

NIHR Bristol Nutrition BRU



Welcome to our seventh newsletter.

I would like to congratulate Vanessa Er on the award of her PhD and on her new job. I would also like to congratulate Holly Cole-Hawkins and Lucy Hackshaw-McGeagh on the birth their sons, Georgina Williams on the birth of her daughter and Shirley Jenkins on the birth of her granddaughter.

I am delighted to welcome Sofia Leadbetter and Ellie Shingler to the BRU. And I look forward to Sam Lang and Sarah Schimansky joining us later this year.

We are just about to enter our final year and I am excited to see all the interesting results coming out of our projects. We are still setting up and running new projects so there is plenty happening! The picture shows me enjoying testing an electric bike that we are hoping to use in one of our studies later this year.

We included an outline for a nutrition theme in Bristol's BRC preliminary submission and we are awaiting the outcome. I think we submitted a strong proposal and I hope that we will be busy expanding this into a full bid after Easter.

Have a good Easter break



Bristol Nutrition BRU Staff Christmas Party

Investigating Meal-Time Interventions to Improve Eating Behaviour

By Elanor Hinton,
Research Associate



Within the Childhood disorders theme, we have been investigating the beneficial effects of modifying eating behaviour. In three studies funded by the Bristol Nutrition BRU and Elizabeth Blackwell Institute (EBI), we have been examining how reducing eating speed and increasing responsiveness to satiety signals, over the short and long term, may lead to a reduction in food intake and improved weight-management.

With Laura Birch, we have combined a six-month weight-management programme in obese adolescents with neuroimaging and measures of gut hormones, in order to understand the underlying mechanisms of slowing eating speed and increasing awareness of satiety through use of the Mandolean (shown in figure 1). A simple food cue reactivity task was given during neuroimaging to examine responsiveness to food in the brain before and after the training.

Figure 1



Data analysis continues, but thus far we have shown a greater response to food images in the insula and orbitofrontal (OFC) cortices in obese participants compared to healthy-weight controls (see figure 2).

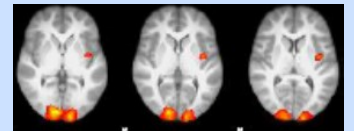


Figure 2

Through an EBI Clinical Primer for Dr Kate Hawton and BSc Health Sciences student Paula Toner, we have investigated the short term physiological effects of varying eating speed using measures of appetite, gut hormones, memory for recent eating and neuroimaging. Data collection is just complete, but so far we have been able to demonstrate a 24% reduction in snack intake following slow consumption of a fixed meal compared to the normal rate



condition. This result has important implications for public health initiatives designed to improve eating behaviour in children.

Finally, I have also been testing a training tool to increase awareness of fullness as it

develops during a meal. This is based on the idea that increasing sensitivity to satiety signals may lead to reduced consumption following the meal, as well as increased fullness during the subsequent inter-meal interval. The outcome of this proof of principle study will be used in the design of a large scale eating behaviour intervention in children and adults.

STAFF CHANGES

Welcome... Sofia Leadbetter, Administrative Assistant

"I joined the University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust in April 2015 when I had a role as a Receptionist/Clerk in the orthotics department, within the diagnostics and therapies division. I enjoyed this position and it was a fantastic opportunity to experience the busy hospital environment.

On 18th January this year, I joined the Bristol Nutrition Biomedical Research Unit as an Administrative Assistant. My job role within the unit is to provide a wide range of administrative support to the Bristol Nutrition BRU, as well as liaising with staff across the Trust and University of Bristol. I am thoroughly enjoying working in the Unit. I am lucky to be working within such a lovely team who are conducting some brilliant research.

I am also studying a BA (Honours) English Language and Literature at the Open University in my part time, as I thoroughly enjoy learning and strive to progress personally and professionally."



Welcome... Ellie Shingler, Research Assistant in Prostate Cancer

"Before coming to the BRU I completed a BSc in Public Health & Health Promotion at University College Cork, in the west of Ireland where I grew up. I then went on to complete the MRes in Health & Wellbeing at University of Bath in 2013. After working within research administration and trial coordination in the NHS for two and a half years, I was delighted to start my post as a Research Assistant on the Prostate Cancer: Evidence of Nutrition and Physical Activity (PrEvENT) Trial, here at the Nutrition BRU in November 2015.

Since joining the unit, I have been making the most of the fantastic support and training opportunities available. For example, I have completed the SSCM's Intro to STATA course which means I am now able to focus on the analysis of the nutritional data that we collect from the PrEvENT participants. As it is a mixed methods study, I am also conducting interviews with research participants when they have finished their follow-up, in order to gain feedback on their experiences of taking part in our trial. Working on a mixture of research methods like this makes for an interesting and diverse role. I look forward to continuing to gain more experience in both nutritional epidemiology and qualitative research during my time here."



MEASURE 2016 Seminar

By Luke Robles, Research Assistant

On 21st and 22nd January 2016, Ellie Shingler and I attended the MEASURE 2016 seminar, held at the College Court Conference Centre in Leicester. The course was arranged by the Leicester-Loughborough BRU and provided training on using physical activity monitoring devices, including ActiGraph, Geneactiv, and activPAL. The seminar was scheduled over two days and involved PowerPoint presentations, group discussions, and computer tasks.

Day 1 was facilitated primarily by Dr Dale Eslinger and Dr Lauren Sherar (Senior Lecturers from Loughborough University), with an emphasis on using ActiGraph accelerometers. Delegates were shown how to initialise the device, how the data can be managed using software, such as ActiLife, and advised about the types of decisions that need to be considered (i.e. what constitutes appropriate wear time?) when initially reviewing the data. The first day concluded with a discussion on future innovation of accelerometry in different research areas. Day 2 was facilitated mainly by two staff members of the Leicester-Loughborough BRU, Dr Charlotte Edwardson and Dr Danielle Bodicoat, and focussed on the use of activPAL. The day started off with group discussions of experiences with using activPAL and how to maximise participant compliance with the device. Delegates were, then, shown how to visualise data using heat maps, how to determine non-wear time and periods of sleep, and how to make manual corrections to data using SAS and STATA.

Both Ellie and I are responsible for initialising ActiGraph accelerometers for the Prostate cancer Evaluation of Exercise and Nutrition Trial (PrEvENT), but had very little experience with these devices before attending the seminar. We both felt that the seminar helped increase our confidence with using the devices with PrEvENT participants, which is measuring both men's baseline level of physical activity and their adherence to a 30-minute brisk walking intervention. We also believe that such devices have the potential to enhance studies that explore physical activity and/or sedentary behaviour in diverse populations.



Vanessa Er completes her PhD

After completing my PhD in January, I have to bid farewell to the BRU to start my new post as a Research Associate at the Centre for Public Health Research at University of Bristol. The centre conducts complex public health interventions on a wide range of topics including obesity, nutrition, mental health, and alcohol misuse. I am looking forward to learning research topics that are outside of my expertise (nutrition) and gain practical experience in developing complex public health interventions. As a small research unit, the staff and students at BRU are like family to me. Everyone has been so helpful and supportive throughout my PhD. For one of my research projects, I had to travel to London regularly to recruit and interview African Caribbean men who had been diagnosed with

prostate cancer about their eating habits and lifestyle. Since this group of men are at higher risk of dying from prostate cancer, it is important to determine how we can help them to eat and live better to prevent/delay their cancer from progressing. Without the encouragement and support of the BRU staff, I would not be able to start and complete this project. I will miss the great times I had at the BRU, especially the Breakfast Club, the annual Christmas meal, and the chats at the kitchenette area during tea-breaks. Thank you to all of you at the BRU for your kindness and generosity. I am sure our paths will cross again in the near future.



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BRU Away Day

By Vanessa Marshall, BRU Manager

On 19th February, the 24 strong team of the Nutrition BRU team took a day away from the office, came together for their annual "Away Day" at Engineer's house for an itinerary of presentations and interactive workshops.

It was an opportunity for each of our four research themes (Childhood disorders led by Julian Hamilton-Shield, Perioperative led by Charlotte Atkinson, Sedentary led by Ashley Cooper and Cancer led by Richard Martin) to share their research plans and look at areas of collaboration. Each of the themes also had an opportunity to discuss requirements and suggestions with our methodologists (Qualitative team led by Andrea Waylen and Quantitative Team led by Sam Leary), logistics team (systematic reviewing and database requirements) and Management and administration.

As well as taking stock and looking at future projects, plans and ideas, at the close of the day, feedback was invited. Included were comments such as "Appreciative of the training opportunities and flexibility within the unit" and "Have enjoyed working collaboratively in the BRU".

We are now looking forward to put these ideas into action over the final funding year of the Nutrition BRU and beyond.



IDEAL

By Vanessa Marshall, BRU Manager

Members of the BRU have been working with the IDEAL Community Action Group to support the delivery of a new health-related module. IDEAL offers a peer-mentoring scheme for people affected by issues such as drugs and offending. Three initial workshops have been undertaken so far, designed to offer participants a taster course on Nutrition. Over the course of three weeks, talks were delivered on national nutritional guidelines and the hidden dangers of sugar. Particular emphasis was placed on developing the participants critical awareness skills regarding claims made about health, food and diet in the popular press. This 'behind the headlines' focus lead participants to research a health food claim of their choice and present their findings to the group. We are currently working with the project co-ordinator, Nick Bentley, to evaluate the pilot work and look forward to further work with the group.

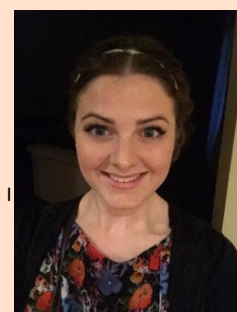


Academic Foundation Programme

By Samantha Lang, F1

I am one of the two academic foundation programme (AFP) trainees at the BRU this year. I am a junior doctor in my first year out of medical school. The first two years spent as a doctor are in the foundation programme where you rotate through six rotations in various medical, surgical and other specialties (GP, paediatrics, etc.) before choosing where you want to specialise. The academic foundation programme is where one of your rotations in your second foundation year (F2) becomes a research/teaching post. You dedicate four months to focus on an area of interest and spend one day per week in clinical practice maintaining your clinical skills. Clearly, this is a pretty important opportunity as research is something that doctors have to do to progress in their careers and to have protected time to do this is a luxury that means I really intend to make the most of my time at the BRU.

During my F1 year (now), I am planning my project, which is part of the sedentary behaviour theme with Professor Cooper following up the STAMP-2 participants. I am really enjoying the planning and looking forward to getting stuck in with data collection in August. Overall, the purpose of the AFP and of my project is to create a piece of research that is beneficial to the BRU's on-going work and that is beneficial to me in the sense that I will develop new skills and experience. My specific goals for the project include running a qualitative research project as this is something that I have never done before; developing a piece of work that can be useful for the BRU and finally (and perhaps somewhat selfishly) bring together a piece of work that can enhance my medical portfolio for further career progression and research opportunities. Although, over and above all of this, of course I love research and can't wait to spend 4 months focusing on just that. I'd also like to take this chance to say a big thank you to everyone at the BRU for being so welcoming and helpful to me and I can't wait to work with you all on a more permanent basis. Anybody I am yet to meet, I am looking forward to it and I'm sure I'll meet you very soon.



UoB Quiz in Wills Memorial Hall

By Vanessa Marshall, BRU Manager

The brainchild of Laura Birch, the BRU made up a team of 6 (Laura, Vanessa, Osama, Chris, Patricia and Andrea) to compete in the University of Bristol Quiz. With the audacious team name chosen as "Irn Bru" the competitive challenge began. The team held their own and came a respectable 8th out of 30. Special mention must go to Patricia, who stepped in at the last moment, and gallantly led our team with her encyclopaedic knowledge of trivia!





ORDS Athena SWAN Coffee Social
 28th January 2016
 By Andrea Waylen
 Senior Lecturer in Psychology



The School of Oral & Dental Sciences held a successful staff coffee social last month. The social event, organised by the School's Athena SWAN committee, was a chance for staff to catch up with colleagues, and share information about opportunities like Soapbox Science.

Athena SWAN has evolved from its original focus, (of supporting the careers of women in science), and now works to further equal opportunities for all staff and students. A friendly and positive working environment plays an important part in that, and further coffee socials are planned throughout the year.

Date of next social: Tuesday 22nd March
 Harry Webb Room, Chapter House
 Drop in any time from 11.30 to 13.30, for a coffee and a chat with friends and colleagues, at this informal social and networking event for Bristol Dental School and hospital staff.



Learn more about the School's [Athena SWAN](#) application. For more info please contact: ords-swan@bristol.ac.uk

Christmas!

Christmas Lunch at the Square Food Foundation

On Thursday 17th December, the Nutrition BRU team, for the third year running, rose to the challenge of preparing and cooking our own three course dinner! Once again, we were under the expert instruction of Barney Haughton at the Square Food Foundation, Bristol's Cookery School and Community Kitchen. Square Food Foundation teaches people from all walks of life to cook good food from scratch. The workshops are hands-on, informative and sociable and above all provide delicious food! Furthermore, as a social enterprise, every penny of profit is used to support work with schools, community groups and charitable organisations.

The theme for our Christmas cookery extravaganza was "From Somerset with Love" and the ambitious menu included twice baked goat's cheese soufflés with beetroot and walnut dressing, roast loin of venison, wild mushrooms and red wine sauce (or spelt risotto) with winter vegetables and greens with poached pears and vanilla ice cream. Of course, all had to be washed down with traditional West Country cider kindly provided by Andy. A fun and productive team-building day out of the office for all who came, consolidating further our relationship with Barney and his team from Square Food.



BRU Staff Join in Christmas woolly world record attempt!

On 11th December, BRU Staff members Chris Penfold, Andrea Waylen, Ellie Shingler, Clare England and Vanessa Marshall donned their festive knitwear to raise money for Above and Beyond and try to help break the Guinness World Record for the most people wearing Christmas jumpers in one place. The colourful gathering took place at 1 pm in Royal Fort Gardens.

Unfortunately the gathering was unable to beat the record of 1,175 made by Loughborough University last year, but hopefully valuable money was raised will go towards Above and Beyond projects to benefit patients in our hospitals.



Congratulations to...



...Holly and her husband on the birth of their son Laurence on the 12th September. Also, the BRU had a lovely visit from Lucy, her lovely baby boy Arthur and Georgina and her two beautiful daughters Lavinia and Rosalie. Arthur was born on the 20th December and Rosalie was born on the 17th November.

Shirley has another member to her family, her daughter Kim gave birth to a baby girl, Isla Jane on the 2nd March. Congratulations to all.

