



Welcome to the December issue of the Research Centre for Health (ReaCH) newsletter highlighting the latest research from the School of Health and Life Sciences at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU).

Find out more on our website [www.gcu.ac.uk/reach](http://www.gcu.ac.uk/reach) or follow us on twitter



## Three Professors take the reins of world-leading research

Three Professors from the School of Health and Life Sciences have spoken of their new leading roles and their plans to build on Glasgow Caledonian University's outstanding impact of world-leading health research.

Head of Biological and Biomedical Science Professor Sharron Dolan has been appointed Associate Dean Research and will take over from Professor Kay Currie in January. Professor Carol Emslie and Professor Frederike Van Wijck have been appointed Co-Directors of the Research Centre for Health (ReaCH), taking over from Professor Andrea Nelson.



Pictured (left to right) - Professor Carol Emslie, Professor Frederike Van Wijck and Professor Sharron Dolan.

All three are excited and proud to be taking up these important roles only months after the School's outstanding real-world impact of health research was assessed as joint first in Scotland and joint second in the UK in the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The University's global reputation as a world-leading provider of health research with real-world impact was driven home with a significant 91% of the University's related research formally classified as world leading or internationally excellent. Over 85% of our world-leading health research was also assessed as having outstanding impact.

Professor Dolan said: "Having the opportunity to shadow Kay before I take over the role in January is a real honour. SHLS research under Kay's leadership has been nothing short of phenomenal as is evident in the last amazing REF results. Kay will be a hard act to follow but I'm really looking forward to this new challenge, and I couldn't have a better mentor to prepare me for my new role. I'm looking forward to working closely with the different research groups across the school to better understand and support their research. It'll be great to work with Professors Emslie and van Wijck as they bring such a breadth of experience and expertise to their new roles, and we will make a great team."

Professor Emslie said: "I am delighted by the opportunity to co-lead ReaCH and work closely with Professor van Wijck to showcase our brilliant health researchers and build lasting connections with communities, practitioners, policy makers and other stakeholders. Our outstanding REF results demonstrate our world-class research and impact, and I look forward to supporting our next generation of researchers to make a real difference in the quality of people's lives in Scotland and around the world".

Professor van Wijck added: "Having benefited tremendously from being a member of GCU's Research Centre for Health, and its predecessors, I am really pleased to be given this opportunity to build on the outstanding work done by Professor Andrea Nelson and Professor Kay Currie - and notable others before them. I am delighted to be sharing the ReaCH co-lead role with Professor Carol Emslie; by combining our experience in long term conditions and public health research, we endeavour to facilitate new initiatives, and continue to foster an intellectually creative, supportive and productive research environment for the benefit of all our colleagues and students within the School of Health and Life Sciences and beyond. We welcome Professor Sharron Dolan to her new role as the incoming Associate Dean Research, who will bring her background in life sciences to the fold. We really look forward to working in partnership to strengthen our rich, multi-disciplinary research portfolio that makes a real difference to peoples' lives."

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## GCU launches £2.5m research programme to combat HIV and Hepatitis C for the Common Good

On World AIDS Day, GCU launched a dedicated research programme to support the Scottish Government's ambitious plans to become the first country in the world to end HIV transmission and the impact of Hepatitis C. The University for the Common Good has a track record in research on blood borne viruses (BBV) and GCU has cemented its

commitment to supporting global efforts to end HIV transmission and the impact of Hepatitis C infection with a new £2.5million investment over the next 10 years. The launch of the Beyond BBV - Drawing a line under HIV and Hep C research programme, led by world-leading blood borne virus experts from GCU's Research Centre for Health (ReaCH), will strengthen the University's collaborative partnership with Public Health Scotland (PHS) and the Scottish Government. Professors Claudia Estcourt and Sharon Hutchinson, Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses Research Group, will be driving the research programme, alongside GCU Honorary Professors Rak Nandwani, a Non-Executive Director of Public Health Scotland, and Nicola Steedman, the Scottish Government's Deputy Chief Medical Officer. Eminent infectious disease control researcher and public health practitioner at UCL, Professor Alison Rodger, will also be joining the GCU team on a part-time basis for the implementation of the Beyond BBV initiative.

[Read more](#)

## First results from largescale long-COVID study

GCU Reader and Public Health Scotland Consultant Healthcare Scientist Dr Andrew McAuley, a member of the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus and Substance Use research groups, played a key role in the first largescale study into long-COVID in Scotland. One of the largest studies to date into the long-term effects of COVID-19 – the [Long-CISS \(Covid In Scotland Study\)](#)– found that 1 in 20 people who took part in the research had not recovered from having COVID-19 at their most recent follow up – between six and 18 months following infection with SARS-CoV-2. The CISS study – which was led by the University of Glasgow in collaboration with Public Health Scotland, the NHS in Scotland, and the Universities of Aberdeen and Edinburgh, and funded by the Scottish Government Chief Scientist Office – was set up in May 2021 to understand the long-term impact of COVID 19, and compare it with the health and wellbeing of people who had not yet been infected. The [study Outcomes among confirmed cases and a matched comparison group in the Long-COVID in Scotland Study](#) is published in Nature Communications.



[Read more](#)



## GCU Professor behind new World Falls Guidelines

GCU Professor in Ageing and Health Dawn Skelton, Ageing Well Research Group, was part of an international expert group behind the landmark publication of the World Guidelines for Falls Prevention. The global initiative aims to provide a framework and expert recommendations to healthcare and other professionals working with older adults on how to identify and assess the risk of falls. They

recommend which interventions, alone or in combination, should be offered to older people as part of a person-centred approach to preventing and managing falls. The [World Guidelines for Falls Prevention and Management for Older Adults: A Global Initiative](#) have been published in Age and Ageing, the scientific journal of the British Geriatrics Society. The guidelines were developed by the World Falls Task Force, involving 96 multidisciplinary experts from 39 countries across five continents, with representation from 36 scientific and academic societies. Within 24-hours of the World Falls Guidelines being launched on social media, 2.75 million people had viewed them on Twitter.

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## Scientists reveal new contact tracing method for sex partners of people with chlamydia

Scientists have shown the effectiveness of a world-first contact tracing method to identify, test and treat sex partners of people with chlamydia – a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that affects 250,000 people in the UK each year. Accelerated Partner Therapy (APT) is a contact tracing method, in which healthcare professionals assess sex partners of people with chlamydia by phone before giving the patient a package of antibiotics and STI self-sampling kits to deliver to their partner. GCU sexual health expert and NHS consultant, Professor Claudia Estcourt,, Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses Research Group, who led the development of APT and the large-scale trial said it could provide patients choice, save the NHS money and be adapted for infectious diseases like Monkeypox, COVID-19 or other STIs. The study entitled [Accelerated partner therapy contact tracing for people with chlamydia: The LUSTRUM cluster cross-over randomised controlled trial](#), has been published in The Lancet Public Health journal. It was funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), a major funder of global health research and training that benefits the NHS, public health and social care.



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## Stigma is causing people with mental illness to hold back in life

People with complex mental illnesses experience discrimination in many areas of their lives, causing them to withdraw from relationships, friendships, work and health care. First of its kind research in Scotland, involving GCU, has revealed the full impact of stigma and discrimination on people with severe, enduring and complex mental illnesses. The Scottish Mental Illness Stigma Study was carried out by See

Me, Scotland's programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination, in collaboration with the Mental Health Foundation, VOX Scotland and GCU, and the results were released at the end of September. The study explored the experiences of people who live with long-term, enduring mental illnesses, and who have faced stigma over the last year. GCU Professor of Applied Psychology Simon Hunter, lead of the Child and Adolescent Health Research Group, who helped lead and design the study, and co-authored the final report, hopes the study will shape future policy to reduce stigma. You can read the report in full at [www.seemescotland.org/stigmastudy](http://www.seemescotland.org/stigmastudy)

[Read more](#)

## Findings highlighted in the Scottish Parliament

Professor Simon Hunter was “very pleased” that the findings of a Scottish Mental Illness Stigma Study were highlighted in the Scottish Parliament. See Me is calling for major change across Scottish society to ensure that people with mental health illness feel safe and included in all aspects of life.

[Read more](#)

## ReaCH researchers investigate how alcohol is marketed to LGBTQ+ community

Researchers at GCU have won funding for a six-month project investigating how alcohol is marketed to the LGBTQ+ community. Dr Dave Whiteley, a member of the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus and Substance Use research groups in the Research Centre for Health (ReaCH), will lead the study with Dr Elena Dimova, Deborah Rickards-Hill and ReaCH Co-Director Professor Carol Emslie. The team has been awarded £8,821 from the Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS) to look at how alcohol companies target gender and sexually diverse minorities, and what impact those marketing practices have on drinking habits. Dr Whiteley is a nurse and lecturer in the Department of Nursing and Community Health in the School of Health and Life Sciences, and his research interests align to his clinical background, which include blood borne viruses, marginalised communities and substance use. This research builds on a previous study led by Professor Emslie, which was debated in the Scottish Parliament and backed by nine MSPs in May, highlighting major inequalities for the LGBTQ+ community in accessing alcohol services.



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## GCU Vision Sciences behind new eye image bank

GCU Vision Sciences Department is behind a new world-leading project that could prevent common sight loss conditions by collecting eye images. Professor Niall Strang, Vision Research Group and University of Edinburgh's Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology Baljean Dhillon came up with the

idea of creating the first Scotland-wide retinal image bank. They launched the Scottish Collaborative Optometry-Ophthalmology Network e-Research (SCONE) with clinicians, academics, NHS, Chief Scientist Office, the Scottish Government and charities. Eye experts at GCU and the University of Edinburgh have so far evaluated and transferred over 30,000 retinal images from four optometry practices in Scotland to the National Safe Haven – a high-powered computing and analysis facility run by Public Health Scotland – as part of the proof-of-concept project. The first phase of research enabling early detection of the UK's most common cause of blindness is near completion, as experts have warned the number of people with sight loss in Scotland will rise to over 200,000 in the next decade. Now SCONE's Chief Investigators Professors Strang and Dhillon are appealing for optometrists and ophthalmologists in Scotland to join their network and help spearhead innovation in eye care.

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## GCU lecturer first MSK physio in Scotland to clinch NHS research fellowship

GCU lecturer Chris Clifford, Musculoskeletal Health Research Group, is delighted at becoming the first musculoskeletal (MSK) physiotherapist to be awarded an NHS Research Scotland (NRS) Career Researcher Fellowship. The Physiotherapy Lecturer in the School of Health and Life Sciences' Department Physiotherapy and Paramedicine said this will allow him to build on his recently completed PhD research into a common musculoskeletal condition. Chris is a musculoskeletal physiotherapist who teaches two days a week at GCU and is a clinician with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde for three days. The three-year fellowship award will pay for Chris to spend one day a week researching pain at the side of the hip, termed as greater trochanteric syndrome or gluteal tendinopathy. The Chief Scientist Office (CSO) allocates £12.7million per annum to health boards through its NRS Researcher Support budget to pay for staff to conduct research. The aim is to strengthen the research culture in the NHS and to increase capacity in areas that are either aligned to research excellence, either locally or nationally, or areas where the potential exists to develop research.



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## GCU food scientists drink in success

Food science researchers at GCU have carried out a study into the benefits of a new probiotic water. Dr John Butcher and Dr Ryan Kean, Molecular Mechanisms of Long-term Conditions Research Group, were awarded funding from the Scottish Funding Council to investigate the probiotic properties of ió fibrewater, produced by

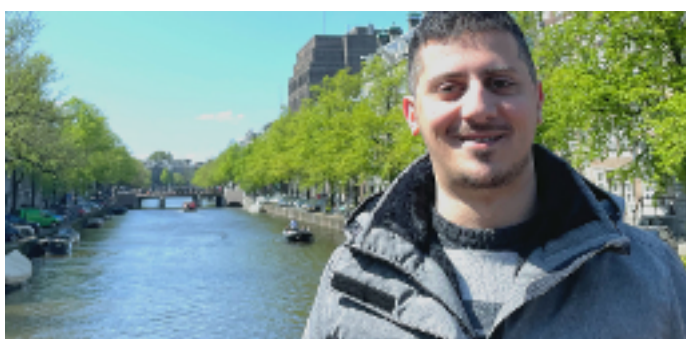
Edinburgh-based The Prebiotic Company Ltd. Their study has shown that ió fibrewater significantly increases probiotic microbes *Saccharomyces boulardii* and *Bacillus coagulans* in 48 hours when compared to regular flavoured water. The term 'prebiotic' refers to the special and essential type of food that our body's friendly gut microbes (probiotics) need to flourish and grow. They are the cornerstone of gut health and provide nutrients and energy for probiotics. Prebiotics are widely researched and are scientifically proven to support gut health, sleep, mood, weight management and stable blood sugar, in addition to lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease and colorectal cancer. The Prebiotic Company Ltd, who are winners of the Scottish Edge Wildcard award for innovation, said ió fibrewater delivers 100% of the daily recommended prebiotics intake and is made with a proprietary blend of soluble fibres that includes prebiotic chicory root fibre (inulin). Their product range is supported by two authorised UK and EU health claims for digestive health and slowing and lowering blood glucose rise due to the chicory root fibre ingredient included in ió fibrewater. The Prebiotic Company Ltd Co-founder and Head of Partnerships and Business Development, Alyssa Reid, said: "This GCU study has scientifically proven that ió fibrewater is really something special. We can officially say we are the UK's first probiotic water."

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## Living near a blue space can reduce mental health conditions

Living near a blue space can reduce the risk of mental health conditions derived from socio-economic deprivation by 6%, according to research carried out GCU. The 10-year study centered around the 250-year-old Forth and Clyde Canal, which runs through some of the most deprived areas in North Glasgow. It was regenerated in 2000 and is now a 'smart canal' that uses technology to reduce flood risks and the impact of climate change.

Michail Georgiou, a GCU PhD researcher, and lead author of the study, which has been published in *Nature* international journal, '[A population-based retrospective study of the modifying effect of urban blue space on the impact of socioeconomic deprivation on mental health, 2009-2018](#)'. The same team of researchers were involved in publishing another research paper earlier this year which showed that people from deprived areas can cut their risk of developing chronic life-shortening diseases by up to 15% if they live near a canal. Michail, Dr Zoë Tiegies, Professor Gordon Morison, Niamh Smith and Professor Sebastien Chastin decided to widen their research to find out what effect living near a blue space such as a canal can have on mental health conditions. The researchers from the University's School of Health and Life Sciences (SHLS) and School of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment (SCEBE) have been working with Scottish Canals on the studies, funded by The Data Lab, Scotland's Innovation Centre for data and artificial intelligence.



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## Psychology lecturer is 'Healing Hearts and Minds' with her new book

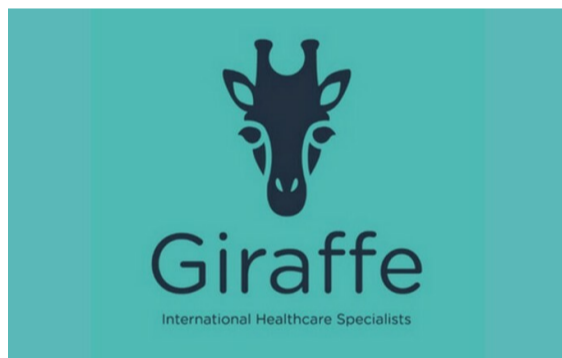
Lecturer in Applied Psychology Dr Liza Morton, has co-written a compelling new book entitled *Healing Hearts and Minds: A holistic approach to coping well with congenital heart disease* about her own experiences living with a lifelong heart condition. Congenital heart disease (CHD) is the most common birth defect in the UK, accounting for a third of all congenital conditions. Survival into adulthood for the one in every 125 babies who are born with CHD has improved by 70% since the 1940s. In her book, Dr Morton, a Chartered

Counselling Psychologist who joined GCU as a lecturer and researcher earlier this year, tells how she coped with the emotional and physical trauma associated with being born with CHD. It motivated her to write her new book *Healing Hearts and Minds: A holistic approach to coping well with congenital heart disease* published by Oxford University Press in New York with Tracy Livecchi, who was also born with CHD complications.

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## Engineers help Giraffe extend its reach

An online social enterprise run by GCU physiotherapists is to get a vital update from University engineers. Giraffe Healthcare, an online physiotherapy and podiatry platform and a UHatch business, was founded by Professor Lorna Paul and Dr Elaine Coulter, SYNERGY (Stroke and Neurological Rehabilitation Research Group), to provide high-quality, personalised healthcare programmes online, backed by expert advice and support. They provide the platform to the NHS, charities, hospices and third-sector organisations. Jacob Koenig from the University's SMART Centre has won funding from the Scottish Funding Council to create an enhanced, faster and optimised version of the application. Jacob said the three-month project will enable Giraffe to recruit more clients and expand into more international markets. Giraffe will also be able to convert short-term trial users to customers by demonstrating the improved capability of the online exercise platform.



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## Improving work outcomes among individuals with chronic pain

Dr Jo McParland, Ageing Well Research Group, has been awarded a National Institute of Health Research grant to conduct a project entitled: "Behaviour change techniques and theoretical mechanisms within psychological interventions seeking to improve work outcomes among individuals with chronic pain: a systematic review and network meta-analysis." The project will involve conducting a systematic review of psychological interventions seeking to improve work outcomes among individuals with chronic pain. In the first investigation of its kind in the field, the review will apply theoretical constructs from the field of health psychology to the field of pain psychology to examine the content of psychological interventions to understand how they work. Stakeholder groups including employers, patients, clinicians, occupational health providers and policymakers will interpret the findings of the review and consider their implications for research and practice in different contexts. The 18-month project will involve a collaboration with colleagues at GCU (Professor Lisa Kidd and Dr Ukay Abaraogu) University of Strathclyde, University of Glasgow, University of Aberdeen, University of Monash, a PPIE collaborator with chronic pain, and the NHS.

## Rheumatoid Arthritis Foot Disease Activity Index

Dr Gordon Hendry, Musculoskeletal Health Research Group, has been awarded £2,000 through the knowledge exchange stimulation fund to promote and facilitate the implementation and integration of the Rheumatoid Arthritis Foot Disease Activity Index (RADAI-F5) in NHS clinical practice. The RADAI-F5 is a new screening tool for inflammatory foot disease in Rheumatoid Arthritis developed and validated by the Musculoskeletal Health research group.

## EULAR Funding

Dr Lisa Newcombe, Musculoskeletal Health Research Group, has been successfully awarded a EULAR publication voucher (up to EUR 2000 to pay the publication fees of her paper).

## GCU hep C expert headhunted for top Lancet commission

GCU hepatitis C expert Dr Dave Whiteley has been invited to join the Commission for The Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology on Liver Disease in Primary Care. The Commission will explore the increasingly important roles of primary care for people with liver disease, from prevention and diagnosis to end-of-life care. It is envisaged that the Commission will also review the current global landscape of liver disease management in primary care, draw together evidence of best practice and deficiencies, and formulate strong recommendations to improve care for patients. Researcher Dr Whiteley, lecturer in the Department of Nursing and Community Health and former hep C nurse, said: "It's a real privilege to be invited onto the Commission, and I'm very thankful for the opportunity. It's exciting to be involved in work that has the potential to be so influential in health policy and improving practice, not just in Scotland, but across the globe. Dr Whiteley is a member of the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses (SHBBV) and Substance Use research groups.

[Read more](#)



## Two bioscientists join RSE Young Academy of Scotland

GCU cancer expert Dr Mark Williams and PhD research student Mohamed Elsharkasi, have joined the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) Young Academy of Scotland. Dr Williams and Mohamed are delighted to be elected as members of the Academy which brings together entrepreneurs,

academics, business leaders and other professionals to work collaboratively on projects that benefit Scotland and the world. Both are based in the Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences and are researchers in the Molecular Mechanisms of Long-term Conditions Research Group. They were offered membership following a competitive process and will serve for five years. Dr Williams, who is fast becoming a recognised name in the field of blood cancer and therapy resistance, is investigating new targeted treatments for Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML) and Multiple Myeloma. The Cell and Molecular Biology Lecturer is also guest editor for the highly-respected British Journal of Pharmacology and the Frontiers in Pharmacology Journals.

[Read more](#)

## Vision Sciences trio awarded rare accreditation

Three optometrists in Vision Sciences are now NESGAT (NHS Education for Scotland Glaucoma Education and Training) accredited. It is the first qualification designed to allow optometrists to manage glaucoma independently in the community and there are only 56 across the Scotland with the accreditation. Dr Lorraine Cameron, Dr Lucy Stevenson and Dr Laura Sweeney are all delighted to have been awarded the qualification to become NESGAT optometrists.



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## GCU researchers shortlisted for THE International Collaboration of the Year 2022 award

GCU stroke expert Professor Marian Brady, SYNERGY (Stroke and Neurological Rehabilitation Research Group), and her research colleagues have been shortlisted for the prestigious

THE International Collaboration of the Year 2022 Award for their "exceptional" collaborative work. The GCU-led international Collaboration of Aphasia Trialists (CATs) network of more than 270 aphasia researchers across 41 countries, which aims to improve the lives of people with language problems, really impressed the judges and "surpassed" their expectations. CATs founder and chair Professor Brady described the shortlisting as "wonderful news" and thanked her GCU colleagues Dr Myzoon Ali and Jaclyn McArthur for their important contribution to the Collaboration over many years.

[Read more](#)

## Double award win for prolapse researchers

Researchers in GCU's Research Centre for Health (ReaCH) and Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit (NMAHP RU) have won two top awards at the ICS (International Incontinence Society) 2022 conference in Vienna. They clinched the Best Clinical Abstract and Best in Category prizes after presenting abstracts from

their research paper [A randomised controlled trial of the clinical and cost-effectiveness of vaginal pessary self-management vs clinic-based care for pelvic organ prolapse](#). The winning team included GCU Professors Carol Bugge, Suzanne Hagen and Helen Mason, and Dr Kirsteen Goodman, Dr Sarkis Manoukian, Lynn Melone, Dr Melanie Dembinsky as well as Dr Cath Best, from the University of Stirling, and Lucy Dwyer and Dr Rohna Kearney, from Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. The International Continence Society is an international organisation that leads interdisciplinary research in the field of incontinence and pelvic health. The annual scientific meeting attracts delegates from across the globe to share contemporary evidence that has relevance to clinical practice.



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## HIV and hep C research success goes global in Real Impact Awards Showcase Book

GCU's world-leading HIV and hepatitis C research is being celebrated around the globe with the launch of a new 'Research Driving Change' Real Impact Awards Showcase Book. The Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses (SHBBV) research group clinched a top international award for their ground-breaking HIV and hepatitis C prevention research in people who inject drugs. The team won the 2021 Emerald Publishing International Real Impact Award – Mobilising Research into Action category – earlier this year for demonstrating impactful results through incredible collaborative working. The award entry, led by Professor Claudia Estcourt and Professor Sharon Hutchinson, showed how the group works collaboratively across academia, public health, NHS, policy, third-sector and people with lived experience to turn research findings into health policy and practice.

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### Global health scientist clinches highly cited award for third year running

Congratulations to Professor of Health Behaviour Dynamics Sebastien Chastin, Ageing Well Research Group, who has been named as one of the world's most influential researchers by Clarivate for the third year running. He has received the highly cited award from Clarivate for the third time in the field of Social and

Health Sciences for yet another bumper year of life-changing health research. Professor Chastin has been named in the top 1% of the world's most influential researchers in the Clarivate's Web of Science Highly Cited Researchers 2022 list. He made it onto the 'who's who' of influential researchers for the third year running for demonstrating significant influence in the field of social and health sciences through the publication of multiple highly cited papers. Professor Chastin said: "I'm delighted to be amongst giants again, but this is really the fruit of great collective work of my colleagues, students and collaborators."

## Ageing expert takes new falls guidelines to Iceland

GCU ageing expert Professor Dawn Skelton visited Iceland to teach physiotherapists about the new world falls prevention guidelines. She reached out to 10% of the Icelandic physiotherapy workforce with her live lectures and workshops over three days but also recorded the sessions for those unable to attend.

Professor Skelton was invited - through an Erasmus+ grant by Professor Sólveig Ása Árnadóttir at the University of Iceland - to speak to physiotherapists and physiotherapy students about the importance of and evidence base for effective falls prevention strategies for older people. The co-lead of the Ageing Well Research Group, began her trip by speaking to 5th year physiotherapy students in clinical placements about 'Considerations for delivering exercise to prevent falls with older adults in groups'. Professor Skelton also spoke at the Icelandic Physiotherapy Association, where she was introduced by President Gunnlaugur Briem and spoke about 'Falls prevention in the UK - How it works, the different organisations involved and scope of practice along the falls exercise continuum'. While in Iceland, Professor Skelton also gave a lunchtime lecture at the Department of Geriatrics at Landakot, the National University Hospital of Iceland, to geriatricians, nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists on 'Pitfalls of falls and fracture prevention: Where practice doesn't follow research?'. She then visited the Department of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Medicine, School of Health Sciences, University of Iceland to meet faculty researchers and PhD students to discuss public and patient involvement in research and to talk about ways in which impact can be generated from research.



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### Big Apple trip takes blood cancer research to next level

Blood cancer expert Dr Mark Williams and senior PhD student Katie Miari, Molecular Mechanisms of Long-term Conditions Research Group, have just returned from New York where they took their research into drug resistance in Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML) patients to the next level. The scientists, who are based in GCU Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, said the US trip was a huge step on the road to finding new and effective

treatments to help AML patients live longer. Dr Williams and Katie worked with world-leading AML expert Associate Professor of Pharmacology in Medicine Dr Monica Guzman and her team, in her labs at Weill Cornell Medicine Cornell University in New York for two months. For the first time, Dr Williams and Katie were able to use leukemic cells and macrophages from AML patients that Dr Guzman's lab has access to through a local Biobank. This allowed them to confirm their own AML research findings, which show that macrophages protect leukemic cell lines from the killing effects of chemotherapy.

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## SUNA Conference

Professor Suzanne Hagen, Ageing Well Research Group, attended the Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates (SUNA) conference in New Orleans to present preliminary findings from a cross-country comparison of quality of life (QoL) in long-term urinary catheter users (IMpact of Practice on Life with an Indwelling Catheter - internATIonal Evaluation - IMPLICATE). The research was funded by a grant from the SUNA Experienced Investigators Program. Researchers from University of Pennsylvania, NMAHP RU at Glasgow Caledonian University and University of Stirling conducted the study in Pennsylvania and Lanarkshire, recruiting 190 participants. The findings will be submitted to the SUNA journal for publication later this year.





## Forthcoming events

### SMMASH-Pan: LGBTQIA+ Mental Health Series

The ReaCH seminar series continues with the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses (SHBBBV) Research Group, teaming up with NHS GGC, NHS Lothian and Waverley Care on **Monday 12th December 2pm - 4pm** to deliver the SMMASH-Pan: LGBTQIA+ Mental Health Series, Understanding and Responding to the Mental Health needs of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men in Scotland, post-Covid-19.

Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men have greater mental health needs compared to other men in Scotland, which were exacerbated by the Covid-19 Pandemic. This seminar will present key findings from the fourth Social Media, Men who have sex with men, Sexual and Holistic Health Survey (2020) that examined the impact of Covid-19 on our mental health. It is aimed at members of the GBMSM and wider LGBTQ+ community, our allies and all health professionals in the wider sense. We'll discuss our latest research findings, share our evidence-based recommendations for Mental Health service provision in Scotland, then host discussion sessions to hear about your views on these findings and examine how you can use them in your everyday life and work.

You can get a head start by looking at our website <https://www.smmash2020.org/> where you can download our [summary report](#) of the paper, watch our [media video](#), and access the wider SMMASH-Pan report, surveys and other SMMASH publications.

[Register](#)

### Keeping up to date with accessing health data for research

A new government, new data protection law, and a pandemic, are changing the way the UK looks at researcher access to health data. Alex Bailey from the MRC Regulatory Support Centre will provide an summary of recent changes in the UK research regulatory environment that may impact on current and future health research. Find out more at our seminar on **Wednesday 16th January, 1pm-2pm**.

[Register](#)

If you have missed any of the previous ReaCH seminars, the recordings are now available to view via the ReaCH SharePoint site along with the sustainability newsletters from our seminar last month.

## Recent events

### GCU health experts play lead role in UK Stroke Forum

Leading researchers from GCU played a key role in this year's [UK Stroke Forum \(UKSF 2022\)](#) held in Liverpool in November.

Scientists from the SYNERGY (Stroke and Neurological Rehabilitation Research Group) in ReaCH shared their expertise and world-leading research at the UK's largest multidisciplinary conference for stroke care professionals.



Highlights included:

- Professor Lisa Kidd, Chair-Elect of the UKSF, took up her position as Chair for the next two years. She also chaired several high-profile sessions and gave a talk on how supported self-management works in a community setting.
- Professor Marian Brady and Dr Lesley Scobbie showcased three research papers which have changed the lives of people with aphasia – a neurologically-based language impairment which affects the ability to speak and understand language. Professor Brady leads the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit (NMAHP) Stroke Rehabilitation Research programme and is founder of the Collaboration of Aphasia Trialists (CATs) network. Dr Scobbie also presented work on the challenges of setting and pursuing stroke rehabilitation goals.
- Dr Christine Hazelton won the UKSF Patient, Carer and Public Involvement Prize for her work on the PIONEER project, exploring effective interventions for disorders of perception after stroke. She presented her findings at the conference.
- Professor Sebastien Chastin shared his expertise on sedentary behaviour in stroke survivors and the health impact, determinants and interventions.
- Professor Maggie Lawrence co-chaired a Stroke Secondary Prevention session on outcomes and measurement – the first of its kind at a UK Stroke Forum conference. She also talked about anxiety following a stroke, its impacts and effects, and how these are being addressed by HEADS: UP programme, a nine-week course designed to help individuals affected by stroke to learn mindfulness skills that might help them cope with emotional difficulties, particularly anxiety and depression.
- Stroke Association-funded researchers including Professor Lawrence and other GCU staff provided bespoke one-to-one research advice at a Research Advice Clinic during the event.
- GCU social enterprise spin-out, Giraffe Healthcare, headed up by Professor Lorna Paul and Dr Elaine Coulter, was part of the trade exhibition for the first time, showcasing how their online rehabilitation platform can support stroke survivors through every stage of their rehabilitation journey.
- ReaCH co-Director Professor Frederike van Wijck, Dr Bridget Davies, Dr Ben Parkinson, Dr Shiv Shanmugam and Dr Alex Todhunter-Brown, and PhD researchers Atharva Bhagwat, Eleanor Brown, Joe Hall, Naomi Clark, Katy Elliott, Matilde Pieri, Dora Regoczi and Stefanie Schnabel also contributed their research to the UKSF 2022.

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## GCU Sport and Exercise Psychology research and applied work showcase

GCU Sport and Exercise Psychology staff, students and graduates had a huge presence at a major two-day conference in Swansea. Dr Bryan McCann and his award-winning trainees on the DPscyh Sport and Exercise programme showcased their research and applied work at the British Psychological Society

Division of Sport & Exercise Psychology (BPS DSEP) conference in November. At the conference last year, Dr McCann's trainees won the Early Career Practitioner Applied Practice Award for their work on the Time for You project with the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH). This year, they shared their experiences in a symposium presenting case studies and reflections on their work on giving lifeline mental health support to COVID-19 frontline workers. DPscyh trainee Health and Sport and Exercise Psychologists have been working with the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) to provide one-to-one sessions through a free and immediate service called Time for You. Dr McCann launched the Time for You project to give the trainees "invaluable experience and employability skills for the future" as well as make a positive contribution to the community, fulfilling GCU's mission as the University for the Common Good and commitment to the UN Sustainable Goals. Dr McCann was joined by trainees Hannah Prince, Rachele Nateri, Leigh Martin and Isabelle Simm for the Early Career Practitioner Applied Practice Award symposium at the conference. There was also a 'Beyond borders: Research & applied practice horizons across cultural locations' symposium with trainees Sahen Gupta and Sanika Divekar, and an oral presentation from graduate Dr Zoe Black. Poster presentations were given by trainees Rachele Nateri, Rebecca Legge, Tim Hardie and Anna Leishman.

[Read more](#)

## SRR-SSAHPF Joint Winter 2022 Conference

The Society for Research in Rehabilitation (SRR) joined forces with the Scottish Stroke AHP Forum at their first joint conference on rehabilitation technology to support self-management, hosted at the Sir Jules Thorn Centre for the Co-Creation of Rehabilitation Technology at the University of Strathclyde. This conference gave delegates from across the UK an opportunity to view a state-of-the-art rehabilitation technology environment, try out various novel devices, and talk to the designers. GCU had a strong representation

from Dr Christine Hazelton, who presented an oral on Interventions for Perceptual Disorders in Stroke; Ciara Ryan, who presented an oral on Development of VISUALISE, a Self-Management Intervention Tailored to the Unmet Needs of Individuals Living with Stroke-Related Visual Impairment; and Chukwudi Ogbueche, who presented a work-in-progress poster on Music-based games to support upper limb rehabilitation after stroke. Professor Frederike van Wijck (President of the SRR and founding member of the SSAHPF), who brought the two organisations together and led the conference organising committee, expressed her thanks to host Andy Kerr and team at the University of Strathclyde and all others involved in realising their vision for this event. She said: 'This was our first face-face conference since the start of the pandemic, and after two years of orchestrating online conferences we really needed a proper get-together. I am delighted that this event was a real celebration; everyone enjoyed reconnecting. It's brought out the best of what the SRR and SSAHPF are so well known for: providing a collegiate environment to discuss new insights and share best practice in rehabilitation. The enthusiasm in the room was so invigorating, and I very much hope that delegates will continue the conversations that this event may have ignited.'



## GCU launches WHO webinar on gender and alcohol



GCU health researchers ran a world-wide webinar on Women, men and alcohol: Why is gender important in alcohol control policies, backed by the World Health Organization (WHO). Professor Carol Emslie, Dr Elena Dimova and PhD student Annamae Burrows, from the School of Health and Life Sciences (SHLS) Research Centre for Health (ReaCH), received funding from WHO to launch the webinar. Professor Emslie, ReaCH Substance Use Research Group Lead, said the webinar which took place on Tuesday 25th October, raises awareness of

the importance of gender when addressing alcohol-related harms, showcase current research evidence and share examples of how communities are addressing these issues. Professor Emslie added: "The Substance Use Research Group is absolutely delighted to have received funding from the World Health Organization to share our important research and expertise on gender and alcohol around the world. Watch the WHO webinar.

[Read more](#)

## GCU hosts international health and hepatitis conference

Award-winning health researchers at GCU were involved in hosting the International Network on Health and Hepatitis in Substance Users (INHSU) annual conference in Scotland from 19th-21st October. Scotland's Public Health Minister Maree Todd opened the three-day conference which brought together hundreds of delegates and speakers from across the globe, united in their mission to ensure people who use drugs have equal access to the healthcare they need to live well.

GCU's hepatitis C expert Professor Sharon Hutchinson, Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses Research Group, was on the main organising committee as co-convenor for the conference at Glasgow's SEC, and Dr Andrew McAuley and Dr Norah Palmateer were key presenters. Other GCU staff and PhD students involved in the conference were Professor Lawrie Elliott, Dr Matt Smith, Dr Kirsten Trayner, Dr Alan Yeung, Dr Vicki Hammill, Dr Gaby Vojt, Dr Scott McDonald, Dr David Whiteley, Shanley Smith, Megan Glancy and Amy McEwan.



[Read more](#)



## Occupational Therapy, Human Nutrition and Dietetics Research Showcase success



GCU Department of Occupational Therapy, Human Nutrition and Dietetics hosted its inaugural research showcase to celebrate and share the breadth of research being produced by staff and students. The free online event last week also marked 60 years of Occupational Therapy education in Glasgow and 21 years of the Allied Health Professions (AHPs) within Scotland. The Occupational Therapy, Human Nutrition and Dietetics Research Showcase attracted representatives from councils, NHS, charities and other

universities across the UK and around the globe from as far afield as Australia. Reader and Head of the Department of Occupational Therapy, Human Nutrition and Dietetics Professor Katrina Bannigan was the keynote speaker. She shared her research expertise and highlighted the fantastic achievements within the University's Research Centre for Health (ReaCH). Staff and students also gave 13 presentations covering a range of practice-based research topics in disciplines and excellence in occupational therapy education research.

The following day, they hosted Practitioner Research Clinic with National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) fellowship guest Domna Salonen at GCU. They set up six slots for AHP practitioners to book in and discuss a research agenda with Domna. The sessions helped attendees to gain more research experience without knowing where to start, develop a career path across practice and research, lead their own research in the future and think how to build strong bridges between practice and research evidence.

The event was organised by Occupational Therapy Lecturer and PhD student Leona Mc Quaid, Occupational Therapy Lecturer and research lead for the department Dr Katie Thomson and Academic Development Tutor Dr Lina Petrakieva.

[Read more](#)

## Success for first Post Doc Appreciation Day at GCU

Researchers in the School of Health and Life Sciences celebrating the success of the first ever Post Doc Appreciation Day held at the end of September as part of 2022 National Post Doc Appreciation Week (NPAW) which is celebrated throughout the UK. The event was organised by Post-doctoral researcher Dr Ofori-Frimpong, ReaCH, Pint of Science, Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA). Around 30 post-doctoral and PhD students, and senior members of the research community at GCU gathered to engage in research career progression discussions. Dr William Johnson and Professor Linda Scobie chaired presentation sessions from staff across the School to support the progression pathways and inclusivity and community engagement. Post-doctoral researcher Dr Maggie Laidlaw, from the Glasgow School of Business and Society (GSBS) spoke on Poetry, Arts and Exhibitions, and Community Engagement Officer Dr Judy Wasige gave an insight in to community engagement in research. Lecturer in Biological and Biomedical Sciences Dr Timothy Humpton spoke on his transition from Post-doctoral Research Assistant (PDRA) to Lecturer and Principal Investigator (PI) and Lecturer in Cell and Molecular Biology Dr Mark Williams highlighted the importance of building and maintaining a research support network. Dr Ofori-Frimpong said: "Presentations were followed by an engaging question and answer session. Attendees then networked over lunch. It was a great event. Many thanks to go to our sponsors Proteintech, and to Associate Dean of Research for the School of Health and Life Sciences Professor Kay Currie and Professor Sharron Dolan, Head of Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, for their funding support."



## Scientists find a real connection at Connexin Research Day 2022



The event, organised by ReaCH and the Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, and funded by the Biochemical Society and Sartorius, took place in the CEE Centre last month. Connexins are a family of proteins that form 'gap junction' channels between neighbouring cells enabling them to 'talk' to each other and co-ordinate cellular activities. The messages or signals can be electrical in tissue such as the heart or the brain or a vast array of small messengers critical for cell growth and regulation. The International Gap Junction Community (IGJC) hold biannual meetings with Dr Patricia Martin, Principal Investigator in the GCU Connexin Research Team, a member for 27 years. In 2017, she hosted the IGJC2017 meeting in Glasgow with over 200 international delegates and in this year, she was a keynote speaker at IGJC2022 in A Coruña, Spain. The UK Connexin Research Teams have hosted 12 one-day meetings focusing on highlights of the IGJC and allowing young researchers to present their new findings. Keynote speaker and lead organiser of the IGJC20 meeting was Dr María Mayán, from the Institute of Biomedical Research of A Coruña. Dr Martin also gave a presentation entitled 'Connexins: Gateways for cell communication - then and now'. Dr Martin said: "We were delighted to host 40 delegates from across the UK and beyond for an interactive day focused on the role of connexins in health and disease. Following the meeting, an early career researchers and speakers' dinner was held Dhakin in Glasgow. We thank all attendees and speakers for stimulating presentations and thoughtful discussions, and to ReaCH, Biochemical Society and Sartorius for their funding support."

## Psychology Lecturer invited to join Oxford Union drugs debate

GCU Lecturer in Mental Health Psychology Dr Phil Dalgarno has been invited to share his expertise on drugs with the Oxford Union at one of their historic debates. He received an invitation from the Oxford Union President Ahmad Nawaz saying it would be an "honour" if he could join them in their debate on the motion 'This House Would Legalise Drugs for Personal Use'. Dr Dalgarno said he was delighted to join the Oxford Union, whose membership is drawn primarily from the University of Oxford, to debate the legalisation of drugs for personal use later this year.



[Read more](#)

## Best presentation award

Congratulations to Aimie Patience, Musculoskeletal Health Research Group, who won best AHP oral presentation at the Scottish Society for Rheumatology conference at Dunblane Hydro in October. This was for her work on Achilles tendon pathology and function in psoriatic arthritis.

## People's Choice and Judge's Choice Awards

Benedictine Khor, Musculoskeletal Health Research Group, has received the Judges' Choice Award (Science category) and the People's Choice Award (overall) for the best 3x3 presentation at the Annual Scholars' Gathering organised by The Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland. This friendly competition amongst all current PhD Scholars funded by The Carnegie Trust models after the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition, where they were required to present their research and their progress to date to a diverse audience from all academic disciplines using a maximum of three minutes and three slides. The Judges' Choice Award for the best 3x3 presentation was determined by a judging panel composed of the Trust's Secretary, Treasurer and Trustees in attendance, while the People's Choice Award was voted by all attending postgraduate students. The Carnegie Trust PhD scholarship is a prestigious and highly competitive scheme which supports a limited number of academically excellent candidates to pursue a PhD at an eligible Scottish University.

## Common Good Podcasts

### The impact of gender and masculinity on male loneliness and social isolation

Annamae Burrows, a PhD student in the School of Health and Life Sciences, joins the Common Good Podcast to talk about her forthcoming study into the impact of gender and masculinity on male loneliness and social isolation. Annamae outlines the project, which aims to talk to men aged between 18 and 30, and how we define terms like "loneliness" and "masculinity". She also discusses the role alcohol plays within this community and how it helps people communicate their feelings.

[Read more](#)

### How living near a blue space can reduce mental health conditions

Michail Georgiou, a PhD researcher at the University, joins the Common Good Podcast to talk about how living near a blue space can reduce the risk of mental health conditions derived from socio-economic deprivation by 6 per cent. Michail, the lead author of the project, discusses how the team carried out their research, how it can be put into a practical context, and how the study dovetails with [a recent project undertaken elsewhere at GCU](#).

[Read more](#)

## BBC debut for physio lecturer

GCU Physiotherapy Lecturer David Hegarty has made his debut broadcast appearance on BBC Radio Scotland Mornings show with Stephen Jardine talking about ageing and balance. He said he was delighted to be asked onto the programme to share his expertise on the importance of balance and how to maintain it when muscle mass begins to deteriorate from the age of 40-45. David reached out to thousands of listeners encouraging them to be more aware of their balance and gave them tips and tricks on how to challenge themselves to improve their balance. You can listen to David's advice on BBC Radio Scotland Mornings 1hr 54mins into the show -<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001dnkq>



[Read more](#)

## Blue therapy: the healing power of water

GCU's Niamh Smith discusses how spending time in blue spaces lowers the risk of stress, anxiety, obesity, cardiovascular disease and premature death on BBC News.

[Read more](#)

## Take control of back pain

Professor Dawn Skelton features in an article in Platinum magazine discussing back pain and expert advice to get our spines back in shape.

[Read more](#)

## The rise in hospital falls

GCU's Professor Dawn Skelton discusses the rise in hospital falls since the pandemic for BBC Scotland News.

[Read more](#)

## Sitting all day can put you at risk of health issues

Professor Sebastien Chastin features in article in health.com and highlights the findings from an expansive new study published in the journal Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise.

[Read more](#)

## Health CASCADE blog

Read the latest from Health CASCADE including:

- If you want to find scientific evidence about co-creation, look no further than the Health CASCADE co-creation database
- Seeing the BIG PICTURE: System level co-creation in eHealth development

[Read more](#)



Read the latest blog from the Safeguarding Health through Infection Prevention (SHIP) research group. Prof Caroline Lopes Ciofi Silva from the University of São Paulo, Brazil shares her experiences on visiting GCU and further plans for strengthening our research partnership.

[Read more](#)

Find out the latest news from the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit (NMAHP-RU) in the October issue of their newsletter

[Read more](#)

Your knowledge and experiences of health, health care and health conditions are extremely valuable and can help us to create exciting and innovative research projects which can benefit and improve the lives of people like you, the people of Scotland, and beyond.



## Latest publications

The latest publications from GCU staff are listed below and to view the article, please click on the title.

**'A population-based retrospective study of modifying effect of urban blue space on the impact of socioeconomic deprivation on mental health, 2009-2018'** in Nature scientific reports. Co-authored by Michail Georgiou, Dr Zoe Tiegas, Professor Gordon Morison, Niamh Smith and Professor Sebastien Chastin.

**'Associations between the composition of daily time spent in physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep and risk of depression: Compositional data analyses of the 1970 British cohort study'** in the Journal of Affective Disorders. Co-authored by Professor Sebastien Chastin.

**'Changes in the 24-h movement behaviors during the transition to retirement: compositional data analysis'** in the International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity. Co-authored by Professor Sebastien Chastin.

**'Conservative interventions for urinary incontinence in women: an Overview of Cochrane systematic reviews'** in the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. Co-authored by Doreen McClurg, Alex Pollock, Pauline Campbell, Christine Hazelton, Andrew Elders, Suzanne Hagen and David Hill.

**'Enhancing existing formal home care to improve and maintain functional status in older adults: Results of a feasibility study on the implementation of Care to Move (CTM) in an Irish healthcare setting'** in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. Co-authored by Professor Dawn Skelton.

**'Interventions and measurement instruments used for falls efficacy in community-dwelling older adults: A systematic review'** in the Journal of Frailty, Sarcopenia and Falls. Co-authored by Dr Chee-Wee Tan.

**'Joint profiles of sedentary time and physical activity in adults and their associations with cardiometabolic health'** in Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise. Co-authored by Professor Sebastien Chastin.

**'Making co-creation a trustworthy methodology for closing the implementation gap between knowledge and action in health promotion: the Health CASCADE project'** in Perspectives in Public Health. Co-authored by Dr Philippa Dall and Professor Sebastien Chastin.

**'Online mindfulness with care partnerships experiencing anxiety and depression symptoms after stroke: mixed methods case study research'** in the Journal of Holistic Nursing. Co-authored by Dr Ben Parkinson, Professor Maggie Lawrence, Dr Evelyn McElhinney and Professor Jo Booth.

**'p-Coumaric acid reverses depression-like behaviour and memory deficit via inhibiting AGE-RAGE mediated neuroinflammation'** in Cells. Co-authored by Dr Xinhua Shu.

**'Recruitment strategies and reach of a digital fall-prevention intervention for community-dwelling older adults'** in Digital Health. Co-authored by Professor Dawn Skelton.

**'Stroke secondary prevention: everyone' business'** in Healthcare. Co-authored by Professor Maggie Lawrence.

**'Targeting 3D chromosomal architecture at the RANK loci to suppress myeloma-driven osteoclastogenesis'** in Oncoimmunology. Co-authored by Dr Mark Williams.

**'Theoretical and practical development of the TOPSY self-management intervention for women who use a vaginal pessary for pelvic organ prolapse'** in Trials. Co-authored by Professor Carol Bugge, Professor Suzanne Hagen, Dr Kirsteen Goodman, Professor Doreen McClurg and Lynne Melone.

**'Trans-urocanic acid facilitates spatial memory, implications for Alzheimer's disease'** in Physiology & Behaviour. Co-authored by Dr Xinhua Shu.

For more information and the latest articles, please visit the ReaCH website.

[Read more](#)

If you have any news stories, please contact Janice Burns, Senior Communications Officer  
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