

Newsletter Winter 2019-2020

CaHRU present at 999 EMS Research Forum conference in Brighton 2020

This year's EMS 999 Research Forum took place at the Hilton Metropole Hotel in Brighton on 3-4 March 2020. CaHRU was represented there by Viet-Hai Phung and Professor Niro Siriwardena.

On the first afternoon, Viet-Hai attended a workshop on using visual methods in qualitative research by Dr Julia Williams from the University of Hertfordshire. She was joined by visual conference call by her colleague Dr Laura Abbott, who talked about her work with pregnant prisoners. Her research used images to represent qualitative research findings, including using actors to bring to life passages of audio transcripts.



The second day started with two keynote presentations including one from Dr Fiona Bell from Yorkshire Ambulance Service about a study on sickness and well-being among ambulance personnel, which CaHRU is currently involved in. Six peer-reviewed presentations took the conference through to lunch.

After lunch, there followed a series of oral poster presentations. Viet-Hai Phung presented the second of his PhD studies, an interview study with paramedics on their experiences and perceptions of attending to Eastern European migrant patients in Lincolnshire. There was some constructive feedback about how to take the study forward. Since conducting the paramedic interview study, Viet-Hai has undertaken a number of interviews with Eastern European patients themselves. He has recently received ARC funding to pay for translation costs for further interviews with Eastern European patients with a limited command of English.

The afternoon session continued with three further presentations, including one from Rachael Berry from the University of Tasmania. She presented her work on anaphylaxis recognition that she presented at the 2019 Paramedics Australia after winning last year's EMS 999 Research Forum best research prize.

The conference concluded with a debate on the role of social media in disseminating research findings. There was an interesting debate about its role with the conclusion being that it has an important role to play but is not the most effective way of doing so.

Communicating cancer risk in primary care



The latest study from CaHRU was published in Health Expectations titled, 'Communicating cancer risk in the primary care consultation when using a cancer risk assessment tool: Qualitative study with service users and practitioners'. The study was led by Dr Joseph Akanuwe, and formed part of his doctoral studies, supervised by the other co-authors, Prof Niro Siriwardena, Dr Sharon Black and Prof Sara Owen.

This was a qualitative study, which sought to explore the perspectives of service users and primary care practitioners on communicating cancer risk information to patients, when using a cancer risk assessment tool. The study involved interviews and focus groups with 19 service users and 17 general practitioners and practice nurses. Participants suggested ways that clinicians could improve communication of cancer risk information. These included personalizing risk information, involving patients with the tool, sharing risk information openly, and providing sufficient time when using the tool during consultations.

Overall, communication of cancer risk information was deemed complex and difficult but the analysis identified helpful strategies for improving communication when patients required cancer risk estimations during primary care consultations.

New NIHR study begins exploring Community First Responders' role in rural healthcare workforce

In February, members of CaHRU started a major NIHR-funded study on Community First Responders (CFRs) which aims to understand their role in the current and future rural healthcare workforce. CFRs are members of the public who have received basic health training or off-duty healthcare staff who volunteer to provide first aid, helping ambulance services to provide care for people with emergencies such as cardiac arrest. The service depends on altruistic people within local communities to be first to arrive at the scene of an emergency and to sometimes administer treatment.



The 2.5 year nationwide project, led by Professor Niro Siriwardena, Director of CaHRU and funded by the National Institute for Health Research Health Services and Delivery Research programme, will investigate various aspects of the CFRs' role including their contribution to care, cost effectiveness, and experiences and views of patients, CFRs and healthcare staff and commissioners. This information will help to build recommendations that help NHS Trusts to make better decisions about how best to involve CFRs in pre-hospital urgent care. Co-investigators include Dr Zahid Asghar, Dr Murray Smith, Viet-Hai Phung, Ian Trueman, and Prof Roderick Orner, together with Amanda Brewster and Pauline Mountain, who are key public patient and public involvement professionals and members of the Healthier Aging Patient and Public Involvement (HAPPI) group. The research study led by the University of Lincoln, also involves seven of the 13 ambulance NHS trusts in the UK, and collaborator, Prof Richard Parish from the National Centre for Rural Health and Care. The team have been joined by Dr Jasmine Harvey as project manager and postdoctoral research associate, with two additional postdoctoral researchers joining the team later in the year.

A particular focus of the research, as well as looking at benefits, will be to include consideration of patient safety and governance aspects of using CFRs. Prof Siriwardena said, "We are excited to be starting this important study, which will support the many thousands of volunteers who are working for CFR schemes, ambulance services and commissioners, who need and want evidence for what they are doing and what they might do in future. We've spread the work over five work packages, each of which looks at a specific dimension of CFRs' work in detail, and we will combine this knowledge to develop recommendations for rural CFRs".

Dr Jasmine Harvey joins CaHRU to work on NIHR study on Community First Responders



Dr Jasmine Harvey joined the Community and Health Research Unit (CaHRU) earlier this month as project manager and researcher, working on a nationwide research project funded by the National Institute for Health Research Health Services and Delivery Research Programme that aims to understand the contribution of community first responders to the rural health and care workforce.

Jasmine is experienced in leading technology and service-based healthcare research projects. She works at the intersection of research and management. She has particular interest in investigating factors that could potentially help service providers improve systems which they use to share information at work, for better clinical decision making and better experiences for service users.

Previously, she was a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Oxford, Nuffield Department of Primary Health Care, and at the School of Medicine, University at Nottingham. She has also held brief roles at Universities of Warwick and Loughborough, and was an Honorary (Consultant) Assistant Professor at the School of Medicine, University of Nottingham.

Dr Dedunu Dias Weligamage joins CaHRU as International Visiting Fellow from Sri Lanka

Dr. Dedunu Dias Weligamage joined CaHRU this January as an International Visiting Fellow from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. His interests include studying health services management and he aims to develop his skills to improve Sri Lankan health services, mainly in the field of rehabilitative services.

Dr. Weligamage received his MBBS degree from the University of Sri Jayawardanapura in 2002 and started working for the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka as a medical officer. He pursued higher education in health management and public health and obtained a master's degree in medical administration from the University of Colombo in 2010.

He was appointed deputy director of the Teaching Hospital, Kurunegala, the third largest teaching hospital in Sri Lanka. His management skills ensured the growth and development of the hospital and staff to provide safe, efficient, effective and timely care for patients. After evaluating his performance as a medical manager, he was awarded a Prestigious Leadership Scholarship of the Commonwealth Government of Australia in 2012, an accolade given to two hundred outstanding leaders in the world that year.

He obtained a Master of International Public Health and a Master of Health Management from the Faculty of Medicine, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. In 2016, he completed his doctoral qualification in Medical Administration at the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo, following which he was assigned as Director of the National Centre of Rheumatology and Rehabilitation, Sri Lanka.

The rehabilitation sector lags behind curative and preventive health sectors in Sri Lanka. Dr. Weligamage was able, with the help of the Ministry of Health Sri Lanka and some local and international Non-Governmental Organizations, to develop the services and improve the quality of care provided by the institution. His work was recognised by the Director General of Health Services in Sri Lanka as he mentioned the good work of the Rheumatology and Rehabilitation Hospital, Ragama in his official statement during World Health Day 2018. Dr Dias was an official representative of the Government of Sri Lanka in WHO at the first global meeting on "Rehabilitation 2030 – A Call for Action" held in Geneva in 2017.



Publications

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Funding

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