



Department of Nursing & Midwifery Research Newsletter



Welcome to our quarterly research newsletter from the Department of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of the Highlands and Islands.

Welcome to 2021. The New Year brings a sense of renewed opportunity and optimism despite starting the year in another pandemic induced lockdown. While 2020 brought us unprecedented challenges there were also plenty opportunities for research, innovation, and improvement. During the ongoing pandemic we have learnt what research we can *push* and what we needed to *pause*. Applying this learning will be invaluable during this phase of lockdown in mainland Scotland and tier 3 and 4 restrictions in our island areas to ensure our research activity continues to thrive. Our research is contributing to the global effort in response to the Covid-19 pandemic by understanding physical and mental health behaviours during these times, adapting our research methods, exploring the impact on healthcare staff and capitalising on the expansion of digital healthcare to name a few. Our research newsletter presents a selection of research that our academic staff and students continue to deliver despite these challenging times.



[Dr Michelle Beattie](#)

Lecturer and Assistant Head of Research

What do we do?

Our research aims to foster a strong research community in the Highlands and Islands and build research collaborations nationally and internationally. This enables us to address key health questions relevant to Scotland and beyond and conduct high quality research that improves health and wellbeing within the Highlands and Islands. We conduct research to improve health and wellbeing in remote and rural regions that has international significance and spans urban populations. Our research expertise includes:

- Health promotion and disease prevention
- Active health
- Health and social care interventions and evaluation
- Improvement science
- Nurse education

View our [Research Strategy](#).

COVID Health and Adherence Research in Scotland (CHARIS)

CHARIS was a telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of adults living in Scotland administered by Ipsos MORI. We asked people about their adherence to each of the behaviours, their beliefs about coronavirus, covid-19 and the different behaviours; their mental and physical health and personal characteristics, e.g. their age, gender, living conditions etc. We interviewed 500 people every week/fortnight from the 3rd June until the 4th November (total sample = 6500 people). The Scottish Government has a 4-phase plan for release from full lockdown.

Prof Gill Hubbard, in the Department of Nursing and Midwifery was one of key researchers on this project led by Prof Diane Dixon, University of Aberdeen. Gill led on a report of the findings about health.

Mental and general health were measured for the first 6 weeks of the study and shown in Table 1. The proportion of the participants reporting poor general health averaged ~5% over the course of the 6 weeks. The proportion of participants at risk of anxiety and depression averaged ~13% over the 6 weeks.

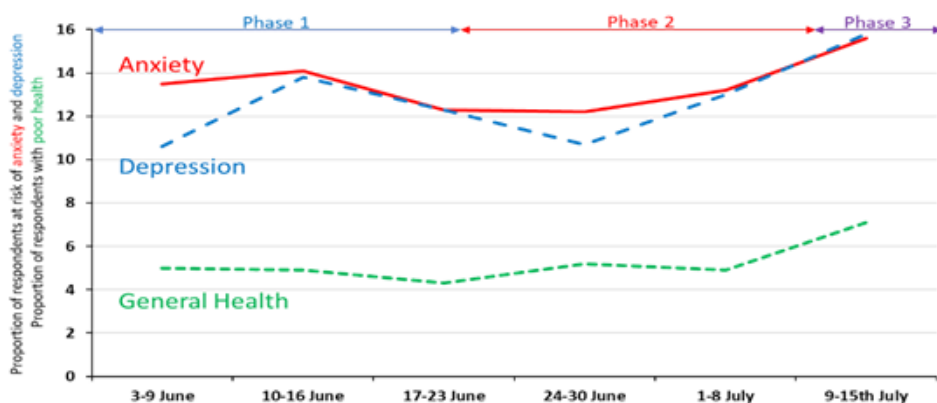


Table 1: Health as Scotland emerged from lockdown

The level of psychological distress varied between social groups. People who rent their home, those shielded by the

Government, young people and those living alone were especially vulnerable to worse mental health.

Psychological distress was not related to adherence to any of the transmission reducing behaviours including social distancing, wearing a face covering and hand washing.

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/iahs/research/health-psychology/charis.php>

Care Home Staff Experiences During Covid-19

There is growing international evidence that Covid-19 disproportionately impacts on people living in care home settings with subsequent high mortality. The psychological impact of caring for patients during the Covid-19 pandemic is likely significant. Researchers within the Department of Nursing and Midwifery are working with academics at the University of Northumbria and the Balhousie Group to explore the stress and coping experiences of care/nursing home staff. The study will give a voice to this under researched group and inform the future development of an intervention to support staff working in care home settings.



Balhousie Care Group

The project has been funded by the SFC Uplift monies enabling recruitment of a Research Nurse. A survey using validated measures of stress and coping will be distributed to approximately 1000 staff and a maximum of 35 virtual interviews will explore the factors contributing to stress and coping. Anyone who would like further information about the study please contact Dr Michelle Beattie michelle.beattie@uhi.ac.uk

Palliative Care

Researchers – Prof Gill Hubbard, Dr Kirsten Broadfoot and Dr Clare Carolan from the Department of Nursing and Midwifery were funded by NHS Highland to explore GP decision-making for adding patients to the Palliative Care Register (PCR).

On 4th April 2019, the Scottish government issued NHS Circular PCA(M)(2019)06 '*The Primary Medical Services Directed Enhanced Services (Scotland) 2019 Palliative Care Scheme*', which states that the PCR should include all patients with a life limiting condition, identified as benefitting from a palliative approach to the care.

In Scotland, a Supportive and Palliative Care Indicators (SPICTM) tool has been developed to facilitate identification of people for the PCR. Anticipal is a computerised version of SPICTM, which uses read codes to automatically identify patients who meet clinical criteria and who are not already on a Practice's PCR.

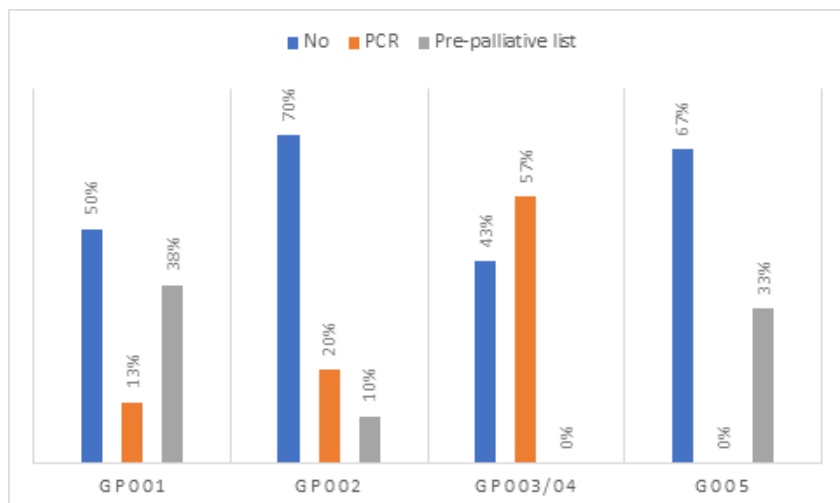
The researchers used 'Think Aloud' interviews to observe GPs' decision-making.

Use of Anticipal results in all of the five GPs deciding to add at least 30% of the patients identified by Anticipal to the PCR or a pre-palliative care list.

Figure 1 shows the proportion of patients identified by Anticipal who GPs decided should either not be added to the PCR ('No'), be added to the PCR, or be included on a pre-palliative care list. The figure shows GP variation in level of agreement with Anticipal for example, GP001 agreed with Anticipal in 13% of cases compared with GP003/04 who agreed in 57% of

cases.

Figure 1: GP decisions about patients identified by Anticipal



The study suggests that Anticipal is a useful tool for identifying patients with current palliative care needs who should be on the PCR or may require this type of care at some point in the near future and therefore should be on a pre-palliative care list.

Scottish School of Primary Care

Ms Fiona Grist and Prof Gill Hubbard from the Department of Nursing and Midwifery on behalf of the [Scottish School of Primary Care](https://uhi.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/pcrp) are running the first comprehensive, patient-centred and generalist health professional project of setting priorities for primary care research since the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. It is designed to strengthen future evidence for primary care to improve health outcomes.



The survey will remain open until 31st March 2021. Please complete this survey if you live and/or work in health or social care in Scotland: <https://uhi.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/pcrp>

PhD Student Profile – Ronie Walters



Ronie is one of those people that just like learning. She obtained a first in her undergraduate degree in psychology studying part-time over several years with the open university whilst having four children. By the time it was finished she was living in Orkney and went on to get a distinction in an MSc in applied positive psychology with the University of East London whilst setting up an award-winning community interest company providing wind turbines. In April 2018 she started her PhD from Orkney and then moved to Inverness with her family in August 2019.

Her multi-tasking skills and ability to work effectively from home have come in useful during this PhD – not least due to the pandemic forcing a redesign of research and a return to home-based working and remote supervisions. Funded by Interreg, Ronie’s PhD is part of the ECME project which seeks to improve outcomes for cardiovascular patients across Scotland, Ireland, and Northern Ireland. Ronie’s research is focused on the impact of health literacy in cardiac

rehabilitation and her findings so far can be seen in the [BMC Journal of public health](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-020-01618-1) and the [International Journal of](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-020-01618-1)

[Environmental Research and Public Health.](#)

When she has any free-time Ronie enjoys learning new hobbies (so far she has tried powerlifting, roller derby and aerial hooping), walking around Ness Islands, and attempting to get five minutes peace to read a good fiction book.

Visit our [website](#) to find out more about PhD students within the Department of Nursing and Midwifery.

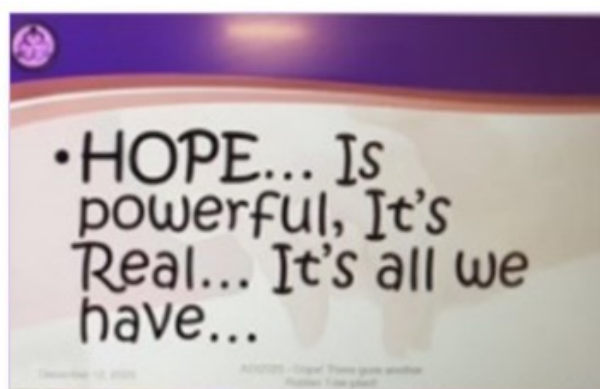
Hope Springs on Virtual Foundations

PhD student Kevin Muirhead recently attended the virtual Alzheimer Disease International (ADI). The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a rapid transition to digital to bridge gaps in service delivery. Kevin reflects on the future of technology-enabled collective engagement and opportunities for dementia care.



Sense of Hope

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on people with dementia who have experienced disproportionately high levels of social isolation, loneliness and mortality. The theme of the conference was 'Hope in The Age of Dementia' which took on greater significance as the dementia community need hope more than ever. The three-day programme provided assurances that hope remains alive in several presentations of clinical and academic progress towards better prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care, and management of dementia. People living with dementia contributed to a great extent; they valued being partners in research and hoped that their important voices continue to be heard. They hoped to end stigma and hoped to live meaningful lives.



Action and Innovation

Enabling people with dementia to maintain (and regain) functional independence can improve quality of life. Monitoring functional change can be valuable as this can lead to early intervention and improved outcomes. The reports of close family members are particularly helpful as self-reports tend to be less accurate¹. It is in this context that UHI partnered with CogniHealth LTD to develop the Monitor and Track Feature (MTF) within the CogniCare App. MTF enables family carers to record functional and behavioural changes to highlight key trends which are then made accessible to healthcare professionals in detailed reports. ADI 2020 provided an international platform to showcase this unique co-production initiative led by Dr Macaden which demonstrates the benefits of technological innovation and the power of taking collective action to improve dementia care. [Read more.](#)

Interested in doing a PhD?

If you are passionate about an area of healthcare practice and want to make a research contribution to your field, a PhD could be the route for you. Doing a PhD provides you with the opportunity to go to the depths of critical enquiry into a chosen topic enabling exponential personal and professional growth. Doctoral studies are challenging, but we provide you with support and encouragement every step of the way. Our department research team gets to know you which enables tailored supervision to your individual learning needs and styles. We can also provide inter-department and across University supervision to ensure students have access to the right supervisors. Students also have access to the University's Graduate School which provides access to training and guidance on administrative procedures.

Anyone interested in conducting a PhD please contact Dr Michelle Beattie michelle.beattie@uhi.ac.uk for informal enquiries.

Recent Publications

Callum K, Muggeridge DJ, Giggins OM, Crabtree D, **Gorely T**, Leslie SJ. (2020), 'Clinical Application of Physical Activity Monitoring in Patients with Cardiovascular Implantable Electronic Devices (CIEDs).' *British Journal of Cardiology*. 27, 115-118. <https://doi.org/10.5837/bjc.2020.035>

Chalkley AE, Routen AC, Harris JP, Cale LA, **Gorely T**, Sherar LB. (2020), 'An Evaluation of the Implementation of a UK School-Based Running Program.' *Children*. 7(10):151. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children7100151>

den Daas , C, **Hubbard, G**, Johnston , M & Dixon , D (2020), 'Protocol of the COVID-19 Health and Adherence Research in Scotland (CHARIS) study: Understanding changes in adherence to transmission-reducing behaviours, mental and general health, in weekly or fortnightly representative samples of the Scottish population', *PsyArXiv*. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/jnxcu>

Hubbard, G, den Daas , C, Johnston , M & Dixon , D (2020), 'Sociodemographic and psychological risk factors for anxiety and depression: Findings from the Covid-19 Health and Adherence Research in Scotland (CHARIS) cross-sectional survey', *PsyArXiv*. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/ngsy5>

Knoery, CR, Heaton, J, **Polson, R**, Bond, R, Iftikhar, A, Rjoob, K, McGilligan, V, Peace, A & Leslie, SJ (2020), 'Systematic Review of Clinical Decision Support Systems for Prehospital Acute Coronary Syndrome Identification', *Critical Pathways in Cardiology*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 119-125. <https://doi.org/10.1097/HPC.0000000000000217>

Macaden, L, **Muirhead, K**, **Melchiorre, G**, **Mantle, R**, **Ditta, G** and Giangreco, A. (2020), 'Relationship-centred CogniCare: an academic–digital–dementia care experts interface', *Working with Older People* <https://doi.org/10.1108/WWOP-05-2020-0016>

MacLeod, A, Campbell, F, Macrae, D, Gray, E, Miller, L & **Beattie, M** (2020), 'Reducing wait time for administration of systemic anticancer treatment (SACT) in a hospital outpatient facility', *BMJ Open Quality* , vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2019-000904>

Preedy P, Duncombe R & **Gorely T**. (2020), 'Physical development in the early years: the impact of a daily movement programme on young children's physical development.' *Education 3-13* <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2020.1849345>

Walters R, Leslie SJ, Sixsmith J, **Gorely T**. (2020), 'Health Literacy for Cardiac Rehabilitation: An Examination of Associated Illness Perceptions, Self-Efficacy, Motivation and Physical Activity. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 17, no. 22: 8641 <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17228641>

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Meet our Research Staff

- [Neil Angus](#)
- [Dr Michelle Beattie](#)
- [Marie Cameron](#)
- [Dr Clare Carolan](#)
- [Professor Trish Gorely](#)
- [Jonathan Gray](#)
- [Hannah Hollinger](#)
- [Professor Gill Hubbard](#)
- [Dr Leah Macaden](#)
- [Julie Munro](#)
- [Robert Polson](#)
- [Dr Michelle Roxburgh](#)
- [Professor Annetta Smith](#)

Please feel free to pass this onto colleagues.

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Department of Nursing and Midwifery, University of the Highlands and Islands, Centre for Health Science, Old Perth Road, Inverness IV2 3JH