identified overall between academic and clinical educators on knowledge/skills (with academic staff reporting greater knowledge/skills), but not use or attitude toward EBP. No statistically significant interaction between country of practice and academic/clinical context on EBP use, attitudes or knowledge/skills was identified. Although most participants felt supported in their roles, themes in the qualitative data pointed to a number of key barriers to EBP.

The results indicate a strong degree of consistency in EBP use, attitudes and knowledge/skills of both UK and US, and academic and clinical educators. However clinical mentors appear to report lower EBP knowledge/skills, suggesting they may need further support in this area. Implications of the findings for policy and practice are discussed.
Social Exclusion: An outline of its continued relevance to tackling inequality and social injustice

Clive Sealey

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ABSTRACT

This paper rationalises the continued conceptual utility of social exclusion, and in so doing addresses the prevailing question of what to do with it. This is evident from social exclusion’s declining relevance in contemporary UK social policy and academia, where its consideration as a concept to explain disadvantage is being usurped by other concepts. The paper analyses criticisms of social exclusion which have typically centred on the operationalisation of the concept, but I will argue that there are operationalisation differences between poverty and social exclusion which give it value-added as a concept to explain disadvantage. Specifically, there will be an analysis of both New Labour’s and the present Coalition government’s conceptualisation of the term in policy. The analysis will highlight the significant dichotomy that the past and present focus on processes rather than outcome of social exclusion can make to our understanding of inequality and social injustice, and in do so articulate the differences that a shift to a strong conceptualisation of the term makes to its applied capabilities for social justice. The paper acts as a rejoinder to prevailing theoretical and political thinking on the value social exclusion for tackling disadvantage. In particular, the paper shows how social exclusion can be conceptualised to provide critical approach to tackling inequality and social injustice, and in do so foregrounds the truly applied capabilities of social exclusion for transforming social justice.
A study to identify nutritional issues that may affect children adopted from Ethiopia growing up in the UK

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Since year 2000 approximately 3500 children adopted into the UK from overseas. An increasing percentage of Intercountry adoptions (ICA) are from Ethiopia. At adoption many children malnourished and have health problems. Research suggests a lack of good quality healthcare and support for these children once in the UK.

Objective: A qualitative case study to identify nutritional needs and general health of Ethiopian adoptees before and after adoption. Also to explore parent’s perceptions of the availability, and quality of medical screening, health care and sources of nutritional support and information.

Methods: Eight mothers interviewed by telephone. Their children ranged from ten months to four years. Recorded interviews took on average 21 minutes using semi-structured questions. Results transcribed, and then analysed using thematic analysis.

Results: UK Health care and screening variable, some not receiving any specialist care and most not screened for gut parasites even though at high risk. Children underweight at adoption showed rapid catch up growth. Many aware there may be increased need for vitamin D due to skin colour.

Conclusion: Issues around the long-term affects of malnutrition complex and further research needed. More specialist support and information required but intercountry adoption figures dropping recently, so parents may need to educate themselves.
Young women’s relationship with alcohol: troublesome femininities?

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ABSTRACT

Alcohol consumption presents one of the most challenging public health issues we face in society. Historically, women’s use of alcohol in public space has produced a number of anxieties which provoke an array of responses. Particularly in Britain the idea of ‘troublesome’ femininities underpins current discourses on young women who get drunk in public space. At the same time many commentators remark on the sense of boldness and personal choice in such activities. Against a backdrop of growing concerns about women and binge drinking, this paper explores some of these dilemmas and contradictions. It draws on empirical research with young British women which sought to explore their conceptualisations of ‘drunkenness’ and ‘going out’ in Britain.
Aged and autonomy: an oxymoron?

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ABSTRACT

The ethical principle of autonomy is entrenched both in law and policy (for example Department of Health 2011; General Medical Council 2008; Mental Capacity Act 2005; Re C (Adult: Refusal of Treatment) [1994]), and is central to the philosophy of patient centred care. Indeed, an individual’s right to autonomy is regarded as so fundamental that there are circumstances where even the “sanctity of human life must yield to the principles of self-determination” (Lord Goff at p. 866 Airedale NHS Trust v Bland [1993]).

It is acknowledged that there may be circumstances where individual involvement with decisions may be difficult, and this may be particularly true for those with a cognitive impairment (Re C (Adult: Refusal of Treatment) [1994]; Mental Capacity Act 2005; Department for Constitutional Affairs 2007). That being said, the starting point in any decision must be a presumption of capacity. Any assessment of incapacity and actions thereafter are subject to statutory regulation (Mental Capacity Act 2005; Department for Constitutional Affairs 2007).

Thirty five registered nurses working in nursing homes, acute NHS Trusts and primary care were asked to use the Royal College of Nursing Assessment Tool for Older People (Royal College of Nursing 1997) to conduct a hypothetical assessment of an older patient (aged 65 years or more) known to them. The nurses were asked to provide a narrative for their decision making, and both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained. The findings suggest that even where cognitive ability was presumed, there was some tendency for individuals to be excluded from decisions relating to their care. Further, they support earlier evidence that practitioners automatically associate cognitive decline with general impaired decision making ability (Sansone et al 1998). There was clear disregard of older adults’ fundamental right to self-determination.
Disclosure of Learning Difficulties for Nursing Students in Practice: Benefits and Barriers

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ABSTRACT

Recent evidence has emerged to suggest that students with learning difficulties do not always access the appropriate support to provide them with equal opportunities in practice learning.

A review highlighted a theme within recent literature identifying one of the most common barriers to accessing support within the practice learning environment is lack of disclosure. The current report discusses the literature in this area in terms of benefits to disclosure and reasons for non-disclosure from the perspective of the student.

Several reports were found recognising students accounts of negative experiences of disclosing difficulties such as dyslexia and dyscalculia as a primary reason for non-disclosure. These included comments by colleagues, lack of understanding by mentors and a fear of being viewed as less capable.

This view is negated by the perspective of some students, who reported that by disclosing learning difficulties, they received valuable support and reassurance.

Both of these arguments are primarily linked to the views of colleagues and mentors - highlighting the importance of the role of the mentor in supporting students learning experiences. Where negative experiences are reported, it seems that lack of awareness of confidentiality guidelines and experience is one of the primary concerns. Indeed separate reports have provided evidence that nurses’ experience of working with people with learning difficulties directly influences their views on capability.

The reviewer concludes that, the implementation of sufficient training and access to information for nurse mentors may be crucial in ensuring that the learning needs of the students are met.
Understanding the sexual health development needs of the primary care and community health workforces

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ABSTRACT

Background: The study aimed to understand the development needs of the primary care and community health workforces with regard to sexual health in NHS Scotland to enable the successful implementation of 'The Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework 2011-2015'.

Method: A two-stage approach was adopted. The first stage involved a desk based review of existing work on training and development, followed by a 'listening exercise' with key stakeholders with a strategic or operational interest in delivering sexual health training, by an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

Findings: Eighty-three questionnaire responses were analysed, alongside data from 12 interviews. Sexual health training was identified to be one of many competing priorities for primary care practitioners. Current training provision and access to training varied widely between Boards and for different practitioner groups with a number of gaps being identified. A number of barriers to accessing training provision were also identified including: time; access and availability of information; and lack of backfill or locum assistance.

Conclusions: Gaps in training for individual practitioner groups and geographical differences need to be considered in order to meet the requirements of the Framework. Additional support at a national level, and Board level, would help to ensure the workforce is adequately trained to deliver sexual health services and meet the requirements at a local level.
The effectiveness of local child weight management programmes: an audit study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Many different child weight-management programmes exist, with varying degrees of evaluation to provide evidence of their success. The purpose of this research was to use a standardized approach to audit the effectiveness of weight-management intervention programmes in the West Midlands region of the UK, specifically to assess the benefits to participating children in terms of health improvement and behaviour change.

Methods: An audit of seven family-based intervention programmes currently in place in the West Midlands. Programmes were audited against the Standard Evaluation Framework (SEF).

Results: The programmes provided a partial data set relating to a change in weight from the baseline to the end of the programme; none of the programmes provided all of the measures indicated by the SEF as being essential for evaluation. Weight change ranged from an increase in group mean of 0.4 kg to a decrease of 0.9 kg. Body Mass Index SD decreased by 0.1–0.2 points in four programmes and remained unchanged in two programmes. Four programmes collected long-term follow-up data at 6 months.

Conclusions: On-going evaluation of all programmes, using a standard approach, is essential in order to improve the evidence base and support future commissioning.

Practice implications: A follow up survey to assess the impact of the research found that the evaluation enabled PCTs to improve measurement, data collection and evaluation and led to PCTs adopting the SEF to support future commissioning decisions. One PCT also specified that the Worcester University evaluation tools and findings must be used by service providers.
The emotive language of welfare: why the Coalition’s divisive policies are so difficult to resist

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ABSTRACT

This paper asks how the ideas sustaining right-wing neoliberal social policy have taken such a hold in public discourse, and why it is proving so hard to challenge their dominance. It argues that that proponents of neoliberal austerity use powerful emotion-laden language and metaphor and other devices familiar in marketing.

The evidence in the paper comes from a Critical Discourse Analysis of news reports, supplemented by some interview data in Britain and Greece; this suggests, amongst other things, that the strategy is based on instilling anxiety and fear. Moreover, although readership of print newspapers is declining, newspapers may be the key vehicle in the spread of these ideas: in the ‘remix culture’ people pick up their messages in fragments via other media including social media.

The result, though given a caring veneer by notions such as the 'Big Society’, is a form of deregulated capitalism which sees welfare services commodified and residualised, used for social control, and inadequately replaced by self-help or the third sector.

So far, anti-austerity movements around the world have been singularly unsuccessful, and the paper examines why. It asks whether lessons might learned from social movements in other fields which have won public support by turning language around and in so doing created more constructive emotions.

This is a revised version of a paper which Mike presented at the Social Policy Association annual conference in July 2013 in Sheffield.