



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).

As we prepare to say farewell to 2021 and take advantage of a very well-earned break, we would like to share with you some of the latest activity of ReaCH colleagues over the past few months. This has been an exceptionally busy time for our researchers and it has been great to see our work having such an impact locally, nationally and globally. This includes some impressive highlights from COP26, research into the effects of the pandemic upon both respiratory nurses and senior clinical staff which is essential for evidence-based support for healthcare staff, and hence for resilient and compassionate healthcare provision. I also noted the impressive work with populations which are typically poorly served in the evidence base for prevention and healthcare; alcohol harm prevention in the LGBTQ community, secondary prevention of stroke, and stigma related to severe, complex or enduring mental illness, as some examples of our research addressing real unmet need.



The bench to bedside (and beyond – with apologies to Woody) nature of our work is exemplified by our Skin Tissue Bank and Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA) links, through trials evaluating models of care, to the public campaigns to raise awareness of antimicrobial resistance. We really do have a broad span of work!

Through these newsletters and seminars we hope that colleagues will identify links that may lead to fruitful conversations regarding future research students, projects and programmes of work. The next seminar is this Wednesday 8th December, 12pm-1pm and is a great example of a complex trial design that addresses key questions in an elegant and powerful manner: Does accelerated partner therapy improve partner notification outcomes for people with chlamydia? The LUSTRUM cluster cross-over randomised control trial. You will learn more when you tune in (or access the seminar recording later).

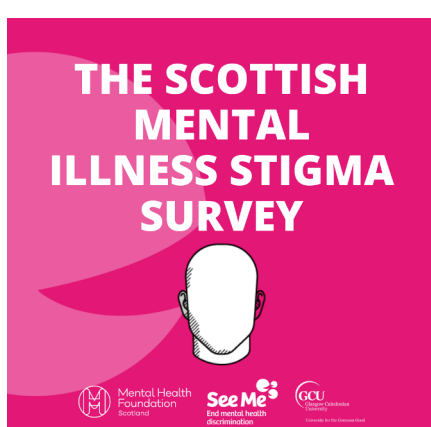
Within this newsletter we link you to the opportunities to explore confidential data sets within the SafePod, to find out about developments at the Teaching / Research Nexus with the masters in Nursing projects, and flag up some great work in Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement, as well as Impact & Knowledge Exchange.

As we reflect on a year which has had continued disruption to our working and to partnerships, we can all be proud of the great work that ReaCH colleagues have been delivering nationally and internationally to share best practice, initiate powerful networks, and lead collaborations. Have a great seasonal break when you reach it and keep sending us your highlights and achievements for sharing. Thank you so much for all your commitment, tenacity and creativity in keeping our research portfolio so strong in a truly remarkable year.

Best wishes for a healthy 2022 for you and your close ones, and, when you get to them, happy holidays.

Professor Andrea Nelson, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Director of ReaCH

GCU at forefront of mental health stigma research



A first-of-its-kind survey is calling on people with experience of complex mental health illnesses to share their views and experiences of stigma and discrimination to help shape policy, support and services in Scotland. Led by Scotland's national programme to end mental stigma and discrimination See Me and the Mental Health Foundation Scotland, in partnership with GCU, the Scottish Mental Illness Stigma Survey is recruiting participants aged 18 and over from across Scotland, who have experience of mental illnesses. GCU Professor of Applied Psychology Simon Hunter, who is also Child and Adolescent Health Research Group Lead said: "This ground-breaking research is a wonderful opportunity for people to share their experiences of stigma related to severe, complex/and/or enduring mental illnesses. Stigma can be present in many areas of people's lives, from housing and employment to the relationships we have with family and friends. I'm immensely proud to be involved in this project and expect it to inform our national strategies tackling this type of stigma in the coming years". The in-depth survey seeks to find out more about the real-life experiences of

people with complex mental illnesses and the stigma that they continue to face. The survey will explore how and where people face stigma, self-stigma, the impact this has on them, and what needs to be done to make their lives better. The research project is one of the first major activities to come from See Me's recently-launched See Us movement to end mental health stigma and discrimination in Scotland.

[Read more](#)

Pandemic impact on senior charge nurses and midwives explored

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on senior charge nurses and midwives will be explored as part of a new study conducted by GCU and the University of Stirling. Experts from the University of Stirling's Faculty of Health Sciences and Sport will lead the project investigating the unique pandemic challenges and experiences faced by this group, who provide front line clinical and professional leadership to more than 40 per cent of the NHS workforce. The new study will focus on staff at NHS Grampian and NHS Lothian health boards, however, its findings will be of significance for health services across Scotland and further afield. GCU Professor Suzanne Hagen, Deputy Director of NMAHP Research Unit and Co-Lead of the Ageing Well Research Group, is co-applicant and key researcher in the study funded by NHS Grampian and NHS Lothian, which is expected to report its findings early next year. The team will conduct an online survey and undertake interviews to understand the experiences, effects and challenges experienced by the group; identify effective mitigation measures being used; explore support strategies that the group find helpful; and elicit their views on the transition to post COVID-19 services.



[Read more](#)



GCU's global health expert briefed COP26 delegates of co-benefits of climate action

The climate crisis is an opportunity to improve our health, welfare and economy, according to GCU global health scientist Professor Sebastien Chastin, Ageing Well Research Group. The Professor of Health Behaviour Dynamics, who has put GCU on the world map for influencing global health policy and research excellence, is lead author of a policy briefing highlighting the co-benefits of climate action which was presented to COP26 delegates during the two-week summit in Glasgow. Professor Chastin produced the COP26 Universities Network 'Co-benefits of climate change mitigation and adaptation actions' briefing with scientists from the universities of Glasgow, Aberdeen, Cambridge and Grantham Institute of Imperial College London. He also recorded a Climate Papers podcast with co-author Professor of Climate Change Policy at the University of Cambridge Laura Diaz-Anadon about the co-benefits of climate action, which shaped and informed discussions at COP26.

[Read more](#)

COP26 'Canals Do Net Zero' event

Professor Sebastien Chastin also played a key role in a major COP26 event entitled 'Canals Do Net Zero: Re-imaging 18th century infrastructure to address flood risk, stimulate investment and tackle health inequalities'. Professor Chastin was a speaker at the climate summit event on Wednesday 10 November in Scotland's Climate Ambition Zone. He was joined by Patrick Harvie MSP, Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights; Glasgow City Council Leader Councillor Susan Aitken; Scottish Canals CEO Catherine Topley; Scottish Water Service Strategy Manager Karen Dee; and Gathering Ground Director Vanessa Gilpin. The event was a virtual live-streamed and in-person TedX-style panel discussion celebrating the diversification of the Forth and Clyde Canal in North Glasgow, with a particular focus on Europe's first smart canal in the city and the launch of the first housing connection to the smart canal system.

[Read more](#)

GCU SafePod for researchers now open on campus



GCU is the first organisation in Scotland to host a SafePod giving researchers secure access to confidential data on campus for the very first time. The SafePod is now open and available for bookings, providing researchers with access to project datasets from the SAIL Databank, UK Data Service Secure Lab and Office for National Statistics Secure Research Service. Designed and developed at the University of St Andrews, a SafePod is designed to replicate a traditional safe setting and includes security features such as door control access system, CCTV camera and secure storage areas for IT hardware and equipment. Professor Sebastien Chastin worked closely with former Assistant Vice Principal, Research Excellence Professor Jim Woodburn to secure a SafePod for GCU and Professor Martijn Steultjens, Musculoskeletal Health Research Group Lead is managing the facility. The SafePod is located on the ground floor of the Sir Alex Ferguson Library and is now available to book.

[Read more](#)

Impact and knowledge exchange

A new webpage has been added to the ReaCH SharePoint site with advice, guidance and resources related to impact and knowledge exchange. Resources include impact tools and a resource list, impact planning template, impact presentations and strategy documentation. If you have any questions about planning for impact in research grant applications or just want to discuss the potential impact of your research, please contact Dr Michelle Ierna, Research Impact & Knowledge Exchange Officer to book a meeting. The impact webpage will continue to be updated with forthcoming resources including lessons learned from REF.

[Read more](#)

Patient and Public Involvement/Engagement (PPIE) Group



A PPIE Group has been set-up to support PPIE activities within the School of Health and Life Sciences. The group runs an Advice Service for postgraduate research students and staff, where you can pick the team's brains about patient and public involvement/engagement in your research. This includes discussing potential ideas for your PPIE activities, assisting with project-specific PPIE activity development, looking at logistics, writing PPIE sections in ethics/grants and more. Further information about the service is available through our SharePoint site including contact details, links to resources, guidance and previous training sessions.

[Read more](#)

GCU Skin Tissue Bank supporting research into skin health and disease

The GCU Skin Tissue Bank has been in operation since 2011 and has approval to access biopsies of human skin for research in skin conditions including chronic non-healing diabetic wounds, psoriasis and atopic dermatitis.

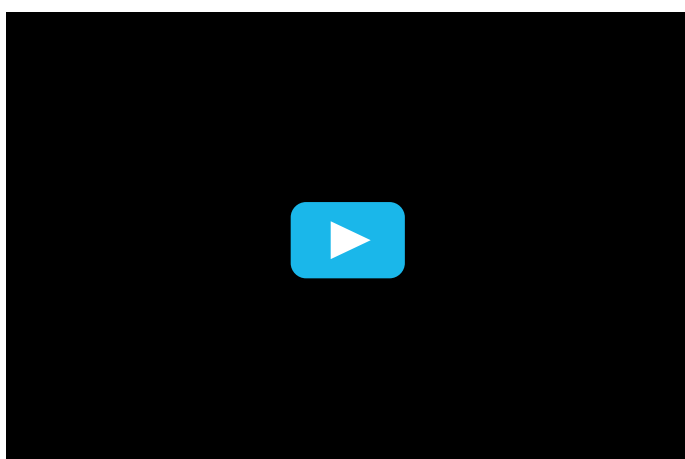
Researchers accessing the tissue from the Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences along with collaborators are studying the mechanisms underlying impaired wound closure in diabetic patients. PhD student Harry Scott, funded by the British Skin Foundation was selected to present his work at a EUHorizon2020 funded 'PANACHE' work shop entitled: The human Discs large protein (Dlg1) controls Connexin 43 (Cx43) trafficking to the plasma membrane and gap junctional communication in keratinocytes.



Funded by Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA) Dr Boatemaa Ofori Frimpong is the curator of the tissue bank liaising with clinicians and external applications and industry over enquiries on tissue acquisition and approval. She is also utilising high resolution microscopy analysis with colleagues at University of Strathclyde to visualise the structure of large volumes of normal and diseased human skin.

For interest, applications and further information please visit our website or contact Dr Patricia Martin.

[Read more](#)





DPsych trainee receives research and applied practice recognition

GCU DPsych trainee Sahen Gupta has received recognition for his psychological resilience research at the British Psychological Society Postgraduate Affairs Group (PsyPAG) Awards. Sahen is a Trainee Sport and Exercise Psychologist who is currently pursuing his Sport and Exercise Psychology Professional Doctorate at GCU. Sahen was awarded second place for his research on psychological resilience, balancing mental health and high performance.

[Read more](#)

Mental health of respiratory nurses working during the COVID-19 crisis

Important research into the mental health of respiratory nurses during COVID-19, led by Dr Nicola Roberts and Dr Kareena McAloney-Kocaman and with colleagues from Southampton University and Edgehill University has appeared in the Nursing Times.

[Read more](#)

World Antimicrobial Awareness Week 2021



Check out the latest blog from the Safeguarding Health through Infection Prevention Research Group about how members of the group, together with their families and colleagues, supported and celebrated this year's World Antimicrobial Awareness Week to increase awareness of the global public health threat of antimicrobial resistance. This year's theme was 'Spread Awareness, Stop Resistance' and the group also put together a Twitter campaign of short videos to help raise awareness of antimicrobial awareness.

[Read more](#)

What does the future of MSc dissertations in nursing look like?

Read the Nursing BMJ blog from Dr Nicola Roberts and Ben Parkinson discussing the current changes affecting student research in the NHS and the future for MSc dissertation in nursing.

[Read more](#)

SHAAP Seminar



Professor Carol Emslie, Substance Use Research Group was an invited speaker at a popular online event on Monday 15 November to mark Dr Eric Carlin's leadership of Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP) over 9 years. Dr Carlin is an Honorary Research Fellow at GCU and has now moved to work on alcohol policy at WHO Europe. Professor Emslie discussed her ongoing work on drinking in the LGBTQ+ community funded by SHAAP. She emphasised important working relationships with third sector partners who have used GCU research to underpin resources such as #KinderStrongerBetter which helps highlight substance use resources to LGBTQ+ people.

[Read more](#)

Sex, Drugs and Scotland's Health

The Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses Research Group recently participated in the Sex, Drugs & Scotland's Health Virtual Conference 2021. Dr Jamie Frankis, Professor Claudia Estcourt, Dimitra Stronglylou and Dr Alan Yeung all gave presentations and Dr Karen Lorimer was part of a panel session. The conference organised by a cross-sector partnership, highlighted new and emerging issues and research, supported workforce development and connected communities and those working within the SHBBV field in Scotland, the UK and internationally.

[Read more](#)



Seasonal depression: why it happens - and how to manage the symptoms



Dr Harriet Bowyer, GCU Psychology Lecturer writes on seasonal depression for The Conversation UK and also for The Independent.

[Read more](#)

Occupational therapy blog

Find out more from the Department of Occupational Therapy & Human Nutrition and Dietetics via their blog. Recent blogs include the following:

- Contemplating retirement? Recently retired?
- Career mentoring is a good fit for occupational therapy
- Three reflections from the best e-learning I have ever done (so far!)
- An occupational perspective of the use of creative approaches to in my PhD

[Read more](#)



Find out the latest news from the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit (NMAHP-RU). In the current issue of their newsletter, read about the Flamingo Study, NIHR funded Stepping Stones project and you can also find out about being a member of their Research Partnership Group.

[Read more](#)

The liver is a window on 21st century health of the European population

Professor Sharon Hutchinson, Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses Research Group was involved as a Lancet Commissioner on a piece of work regarding protecting the next generation of Europeans against liver complications and premature mortality.

[Read more](#)

Falls prevention

Professor Dawn Skelton, Ageing Well Research Group was an invited keynote speaker at the 9th Biennial Australian and New Zealand Falls Prevention virtual conference which took place 29 November - 1 December. The theme of the event was 'Live Stronger for Longer' with the underpinning desire to promote strength, independence and wellbeing in ageing. Professor Skelton has also been invited to be part of an expert group working on Global Falls Prevention Guidelines and is leading on the exercise evidence, Working Group 4.

[Read more](#)



Forthcoming events

Please see details below and links to register for forthcoming seminars and events.



LUSTRUM

Limiting Undetected Sexually Transmitted Infections to RedUce Morbidity

The ReaCH seminar series continues with the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses Research Group on Wednesday 8th December, 12pm-1pm.

Does Accelerated partner therapy improve partner notification outcomes for people with chlamydia? The LUSTRUM cluster cross-over randomised control trial.

Chlamydia is the UK's most commonly reported STI with around 250,000 diagnosed cases each year. Around 60% of recent sex partners of people with chlamydia will also have the infection. Although often asymptomatic, chlamydia can lead to serious reproductive health consequences such as ectopic pregnancy and infertility. These are most often caused by reinfection due to sex with an untreated partner. Strategies to identify, test and treat sex partners (partner notification and management) are key to controlling transmission and preventing reinfection. Join us to hear findings from a large RCT of our Accelerated Partner Therapy intervention and the associated process evaluation, mathematical modelling and health economics evaluation.

Seminar speakers:

- Professor Claudia Estcourt (GCU)
- Dr Fiona Mapp (UCL)
- Ms Ellie Williams (University of Birmingham)
- Dr Christian Althaus (University of Berne)

If you would like to attend the seminar, please register via the link below.

[Register](#)

Previous seminars

If you have missed any of the previous ReaCH seminars, the recordings are now available to view via the ReaCH website and include the following:

- Funding opportunities with SULSA
- Molecular Mechanisms of long-term conditions
- Ageing Well
- Social innovation from a healthcare research perspective
- ECR Network, Engaging with Open Science
- Living with stroke and other long-term conditions
- Vision Research

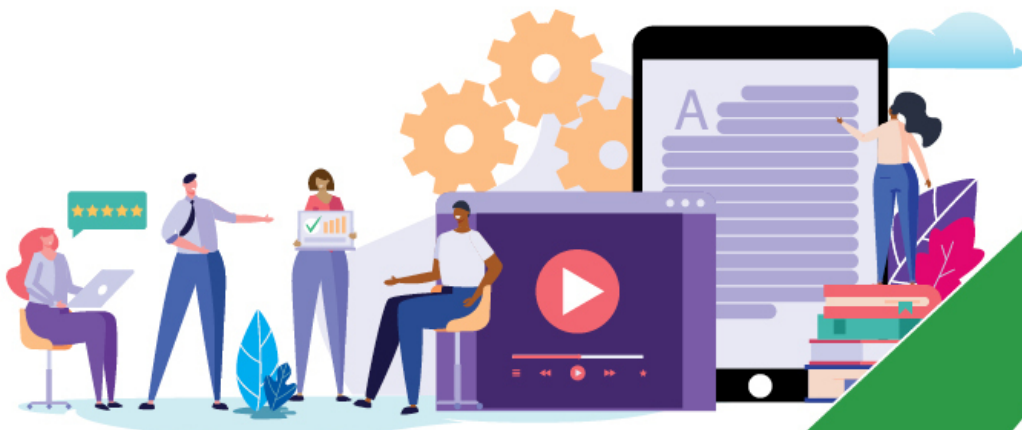
[Seminars](#)

Coffee Break @ SULSA



Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA) have launched their International Coffee Break @ SULSA which is a new initiative to help build international collaborations between Scotland and Europe (initially France and Germany) via short, informal coffee breaks facilitated by SULSA.

[Register](#)



Latest publications

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

'Factors influencing the stewardship activities of Antimicrobial Management Teams: A national cross-sectional survey' in the Journal of Hospital Infection. Co-authored by Dr Valerie Ness, Professor Kay Currie.

'From the clinic to the street: the changing role of benzodiazepines in the Scottish overdose epidemic' in the International Journal of Drug Policy. Co-authored by Dr Andrew McAuley.

'Informing future nursing: An exploration of respiratory teaching in the pre-registration nurse curriculum' in Nurse Education in Practice. Co-authored by Dr Nicola Roberts.

'Measuring the Foveal Avascular Zone in Diabetes: A Study Using Optical Coherence Tomography Angiography' in the Journal of Diabetes Investigation. Co-authored by Ross Aitchison, Dr Graeme Kennedy, Dr Xinhua Shu, Dr Uma Shahani

'Mental health, potential minority stressors and resilience: evidence from a cross-sectional survey of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men within the Celtic nations' in BMC Public Health. Co-authored by Dr Jamie Frankis.

'Organ transplants of the future: planning for innovations including xenotransplantation' in Transplantation International. Co-authored by Professor Linda Scobie.

'Sarcopenia and associated factors according to the EWGSOP2 criteria in older people living in nursing homes: A cross-sectional study' in Europe PMC. Co-authored by Professor Dawn Skelton.

'Sitting as a moral practice: Older adults' accounts from qualitative interviews on sedentary behaviours' in Sociology of Health and Illness. Co-authored by Professor Sebastien Chastin, Professor Dawn Skelton.

'Ultrasound features of Achilles enthesitis in psoriatic arthritis: a systematic review' in Rheumatology Advances in Practice. Co-authored by Aimie Patience, Professor Martijn Steultjens and Dr Gordon Hendry.

'Using telemedicine to provide education for the symptomatic patient with chronic respiratory disease' in Life. Co-authored by Dr Nicola Roberts.

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

[Read more](#)

Find our more about our research on our website www.gcu.ac.uk/reach or follow us on twitter

