

# SMHRN NEWSLETTER

*'Facilitating the development, set up and successful completion of mental health clinical research studies across Scotland.'*

Issue 7: Jan 2012

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## Special points of interest:

Review of 3rd Annual ASM

Protocol Development Service

Working with SMHRN

## Welcome

Happy New Year and welcome to the first Scottish Mental Health Research Network newsletter of 2012. 2011 was a fantastic year for the network with many new studies adopted, contacts with new people and new organisations established and ties strengthened with old friends. Sadly though, we bid farewell to Manager Darren Gibson, who has relocated to sunny Perth, Western Australia. James McKirdy is currently Acting Manager. We also said goodbye to Research Assistants Seonaid Cleare and Vairi James and Research Nurse Walter Cambers. We were very sorry to see them go and thank them for all their excellent work during their time with the network.

New members of staff Nicki Ridgeway and Katie Nicol joined us as Research Assistants in Edinburgh and will be working on a number of different studies. Laura Hodges has returned from maternity leave to take on the role of Research Associate with responsibility for our Protocol Development Service (PDS), several PDGs, the network's contribution to the UKCRN and the SMHRN's Public and Patient Involvement strategy.

The network hosted its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> December which, despite the weather's best efforts, was a great success. A big thank you to all who braved the elements to attend! By continually striving to facilitate an increase in the number of people participating in mental health research by supporting more high quality studies across Scotland and the UK we hope to make 2012 another successful year.

## Conferences and events of interest

- Scottish Mental Health Service User Research Network Conference  
14th February 2012  
<http://www.smhrn.org.uk/News/events.asp>
- Scottish Dementia Clinical Research Network Conference 2012  
5th/6th March 2012  
<http://www.sdcrn.org.uk/resources/conference-2012>
- Inaugural Scottish Mental Health Nursing Research Conference  
20th April 2012  
<http://www.uws.ac.uk/schoolsdepts/hnm/mentalhealthconference/Index.asp>
- Scottish School of Primary Care Annual Conference  
24th/25th April  
[http://www.sspc.ac.uk/events/sspc\\_conference2012.htm](http://www.sspc.ac.uk/events/sspc_conference2012.htm)

## Annual Scientific Meeting - 8th December 2011 'Working with Industry'

90 delegates and speakers attended.

Speakers presentations available on request.

### Feedback

"A greater understanding of some of the challenges of carrying out clinical research"

"A better understanding of SMHRN and how NSGC program fits into this network of funding."

"A good balance of academic and industry speakers with entertaining presentations."

The Scottish Mental Health Research Network hosted its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting at the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh on the 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2011. The theme of the meeting was 'working with industry', with the intention of provoking frank discussion and encouraging consideration of the issues arising when academics and medics enter into research partnerships with the pharmaceutical industry.

It was important to provide a balanced combination of speakers from the academic environment and from the pharmaceutical industry as well as hearing impressions from those who had been part of both worlds and the guest list of invited speakers reflected that desire. The meeting was introduced, and chaired, by **Professor Stephen Lawrie**, the head of the Division of Psychiatry and Director of the network with a brief overview of the structure of the network and our aims and objectives. Updates from **Andrew McKechnie**, Clinical Research Fellow at the Division of Psychiatry, for a Novartis funded study into Fragile X syndrome and **Keith Matthews**, Professor of Psychiatry from the University of Dundee, regarding deep brain stimulation, were well received.

**Jui-Lee Birse-Archbold**, the Grand Challenge Program Manager for Pfizer related her experience of the challenges inherent in trying to bring together researchers from the private sector and from academia, to the satisfaction of both. **Alan McNair**, Research Manager at the Chief Scientist Office gave the CSO perspective on the role and importance of the Scottish clinical research networks and this was followed by **David Christmas**' insightful and incisive examination of 'pharmaceutical shadow-science'.

**Douglas Turkington**, Honorary Professor of Psychosocial Psychiatry at the University of Newcastle gave an entertaining and astute account of an industry funded pragmatic trial of CBT for schizophrenia in community settings while **Professor David Healy** from the University of Cardiff discussed conflicts of interest in the context of academic involvement in industry funded research. **Jayne Bailey**, representing the MRC, gave an overview of that organisation's stance on industry collaboration and the presentations were rounded off by **Dr Alan Carson**'s shrewd and amusing insight from the perspective of an Associate Editor of a scientific journal.

The meeting was brought to a close with the presentation of prizes for the best poster to **James Currie** (University of Aberdeen), and the student prize awarded to **Victoria Gradin** (University of Dundee).

The aims of the Annual Scientific Meeting were to stimulate debate about the advantages and difficulties of engaging with the pharmaceutical industry; to present our audience with examples of where those partnerships had worked well and where different priorities had caused conflict and controversy. We also wanted to highlight the government and MRC positions on industry collaboration and we wanted to inform and bring up to date the people with whom we engage with and depend on with our achievements, successes and challenges for the next year.





## Do you have a research idea you would like to pursue?

The SMHRN runs a Protocol Development Service (PDS) that aims to support researchers to develop their research ideas into successful applications to grant funding bodies.

We can offer support with:

- Literature scopes and literature reviews
- Identifying collaborators
- Defining the research question
- Advising on protocols
- Research design and statistics
- Identifying sources of funding
- Completing grant applications

Studies currently supported:

- Eating disorders
- Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy
- Impact of the Mental Health Arts and Film Festival
- Green space and mental wellbeing
- Arts therapies for depression
- Service user led research
- Learning disabilities

We are keen to support more researchers so please get in touch with us to informally discuss your ideas or you can complete an application form on our website.

[http://www.smhrn.org.uk/our\\_services/protocol\\_development\\_service.asp](http://www.smhrn.org.uk/our_services/protocol_development_service.asp)



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## Working with SMHRN by Vairi James



"I worked for the Scottish Mental Health Research Network for just over a year. It was an interesting, varied, and extremely fun place to work. The network managers created a relaxed but hard working environment and the variety of studies that are adopted by the network meant that no two days were the same.

As a Research Assistant with the network I supported studies in recruitment, carried out neuropsychological assessments and interviews about mental health symptoms. I worked on studies of people with chronic depression, bipolar disorder, and learning difficulties. I always enjoyed meeting the participants who took part in the studies. I met a variety of people, all from different backgrounds and with different hobbies.

Working for the network, I was always encouraged to go on training courses to add to my CV and to learn new skills. The most enjoyable training for me was venepuncture training where we learned how to take blood.

The experience and training that I received whilst at the SMHRN have ultimately aided me in securing my new position as an Assistant Psychologist. I am going to miss working with all the team at the SMHRN but I am extremely grateful for everything that they have done to help me during my time there."

The SMHRN have a team of Research Assistants across Scotland who can support the set-up, recruitment and completion of mental health research studies adopted by the SMHRN. If you would like to find out if your study is eligible to be considered for adoption please contact the Network Manager.



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"Facilitating the development setup and successful completion of mental Health clinical research studies across Scotland"

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SMHRN works in close association with the following organisations:



Please complete this form and send it back to join our mailing list::

Name: .....
Title: .....
Post Title: .....
Address: .....
Email: .....
Telephone: .....
Area of Interest: .....
Are you currently involved with research? Please give details: .....
How did you hear about the network?: .....

Focus on support and community

Scottish Mental Health Service User Research Network (SMHSURN)

The Network aims to encourage people with personal experience of mental health problems to get involved in the development of mental health research in Scotland.

We aim to promote and encourage active service user involvement in academic and clinical research, and promote the value of service user led research.

Service user research is about the empowerment of service users to be active partners in mental health research.

People should not just be the subjects of research, but can work individually and collectively to plan, manage, conduct and present research.

We promote a collaborative approach to user involved research where 'users' and 'researchers' are equal partners.

Showcasing Service User Research

In Partnership with Voices of Experience, the Network has launched a research repository to promote and showcase examples of service user research undertaken in Scotland.

Organisations or researchers are invited to submit research abstracts and the database is hosted on the VOX website at: www.voxscotland.org.uk/get-involved/smhsun

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