

Research Programme Meeting

The COVID-19 pandemic and healthy ageing in the UK

17th November 2021, 10.00 - 12.00

Presentation	Time
Welcome – Dr Gemma Wilson-Menzfeld	10 mins
Dr Jason Scott: <i>Safety of hospital to care home transitions during the COVID-19 pandemic</i>	15 min presentation 5 mins Q&As
Dr Mariyana Schoultz: <i>Stress and coping experiences of healthcare workers in care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic</i>	15 min presentation 5 mins Q&As
Break	10 mins
Andrea Lambell: <i>Behind The Mask: Healthcare communication in a time of COVID</i>	15 min presentation 5 mins Q&As
Prof. Vincent Deary & Dr Duika Burges-Watson: <i>Losing more than your appetite: the consequences of altered taste and smell after COVID infection</i>	15 min presentation 5 mins Q&As
Close	10 mins

Fuse Research Programme: Healthy Ageing (led by Dr Gemma Wilson-Menzfeld, Dr Sheena Ramsay and Dr Sonia Dalkin)

Abstracts

Presenter: Dr Jason Scott, Northumbria University. Jason is an Associate Professor and a Chartered Psychologist (CPsychol) with expertise in quality and safety in health and social care.

Title: Safety of hospital to care home transitions during the Covid-19 pandemic

Care homes have infrequently received the high-profile, public scrutiny which has been witnessed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this focus the pressures and demands of care homes and their staff to provide a home for their residents, as well as care, is often overlooked. As part of a wider project focused on safety of transitions between hospital and care homes, the cultural perceptions of NHS and care home staff became informative in understanding differing working conceptions of achieving safe care. Findings from semi-structured interviews with care home staff ($n = \sim 40$) and healthcare professionals ($n = \sim 30$) suggest the relationship between the NHS and the adult social care sector is not equal, can be hindered by poor communication, and scrutiny of each is not equivalent. This can lead to feelings of resentment, dejection and disempowerment, particularly for those working in care homes, with implications for cross-sector organisational learning.

Presenter: Dr Mariyana Schoultz, Senior Lecturer in Mental Health, Northumbria University

Title: Stress and coping experiences of health care workers in care homes during Covid-19 pandemic

A cross-sectional mixed methods study was undertaken using an online survey and virtual one-to-one interviews. Stress was measured by Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and coping with self-efficacy scale (CSE). The in-depth interviews explored HCWs (carers, nurses, and managers) experiences of stress and coping while working in care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants for the online survey (n=52) were predominantly female (90.4%), more than half were over the age of 44 (53.8%) and half of them (50%) had a diploma or higher education. Over a quarter (26.9%) of the participants had their own health issues and half (50%) had caring responsibilities at home. The mean score for the PSS was M=39.75 indicating that participants had high stress levels. The mean score for coping was CSE M=150.6 meaning most participants had medium coping skills Thirteen HCWs participated in one-to-one interviews. Qualitative data analysis generated four themes contributing to stress; 1. Personal factors, 2. Changed care environment, 3. Amplified scrutiny, and 4. Psychological responses, all underpinned by ongoing change and uncertainty. Coping was represented as three main themes 1. Personal factors, 2. Organisational culture and 3. Safety and security which were all underpinned by relational interactions.

Presenter: Andrea Lambell, ESRC-funded PhD student, Department of Anthropology at Durham University.

Title: Behind The Mask: Healthcare communication in a time of Covid

This session will be a discussion of findings from a Durham University COVID-19 Response Fund project exploring the thoughts and experiences of people who gave and received health and social care in the presence of face-coverings, PPE and distancing. The webinar will examine two Realist programme theories which emerged from the research project:

1. Conflicting concurrent signals - sensory, emotional, environmental and institutional - contribute to an uncontrolled and ever-changing alteration of the hexis and habitus of communication which inhibits its effectiveness
2. Effective communication in the presence of infection control measures is more likely in circumstances where experts by experience demonstrate a salutogenic sense of coherence - not least those care-givers and care-receivers with pre-existing communication impairments.

Presenters: Prof. Vincent Deary (Northumbria University) & Dr Duika Burges-Watson (Newcastle University). Vincent is a writer, researcher, and practitioner health psychologist. Duika's core research interests are in inter-disciplinary approaches to food and well-being – from source to senses.

Title: Losing more than your appetite: the consequences of altered taste and smell after Covid infection.

Recent in-depth qualitative research from a team of altered eating and altered smell specialists analysed data from 9000+ users of an online support group to document the impact of persistent alterations to taste and smell following Covid-19 infection. This is an issue that affects at least 10% of people infected with covid. The research, based on first-hand, written accounts, vividly shows the profound impact on people's lives. As well as the more obvious effects like loss of pleasure in food and associated weight loss and malnutrition, there were less obvious effects on appetite, intimacy and the relationships to the self and the world. This talk will summarise and illustrate this research, which is being published in Plos One in September of this year.