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Iechyd Da

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School of Healthcare Sciences

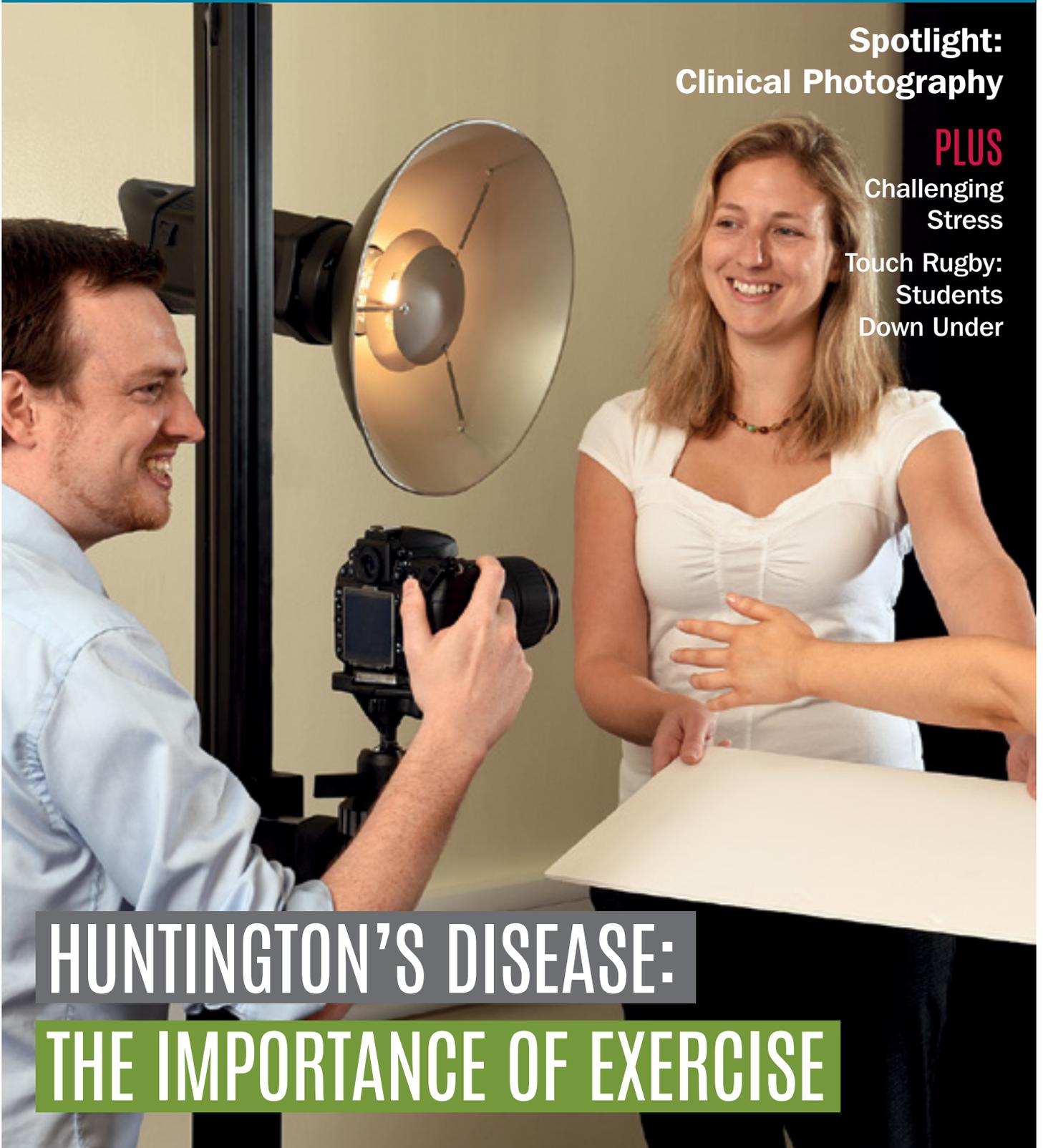
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to the latest edition of *Iechyd Da*, the School of Healthcare Sciences newsletter.

...and to what will be my last edition as Head of School. As we embark on the new academic year, I am delighted to welcome Professor Heather Waterman as the new Head of School. Professor Waterman joins us from the University of Manchester, where she has developed an international reputation for her research into the management of long term conditions, particularly in the field of ophthalmology. Heather will bring an exciting and new perspective to the leadership of the School; she talks about her vision for Healthcare Sciences overleaf.

It is a school that I am rightfully proud of; one which prides itself on delivering research that directly benefits the lives of patients and their families. We are a big school, but what all our staff have in common is a commitment to providing the best education possible for the next generation of healthcare professionals. This was demonstrated in the most recent NSS results, in which our final year students indicated 86% overall satisfaction.

This edition of *Iechyd Da* celebrates excellence in both research and education. Our feature on the field-leading research being undertaken by Professor Monica Busse into exercise and Huntington's Disease looks at the significance of her work. We reflect on the first year of our new Clinical Photography postgraduate degree, a unique programme in the UK, and some of our physiotherapy students describe their experiences supporting a touch rugby competition...in Australia!

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Head of School, leading this dedicated, diverse and dynamic community of healthcare professionals, teachers and researchers; as I step down from the position I would like to thank you all for your continued support.

With my best wishes for the future,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gail".

Gail Williams
Associate Dean and
Deputy Head of School

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Feedback and items of interest relating to the School are welcome and should be sent to hcaremarketing@cardiff.ac.uk. The editor reserves the right to edit contributions received.

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Welcome to our new Head of School

The School of Healthcare Sciences is delighted to welcome our new Head of School Professor Heather Waterman. With over 25 years of experience in healthcare sciences research, Professor Waterman joins us from the University of Manchester's School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work.

Professor Waterman qualified as a nurse from Manchester Royal Infirmary in 1983. After getting her degree from Kings College, London she joined the University of Manchester where she gained her PhD in 1994, and where she has been Professor of Nursing and Ophthalmology for the past 13 years. She has an international reputation for her research which is focussed on the promotion of self-care of patients with long term conditions, especially those concerning loss of sight, and her methodological interest is action research.

“We are all deeply invested in the same core values... that directly improves the well-being of people from Cardiff and beyond and playing our part in developing communities locally and abroad.”

“I was very excited about the opportunity of coming to work in a school with such a strong reputation, both for education and research. Such a large school also has huge potential to command serious influence. What comes across as the

School's biggest asset is, above all, its people; academics, professional services staff and students alike. They are what make the School what it is.

Having been in post for a few weeks now, I have been particularly enjoying meeting and getting to know my colleagues. We are all deeply invested in the same core values – a belief in the importance of developing new generations of caring, compassionate, skilled and knowledgeable professionals, delivering research that directly improves the well-being of people from Cardiff and beyond and playing our part in developing communities locally and abroad.”

“I have attended a Leadership programme with four other new Heads of School. Apart from it being perfect timing for my appointment, I found it extremely useful to hear about the challenges in other schools which are not altogether different to our own including: workload allocation, the impact of changing political environments, improving NSS success and research performance. I really look forward to having the opportunities to discuss these with you in the future and planning together how we as a school move forward.”

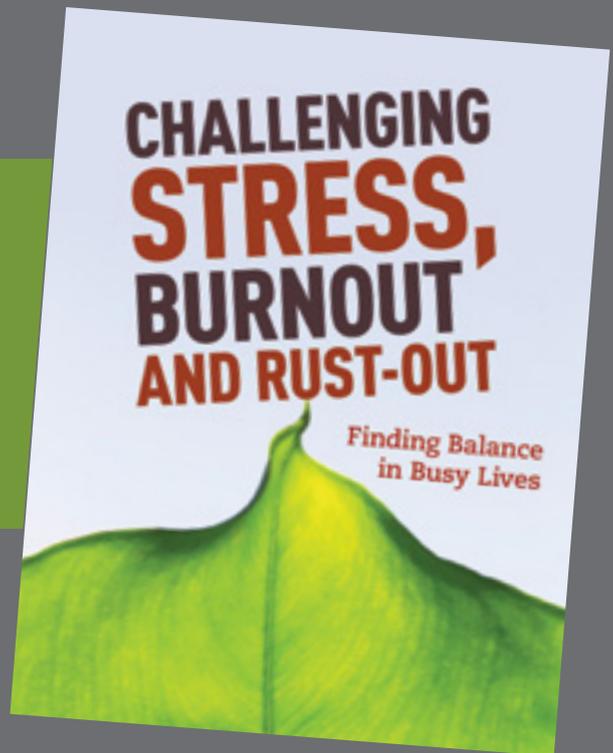
Professor Waterman's own research fits well in the School's existing research focus. Having focused on the field of ophthalmology, specifically glaucoma, and the effects of patient education on adherence to glaucoma eye drops, she has a lot of potential

connections with ophthalmology and optometry within the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences. New grants, which will sit in the School's Long Term Conditions research theme, include a grounded theory study which will examine patients and carers perspectives on having a diagnosis of dementia and glaucoma. “Basically, we are using qualitative research to understand how people who have dementia cope with glaucoma including visits to glaucoma clinics and how they manage their eye drop regimes so we can improve the services we provide to them.” She is also involved in another project with Professor Christine Dickinson from University of Manchester on the effectiveness of portable electronic vision enhancement systems in comparison to optical magnifiers for near vision activities in visual impairment (The p-EVES Study).

Professor Waterman tells us she is looking forward to exploring Cardiff: “I have already experienced breakfasting at the delightful café bars at Cardiff Bay!”

Challenging stress and finding balance

Many of us will be able to identify with the themes of Dr Teena Clouston's *Challenging Stress, Burnout and Rust-Out: Finding Balance in Busy Lives*. The book investigates the increase in work-related stress, offering practical strategies for dealing with increasingly pressured workplaces.



“Occupational therapists have a professional concern with balanced lifestyles as a doorway to wellbeing,” says Teena, “but while researching the book I realised that the difficulty of finding balance in the modern workplace is relevant to people in all sorts of professions and occupations.”

Teena’s book explores the influence of neo-liberalism on increasing levels of stress in the workplace. As a result of the persistent and insistent drive for growth in the UK and across all western economies, workers are under more pressure than ever before. “People are pushed to do more in less time; this speeds up the rate at which they work which reduces their ability to truly focus on the task in hand. An emphasis on the stimulation of growth and money means that the human factor gets lost – workers are pushed to be responsible for their own actions, and correspondingly the consequences of in-action.”

The book recognises that we can’t change this economic model, but does explore others – a focus on wellbeing instead of wealth, for instance; an area of increasing interest with today’s government introducing new ways of measuring national wellbeing in addition to GDP. Practical solutions for coping with stress in the workplace are offered; from mindfulness – focusing on the job of the moment (rather than the

next one!) – to cognitive behavioural approaches, which involve recognising negative thoughts and turning them into positive ones.

The author encourages readers to identify their existing coping strategies in order to find their ‘type’ – endurer, resister, deferrer – and thus better ways of coping, as well as outlining simple strategies that are relevant for everyone. By focusing on meaning orientation rather than performance, we can be sure to make time to do activities we enjoy rather than need to do. She particularly advocates spending time in nature – which evidence suggests is one of the best stress-busters available to us.

A Reader in Occupational Therapy with over 30 years experience, Dr Clouston is ideally placed to analyse the effects on wellbeing of workplace pressure and stress. By pitting the latest research into coping with and reducing these stresses against the realities of a neo-liberal capitalist socio-economic culture, she offers valuable lessons we can all learn from.

“In this very useful book, Teena Clouston uses her occupational science expertise to explore lifestyle balance and how doing too much can be addressed by applying concepts of being, becoming and belonging. I recommend this excellent book to all those who work with or experience lifestyle imbalance.”

Annie Turner, Emeritus Professor of Occupational Therapy, University of Northampton

Compassionate person-centred care

Senior Lecturer Dr Gwilym Roberts has collaborated with Dr Andrew Machon, an accredited executive business coach with some of the world's leading corporate companies, to publish *Appreciative Healthcare Practice – a guide to compassionate person-centred care*.

The book considers a new approach to the question of how to care for clients appreciatively, responsively, compassionately and in a truly person-centred way. Its inception was inspired by discussions around Robert Francis's report into the failings at the Mid Staffordshire Foundation Trust published in February 2013 and relating to issues of patient safety, quality of care and a culture of collective leadership.

The book is targeted at all those involved in delivering health care, from experienced practitioners at all levels including social workers, allied health professionals, nurses, and doctors to students across support workers and the voluntary sector.

Gwilym and Andrew argue that each and every health and social care professional and support worker is capable of a spectrum of care – from mis-care through to compassionate care.

Putting blame somewhere outside of us negates awareness of our limitations and our great strengths as practitioners.

Our ability to be self-aware, to self-manage and to self-care is a true and direct measure of the degree that we are able to care for others.

What is missing and yet vital to the discussion is insight. The book offers a model that allows all health and

social care practitioners to see the full scope of their potential practice. The 'three eyes' of the healthcare practitioner invite every carer to look in at their caring practice through three different lenses namely: the analytical, appreciative and creative eye.

Appreciative Healthcare Practice

A guide to compassionate
person-centred care



Each lens offers a markedly different perspective on caring and as each eye is opened brings new skills and qualities to the practitioner and their care practice.

“I believe this book may become one of the most important of our time for those of us in work that involves the care of others. The volume and type of demands and changes we face in caring work means we may lose our capacity to ‘be’ and care in the pressure to ‘do’, work and deliver. Open-hearted individuals wishing to care may face stress and an experience of burnout in the face of these demands.

“This book has a special gift in dealing with a complex subject that is hard to express in a way that is accessible to those that need to understand more fully. The book gives us the language and perspective that makes this subject communicable and one that can be taught, explored and learnt.

“The book also shows us a paradox: in care, appreciation and creativity we can find the best in us, give the best in us, care while delivering tasks that are asked of us, and at the same time care for ourselves. This book will help us find more of our own humanity as well as caring via that humanity.”

**Piers Worth, Reader in Psychology,
Buckinghamshire New University**

Siarad â fi

Increasing the amount of healthcare education we provide through the medium of Welsh has benefits for both practitioners and their patients. Lecturer Gaynor Williams from our Welsh language team tells us more.

The School of Healthcare Sciences is fully committed to developing a positive culture within the School around the use of the Welsh language, including access to Welsh medium education where possible. Our dedicated Welsh language team ensure a proactive approach to the provision of Welsh language education; our remit includes responsibility for driving an increase in the provision of Welsh language education at undergraduate level as well as supporting students who use Welsh in the course of their studies and colleagues involved in providing this.

Language is an integral part of who we are. It's true that when accessing healthcare patients are often ill, in pain, or feeling unusually vulnerable, and so it's incredibly important that we are able

to communicate with them in their own language. But with 20% of the Welsh population speaking Welsh, enabling people to access healthcare in their own language should be achievable for all – practitioners should be able to respond to the preferences (and not just the needs) of their patients.

On the other hand, it's equally important that practitioners feel confident in a healthcare setting when managing patients who wish to speak Welsh. Anecdotally, some students have felt unprepared for the 'Welshness' of some of their placements. It's vital that the University responds to the responsibility of preparing students for the workplace by normalising the use of the Welsh language in healthcare.

Increasing the availability of education through the medium of Welsh is an important part of this process. Historically, access to Welsh medium education in the School has been ad hoc, and varied greatly across disciplines. For example, Welsh speaking personal tutors were allocated by chance, and within the nursing pre-registration programme no credits were available through the medium of Welsh; we were unable to offer the option of completing assessments in Welsh. In the two years since I've been in post, we've taken huge strides forward.

In support of the University's Welsh language policy, students are now able to request to undertake both verbal and written assessments in Welsh, and pre-admission questionnaires help us to assign Welsh speaking personal tutors to those who request them, where possible.

Thanks to the support and proactive approach of colleagues across the School we have identified 40 credits in adult nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and diagnostic radiography that students enrolling in 2016 will be able to complete through the medium of Welsh, if they wish. To implement new ways of identifying Welsh speaking mentors and practice placement educators for students on placement, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has funded a new Welsh language lecturer. Anwen Davies, who joined the School in August, will be responsible for creating a clear process to enable those students who wish to undertake Welsh language placements to do so where possible.

In collaboration with the School of Medicine, we were recently awarded a £31,000 grant by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to develop reusable learning opportunities.



Our new Welsh language online resources are cross-disciplinary in nature



Online resources to assist with the development of crucial skills are fundamental to the School's Welsh language scheme

The first phase of the project has been the development of Welsh medium e-learning resources focusing on the teaching of clinical skills – including the importance of communication. These consist of a series of short instructional films demonstrating fundamental skills – blood pressure monitoring, taking temperatures, basic life support – that will sit on the University's virtual learning environment. Available in both English and Welsh, these films will form part of the Fundamentals of Care module undertaken by pre-registration nursing students but are cross-curriculum in nature. Not only will other disciplines within the Schools of Healthcare and Medicine be able to utilise them, but they can be made available to all health schools in Wales.

Further projects include the introduction of an inter-disciplinary journal club for Welsh language academics working within the healthcare arena, and the provision of Welsh language lessons for staff at the University's Heath Park campus as part of the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences' staff development programme following the successful pilot scheme run by the Schools of Healthcare and Medicine. And there's more we can do - the School's commitment to the importance of the Welsh language is an integral part of its contribution to the culture, society and health of Wales. Watch this space!

SCHOOL

ACHIEVEMENTS

- ★ Well done to PhD student Lowri Hansford, who has been awarded the Florence Nightingale Foundation Research Scholarship 2015-16. Lowri's research is focused on the experience of mothers with a baby in a neonatal intensive care unit.
- ★ Senior Lecturer in Adult Nursing Dr Paul Gill has been awarded second prize for best oral presentation at the ABUHB Annual Research for Patient Benefit Conference. His presentation focused on his recent study exploring the effects of ketamine bladder syndrome on patients.
- ★ Mental health nursing student Tim Nagle has been nominated for the Nursing Student of the Year award in this year's RCN in Wales Nurse of the Year Awards. Deputy Head of School for Education Dave Clarke has also been nominated in the Nursing Education category. The awards ceremony will take place on 19 November.
- ★ Congratulations to Professor Nicola Phillips and Professor Dianne Watkins, who have each been awarded a personal chair. Also to Dr Teena Clouston and Dr Gail Boniface, who have both been promoted to Reader, and to Dr Sally Anstey, Dr Dave Clarke, Dr Nicola Evans, Judith Benbow and Keren Williamson who have all been promoted to Senior Lecturer.
- ★ Congratulations to Associate Lecturer Yvonne Jordan who was awarded an MBE for services to nursing in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2015.
- ★ Lecturer Fiona Morgan has launched a MOOC via FutureLearn. Titled 'The Informed Health Consumer: Making Sense of Evidence' the four week Massive Open Online Course started in September.

Huntington's Disease and the importance of exercise

Professor Monica Busse is a leading figure in the world of Huntington's Disease research. Identifying and understanding real issues faced by people with HD, Monica's work focuses on the importance of physical exercise for those with the disease and establishing a solid evidence base for the benefits of physical activity. Crucially, her research involves working closely with the HD community; not only to promote exercise and activity but, by involving them closely with the research process, ensuring that the work of her team remains relevant and beneficial to their needs.

Professor Busse leads the Cardiff Huntington's disease (HD) Physiotherapy Group. She also interacts closely in a clinical and research capacity with the University's Cardiff HD Centre and the Brain Repair Group. Together this interdisciplinary and inter-professional group brings expertise in research, teaching, NHS trusts, charities and support groups to identify, understand and resolve real issues faced by people with HD. A Wales HD Involving People Group has also been established to ensure that researchers work closely with people with HD and their families, with a view to ensuring that the research being undertaken by the University is always relevant and applicable to the needs of the HD community.

Huntington's Disease (HD) is a hereditary neurological disorder that leads to severe physical and mental disabilities. Over time, HD causes the progressive loss of nerve cells in the brain, impacting movement, cognition, emotions and behaviour. While there are currently no treatments that slow or stop the progression of the disease, physical therapy and keeping active is known to be of significant benefit in retaining quality of life; studies showing that higher levels of physical activity correlate with a delay in the predicted onset of symptoms.

The Cardiff HD Physiotherapy Group leads the field when it comes to physical activity and rehabilitation in HD, and collaborations have been established with researchers across the United Kingdom, Europe and the USA. Since 2013, when Monica's team were awarded significant funding, they have successfully conducted and published data from the first randomised and controlled multi-centre trials investigating different physiotherapy and exercise interventions for HD (MOVE TO EXERCISE, TRAIN-HD and COMMET-HD).

This work has led to further funding for exercise intervention trials related to HD: ENGAGE-HD is a trial that aims to develop psychosocial support systems for changing physical activity behaviours. Taking the form of a randomised study, the project aims to evaluate two different supported home-based activity programmes that have been specifically developed for people with HD, each of which has different attributes, either social or physical. ExERT-HD will test the benefit of aerobic exercise training protocols in HD on brain health. By designing and evaluating these complex interventions, Monica's group should be able to provide a structure that will ultimately lead to full scale, robust controlled clinical trials.



The growing recognition of the importance of physical activity and physiotherapy in HD is further evidenced by the FP-7 funded programme of work being conducted by the REPAIR-HD project, led by the Cardiff Brain Repair Group under Professor Anne Rosser. This project is seeking to establish protocols for the 'first in man' trials of stem cell therapies in HD. The focus of this work is the development of novel dual task assessments for use in cell transplantation and considering the consent process and care pathway for such 'first in man' trials.

Monica also collaborates with researchers in the Neuroscience and Mental Health Research Institute, Hadyn Ellis Building and staff in the School of Psychology and Cardiff University Brain Imaging Unit (CUBRIC) to understand the mechanistic effects of exercise and training in neurodegeneration. Current activities include a study of the effects of acute exercise in HD using fMRI and evaluating the role of fMRI neurofeedback to improve function in Parkinson's disease (PD). She is working with researchers to develop ideas for exercise interventions to facilitate optimal neuroplastic adaptation in PD and multiple sclerosis.



The ongoing research conducted by Monica and her group is very much in support of larger scale trials incorporating sustained physical activity so as to fully elucidate the extended clinical potential of exercise as a neuroprotective agent in neurodegeneration. Monica welcomes discussions and ideas for new collaborations in this exciting and developing research area.

FIND OUT MORE:

The Cardiff HD centre will be holding an open day on Friday 20th November.

As well as providing an opportunity to find out more about the research being undertaken by the University, Sarah Winckless, patron of the Scottish Huntington's Association, Olympic Bronze Medallist and World Champion and a carrier of the HD gene, will talk about HD in her life.

More information on Professor Busse's HD research can be found on the project website: www.activehd.co.uk

Meet our people...

Dr Aled Jones

Dr Aled Jones is one of our Senior Lecturers and the Deputy Lead for our Workforce, Innovation and Improvement research theme. After working as a mental health and neurosurgical nurse for several years, Aled became a tutor in nursing at Swansea University in 1997, completing his PhD in nursing and medical sociology in 2007. He has been with Cardiff University since 2011.

Aled's research focuses on healthcare policy, quality and safety, particularly in relation to employees raising concerns, team working and care coordination. Most recently he led a research project commissioned by the Welsh Government on how nurse staffing levels across Wales are set and monitored and the possible impact of staffing levels on patient safety.



Describe yourself in three words...

Curious, active, loyal...bit like my pet dog and confidant Taliesin (Chocolate Labrador).

Why nursing?

I undertook voluntary work during the second year of sixth form at a local mental health unit which became a holiday job. Being able to practically help people, the work being different everyday and working with different professional groups proved more attractive than the prospect of uni. So I abandoned plans to study Geography and enrolled as a student mental health nurse the following March.

Who or what inspires you the most?

People who strive to achieve their goals – I'm inspired as much by Olympic gold medalists as I am by students who strive to finish their degrees.

What would you most like to influence or change about healthcare?

I'd like healthcare to be depoliticised – endless and expensive re-organisations that are set by the electoral timetable is a significant barrier to genuine progress. As is the avoidance of making difficult decisions (e.g. hospital closures or service redesign) due to the risk of

losing political popularity. A cross-party panel of politicians with service users and academics, perhaps chaired by Sarah Woolaston MP would beat anything that's come out of Westminster since Nye Bevan.

How do you relax in your spare time?

Basically I like to get outdoors as much as possible. Dog walking is a constant pleasure/curse (depending on my mood). I've participated in many endurance based sports such as hill/ mountaing walking, road running (10ks to marathons) and road cycling. When not out and about I'm usually reading, I'll read anything, literally (sorry, bad pun) and jazz music.

What are you most proud of?

Professionally speaking I'm proud of all the work we do in the School - our students are inspiring and the research outputs across the themes are genuinely shaping health and social care practices. Personally, I'm proud of my girls (Mari 20 and Alys 18) who thanks to their wonderful mum are turning out just fine!

What's a great resource to help you do your job?

Coffee, my MacBook Pro and the new 13th floor research hub.

Spotlight on:

Clinical photography: reflections on the first year of our unique postgraduate programme

One year since the launch of the School's new Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Photography, Programme Manager Amy Lake reflects on the success of the programme.

Over 40 years of expertise

Medical illustration education and training has been delivered in various forms in Cardiff since 1969.

Medical illustration is the term used to describe a group of professionals who specialise in clinical photography, clinical videography, graphic design for healthcare and medical art. Based within the healthcare environment and working alongside other healthcare professions, medical illustrators provide visual media to support patient care, teaching, research and publications.

More specifically, clinical photography provides direct diagnostic imaging in the case of ophthalmology and documentary evidence of disease progression and response to treatment in clinical specialities including: dermatology; wound healing; breast care; plastic surgery; dentistry and child protection. Clinical photography is also used to support learning and teaching, and provides visual evidence in support of research.

Building on the School's history within this field, the Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Photography was introduced in September 2014 in response to the changing needs of the profession. The programme replaced the original Postgraduate Certificate in Medical Illustration which had offered two routes - one for clinical photographers and the other for healthcare graphic designers. Based on workforce planning indications that there are a higher number of new entrants into clinical photography, the programme was designed to focus on photography and the graphics route was ceased.

A unique programme

Cardiff is one of only two universities in the UK to offer a postgraduate certificate in clinical photography. Delivered via distance learning, it is the only course that supplements this with face-to-face teaching and access to a dedicated and state-of-the-art clinical photography studio.

The course provides practising photographers working in a healthcare setting with the opportunity to develop their photographic skills and critical thinking. Students explore a range of imaging technologies and techniques, as well as evaluating legal, ethical and patient management considerations. Through a combination of theory and practice based assignments students

advance their practical skills and critical thinking through evidence based, reflective practice.

As part of the programme's compulsory study days students are able to undertake hands-on skills sessions in our dedicated clinical photography studio. These study days also have the benefit of bringing students together and giving them the opportunity to share experiences and to learn from each other; this is something the students rate highly.

The practical and immediate outcomes for students are fundamental to the success of the programme. The practical application of the skills they develop over the course of the programme is demonstrated in a photography portfolio, while through the development of a work-based project the programme encourages students to research and evaluate practice relevant to their workplace.

One year since its launch, the programme's first intake are now approaching the end. They are currently working on their work-based projects which cover a range of topics, including: the evaluation of imaging modalities used in ophthalmic imaging; the clinical value of video in recording movement in burns victims; assessing existing photographic protocols and service evaluation.

The first cohort to embark on the new PgCert in Clinical Photography.



Furthering careers

The programme is accredited by the Institute of Medical Illustrators and on successful completion of the course, graduates are eligible for full membership to the Institute of Medical Illustrators and professional registration.

The majority of clinical photographers are already employed in the NHS, meaning that our students tend to come from medical illustration/clinical photography departments in the UK (although the programme is also available to individuals from overseas). Previous graduates have benefitted from the programme to advance to senior roles within their profession, and students have also achieved success at the Institute of Medical Illustrators' Annual Awards. Cardiff students are encouraged to present at the Institute's yearly conference, and to publish in international peer reviewed journals.

Moving forward, there are plans to develop the programme's online learning materials further, maintaining the focus of the course. The Postgraduate Certificate will continue to support clinical photographers' to develop their skills and help further their careers. The programme makes a real difference to the development of clinical photography as a profession and contributes towards patient care in the NHS.

“Whilst studying on the PgCert in Clinical Photography my experience has been very positive.

It is a great opportunity to meet fellow clinical photographers at an early

point in your career, it provides the opportunity to share information about our role and work place, everyone studying on the course shares a genuine enthusiasm and interest in learning and developing new skills.

The course is challenging but very worthwhile. It has enabled me to dedicate time in very specific subject areas allowing me to gain in-depth understanding of a topic and how it relates to my place of work enabling improvements to be made.

I have developed skills in scientific writing using critical enquiry techniques. I now appreciate the importance of the clinical photographer's role within healthcare and fully understand how it supports patient care through standardised and accurate recordings of conditions.”

**Jill O'Brien, Trainee Clinical Photographer,
Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle Upon Tyne**



Touch Rugby Down Under

For three third-year physiotherapy students, the 21st April was the beginning of a very unusual clinical placement that started with a flight to Brisbane. This trip was in aid of providing physiotherapy support for the Welsh touch rugby squads during the World Touch Championships in Coff's Harbour, New South Wales, Australia. Student Oliver Wilding tells us more...



During the first day, we got a particular insight into how different the speciality of sports physiotherapy is from normal musculoskeletal outpatients.

The initial application process started in December 2014, when an advert was sent to all third-year physiotherapy students outlining details of the trip. To be considered we had to write a letter demonstrating a range of categories including: ongoing commitment to existing engagement activities in sport through the Inspire programme, an understanding of the necessary team work when providing travelling support, and good organisational skills.

I personally really wanted to go on this trip because I thought it would be an amazing opportunity that many undergraduate physiotherapy students do not have. I also thought this trip would be extremely beneficial in showing the roles and responsibilities of a sports physio as well as how a sports team is managed in tournament from a physio perspective.

The first few days of this trip were spent visiting the physiotherapy schools at the University of Queensland and Griffith University, where we are able to meet internationally recognised physiotherapists including Professor Paul Hodges, as well as the physiotherapy students studying at these universities. We also had a tour of state-of-the-art research laboratories, where we learnt about topics such as 3D modelling of tendon deformation.

Before we knew it, the first day of the tournament had arrived, which especially tested our stamina, as we worked from 7am to 9pm. However it was made slightly easier when we were able to put our beds outside to bask in the great Australian sunshine! We even went to a local Australian equivalent of B&Q to get supplies to build a gazebo, to make full use of the nice weather.

Whereas normally you have to wait at least a week to understand whether your treatment has made an effect, in this speciality and in this tournament we were able to get almost instant feedback, thus allowing us to tailor our treatment sessions to the athlete.

The following days brought rain and a lot of it, turning the “all-weather” pitches into swimming pools. We never thought we would be putting our waterproof jackets to the test in Australia! Although we were told Australia is either on fire or under water, we didn't think a day of a tournament in Australia would be rained off!

The rain eventually cleared on the final day of tournament, which saw Australia win across a range of age groups and most importantly the Men's Open. I found the whole trip beneficial for the real-world insight it gave me into the work of a sports physiotherapist. It gave us experience of working in a high-pressure environment, and highlighted the importance of being part of and working within a team. I'd like to say thank you to Prof Nicki Phillips, Dr Liba Sheeran and Tim Sharp for giving their time in order for us to have an opportunity of a lifetime.