



Lewisham Research Unit



**Annual Report
2003/4**



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About Us

The Lewisham Research Unit was formerly known as the Lewisham Primary Care Research Consortium, which was formed in 1999. In 2003 the consortium joined the Lewisham Primary Care Trust and became known as the Lewisham Research Unit.

The Unit is a network of primary care practitioners, who include general practitioners, nurses and allied health professionals. It is co-ordinated by a research fellow who is hosted by the Lewisham PCT within the Public Health Directorate. The LRU management team makes the executive decisions of the LRU. In 2002/3 the LRU management team consisted of Dr. Jim Sikorski (Chair), who took over from Dr. Richard Byng, Dr. Martin Edwards (General Practitioner), Dr. Chris Watts (Director of Public Health) and Anthony Theuninck (Research Fellow). Dr.

Susan Robinson takes over as the LRU Research Fellow from September 2004.

The LRU works closely with the PCT to promote and support primary care research in Lewisham. The LRU is a collaboration of practitioner led research initiatives that integrate the support of academic partners and the PCT within coherent research programmes.

Primary funding for the LRU is received from the Department of Health through Priorities and Needs Funding and Support for Science funding. The LRU is accountable to the Department of Health for the use of the research funding, reporting on annual indicators of research progress, and submitting research project data to the National Research Register.

The LRU is hosted by





Welcome

The Lewisham Research Unit (LRU) has seen a productive year in 2003-4. We have joined forces with the Lewisham PCT and broadened our collaboration with local and national research bodies.

Our involvement with the PCT has enabled us to increase our sphere of influence and exposure throughout the PCT. An ever growing number of Lewisham practitioners are now aware of the LRU and are making full use of the support being offered. The LRU has been instrumental in raising the profile of research amongst practitioners in the borough. A new website is providing a first port of call for Lewisham practitioners and creating a visible public presence for the work of the unit.

The LRU has developed strong links with local South London Research Units, namely the Research Support Unit, Starnet, and the BRG Wandsworth Primary Care Research Centre. The LRU is a member of local and national research networks and societies: secretariat member of the Pathways for Research: Forum for SE London Primary and Community Care; member of the London Primary Care Research Network; member of the UK Federation of Primary Care Research Networks, and member of the Society for Academic Primary Care.

Research members of the LRU have had their work represented at two conferences, namely the 6th annual conference of the UK Federation of Primary Care Research Networks, and the 3rd Joint Annual Conference of South London Research Networks. Numerous publications have been produced by members of the unit and research undertaken has

significantly informed local and national health and service issues.

Future challenges entail broadening our research programmes and promoting their findings. We need to continue promoting and disseminating research findings and work for their implementation in practice or to inform the development of services or policies. We are instilling the spirit of user involvement in research by encouraging researchers to consider how they will involve users in their studies, so that users can inform and guide the process of research, and not merely be research subjects. We seek to further our academic collaborations. All projects are required to consult with an academic partner.

This report is made available in addition to the annual report provided for the Department of Health. It is for the benefit of our members, our collaborators, and practitioners at large. It provides an overview of the LRU, the research that has been conducted by the LRU, and the outcomes and impacts this has given rise to. We hereby seek to promote our findings and stimulate interest in our research areas in order to foster further collaboration with other interested researchers and practitioners. We hope to encourage the further implementation of current research findings, and stimulate interest in the outcome of current projects.

If you are interested in any of the research findings or current projects mentioned here, please contact us for more information.

www.lru.org.uk

lru.research@lewishampct.nhs.uk



Research Programmes

The Lewisham Research Unit leads in two primary research programmes, and collaborates in a further four programmes.

The LRU lead programmes are:

- Evaluation of innovation in primary and community care
- Using the patient care experience to improve care

The LRU collaborates in the following programmes:

- Health inequalities (lead: Research Support Unit)
- Sexual and reproductive health (lead: Research Support Unit)
- Primary Care Trusts Research Priorities (lead: Starnet)
- Common Mental Health Problems in Primary Care (lead: Institute of Psychiatry)

Evaluation of innovation in primary and community care

Aims:

- Develop both trial and especially non-trial research to capture the new learning and experience of managers, patients and clinicians involved in delivering care.
- Evaluate local initiatives and the innovative work of researchers in academic partner organisations
- Guide research that recognises a multi-disciplinary approach to primary and community care, that includes user involvement (e.g. working with Consumers in NHS Research) and involvement of all stakeholders.
- To develop non-trial evaluation expertise of health service researchers and a framework for evaluating innovative interventions
- Establishing an effective database, available to all primary and community researchers

Methods:

- Methodologically based on quantitative and qualitative methods
- Strong emphasis on project evaluation in addition to randomised control trial research

Partners:

The programme currently involves the following partners:

- Department of General Practice and Primary Care, GKT, King's College
- Institute of Psychiatry
- Department of Psychiatry, St Thomas' Hospital
- Starnet
- Research Support Unit (Southwark PCT)
- University Hospital Lewisham (pending)
- Health First
- Health Action Zone



Using the patient care experience to improve care

Aims:

- Develop a body of knowledge on patient experiences within the area of primary and community care that will benefit the improvement of primary and community care services.
- Guide research that recognises a multi-disciplinary approach to primary and community care that involves empowerment of the user and involvement of all stakeholders.
- Support research that is of direct use to planning and developing services and improving care in the clinical encounter.
- Develop a body of primary care expertise to promote collaboration or consultation on externally led programmes requiring input on patient experience.
- Establish an effective database, available to all primary and community researchers

Methods:

- Methodologically based on quantitative and qualitative methods
- A programme built on using social scientists' skills in community and primary care research using sociological and psychological methods
- Strong emphasis on project evaluation in addition to randomised control trial research

Partners:

The programme currently involves the following partners:

- Department of General Practice and Primary Care, GKT, King's College
- Institute of Psychiatry
- Starnet
- University Hospital Lewisham (pending)
- Health First
- Health Action Zone
- Healthier Lewisham Steering Group



Project Highlights: Research Findings, Impact and Output

Thirty projects have either been completed, are underway, or are being developed through the support offered by the Lewisham Research Unit. These projects span a range of topics covering access to services by vulnerable groups, user involvement, service provision and the effectiveness of specific interventions. Completed projects are listed below. For a list of projects that are current and under development, please see the last page.

We seek to raise awareness of current findings and encourage practitioners to

take these on board in their clinical work. Research should inform the health service through service development, or practice change, or informing policy, or training.

Please consider the outcomes from the completed projects we supported, some led by LRU researchers, and others that LRU researchers have collaborated on.

The LRU encourages and invites practitioners and academics to express their interest in initiating or collaborating on its research programmes.

Completed projects that received LRU support are:

- 1 GPs' beliefs about their management of depression
- 2 Mental Health Link: A complex intervention to improve care for patients with long-term mental illness
- 3 Meanings of stress and their impact on help-seeking behaviour
- 4 Deferred antibiotics prescribing
- 5 Do Asthma patients in general practice profit from structured allergy evaluation and skin testing? A pilot study
- 6 Systematic review of breastfeeding support
- 7 Mother-to-mother breastfeeding support project evaluation
- 8 What do Vietnamese patients expect from their GP consultation?
- 9 Elderly depression project
- 10 Patients-As-Teachers – depression/concordance study
- 11 Patients-As-Teachers – single assessment process for older people
- 12 Patient Access to Electronic Records (PAERS)
- 13 Bronchial boogie – pilot
- 14 Rushey Green Time Bank evaluation



Impact

The results have informed the Mental Health Link initiative and the development and implementation of a Lewisham PCT and SLAM led programme to improve detection and management of depression by GP's and practices in Lewisham. This project seeks to train and improve practices through bespoke solutions through a complex intervention that is generalisable. The project is also being evaluated with LRU support.

GPs' beliefs about their management of depression

Finding

The study found that GPs believed they normally explained depression treatment options well and involved patients in decision making but did not always consider referring to counselling or question about suicide risk. They rarely provided written information about depression. 45% reported aiming for less than 100mg doses of tricyclic antidepressants. A significant minority admitted to low confidence, satisfaction and enjoyment when managing depression. GPs potentially needing support were no more likely to be able to commit time to change than those with no self reported support needs. GPs, who were generally confident about depression management, believed they involved patients in decision making; although this occurrence may be overestimated. The results show a reluctance amongst GPs to follow guidance to prescribe tricyclic antidepressants in higher doses. However, it was possible to identify a group of GPs whose patients could benefit if they accepted support.

Output

Byng, R., Weaver, L., Bury, C. 'GPs' beliefs about their management of depression and needs for supporting change in practice'. *Primary Care Psychiatry*, **8** (2003), No. 4, pp. 121-125.

LRU Researcher:
Dr. Richard Byng, General
Practitioner, KCL Honorary
Research Fellow



Impact

The results have informed the development and implementation of a Lewisham PCT and SLAM led programme to improve detection and management of depression by GP's and practices in Lewisham. This project seeks to train and improve practices through bespoke solutions through a complex intervention that is generalisable. The project is also being evaluated with LRU support.

Mental Health Link: A complex intervention to improve care for patients with long-term mental illness

Findings

This research showed it is possible to identify a group of GPs whose patients could benefit if the GP's accepted support. Exploratory research on the Mental Health Link (MHL) (a facilitation based quality improvement programme to improve communication within general practice) found that this complex intervention could prove viable if it notes the heterogeneity and interdependencies of care components in the care context. A cluster RCT on the effects of the (MHL) intervention, found that practitioners were more satisfied, and services for long-term mentally ill improved significantly more, as a result of the intervention.

LRU Researcher:
Dr. Richard Byng, General Practitioner, KCL Honorary Research Fellow
Collaboration with Prof. Roger Jones, Dept of General Practice and Primary Care, KCL

Output

Byng, R., Jones, R. 'Mental Health Link: The development and formative evaluation of a complex intervention to improve shared care for patients with long-term mental illness'. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, **10** (2004), No. 1, pp. 27-36.



Impact

The stress study has increased GP/practice awareness of patient attitude to stress and help-seeking and how this may shape differential ethnic access to or consultation of services. It has informed GP approach to ethnic minority clients and has potential for patient education or health/stress awareness promotion. Further promotion of this awareness is being considered.

LRU Researcher:
Dr. Alberto Febles,
General Practitioner

Meanings of stress and their impact on help seeking behaviour

Findings

Research found that the more a symptom is attributed to stress, the more likely the patient is to visit the doctor. However, patients of differing ethnic groups take different symptoms attributed to stress to the doctor.

Output

Febles, A. and Ogden, J. (accepted for publication) 'Taking stress to the doctor: A cross sectional survey of patients' beliefs about stress and help seeking behaviour'. *British Journal of General Practice*.

Impact

The Jenner Practice and other practices involved in the study in Lewisham have taken up deferred antibiotics prescribing. This has shown a decrease in patients using antibiotics unnecessarily and encouraged co-operation from patients in managing healthcare.

LRU Researcher:
Dr. Martin Edwards,
General Practitioner

Deferred antibiotics prescribing

Finding

The deferred antibiotics prescribing study found that most patients are confident in making the decision about whether or not to take their antibiotics when receiving a deferred prescription. Deferred antibiotics prescribing reduced the amount of antibiotics obtained from pharmacies.

Output

Edwards, M., Dennison, J., Sedgwick, P., 'Patients' responses to delayed antibiotic prescription for acute upper respiratory tract infections'. *British Journal of General Practice*, **53** (2003), Issue 496, pp. 845-850.



Impact

The study formed the crucial pilot and building block for a larger trial and research grant bid funded by Asthma UK, "Does structured advice on allergy and allergen avoidance given by practice nurses improve control of asthma in primary care?" Further implications of the study to be examined with the PCT in terms of guidance to practitioners.

LRU Researcher: Carol Bobb, Practice Nurse

Do Asthma patients in general practice profit from a structured allergy evaluation and skin testing? A pilot study

Findings

This pilot study found that structured allergy evaluation and avoidance advice improves lung function and the control of asthma in primary care.

Output

Bobb, C. and Ritz, T. 'Do Asthma patients in general practice profit from a structured allergy evaluation and skin testing? A pilot study'. *Respiratory Medicine*, **97** (2003), pp. 1180-1187.

Impact

This led to a successful funding bid from the Medical Research Council for the development of a mother-to-mother breastfeeding support research and service development project.

LRU Researcher:
Dr. Jim Sikorski, General Practitioner and Institute of Psychiatry Honorary Research Fellow

Systematic review of breastfeeding support

Findings

A systematic review of support for breastfeeding mothers found clear evidence for the effectiveness of professional support on the duration of any breastfeeding. Lay support is effective in promoting exclusive breastfeeding. Evidence supports the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding as central to the management of diarrhoeal illness in partially breastfed infants.

Output

Sikorski J., Renfrew M. J., Pindoria S., Wade A. 'Support for breastfeeding mothers. A systematic review'. *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology*, **17** (2003), pp. 407-417.



Impact

The lay breastfeeding project has informed the National Services Framework for Children's Maternity Module for Postnatal Services.

The project has informed a Southwark PCT project on training mother-to-mother breastfeeding supporters, and has informed the evaluation of this project.

Mother-to-mother breastfeeding support project evaluation

Findings

Evaluation of the lay breastfeeding support service uncovered the factors that helped and hindered the implementation of the project. The evaluation highlighted the issues that researchers need to consider ensuring that primary care research is sustainable and replicable.

LRU Researchers: Dr. Jim Sikorski, General Practitioner and Institute of Psychiatry Honorary Research Fellow, and Susan Robinson, Research Fellow

Output

Sikorski, J., Robinson, S., Dezateux, C., Wade, A., Pindoria, S., Britten, N., Clement, S., Renfrew, M. 'Mother-To-Mother Study: A systematic review and case study of lay breastfeeding support'. Grey literature report (2003).

Impact

This has informed the practice's recruitment strategy which is now oriented toward attracting GP's proficient in languages applicable to the practice's population. The practice has been successful in recruiting a GP fluent in Vietnamese, a difficult feat in itself due to shortages of GPs with such linguistic skill.

What do Vietnamese patients expect from their GP consultation?

Findings

This multi-ethnic study of patient expectation indicated problems with the use of interpreters and the importance of unhindered communication for effective and satisfactory consultations with foreign language patients.

LRU Researcher: Dr. Asha Jain, General Practitioner

Output

Ogden, J. and Jain, A. (submitted for publication) 'Patients' expectations and experiences of General Practice: a study of differences by ethnic group'. *British Journal of General Practice*.



Impact

A stakeholder workshop was arranged to disseminate the findings of the study and workshop multi-faceted solutions to depression management for the elderly with practitioners.

Elderly depression project

Finding

The elderly depression study highlighted the primary care needs of elderly patients with depression and the cross-cultural differences.

LRU Researcher: Dr. Richard Byng, General Practitioner, Kings College London Honorary Research Fellow, consultant to the project
Collaboration with lead researcher Dr Sube Bannerjee, Institute of Psychiatry

Output
Report being drafted

Impact

The Clinical Governance Support Team, (Modernisation Directorate in Lewisham PCT), are promoting the PAT research methodology as a useful approach to Public Patient Involvement and Clinical Governance.

The project led to the development of "Guidelines for good practice in the management of depression". Workshops have led to change in clinicians' self-reported change in clinical behaviour and practice operations when dealing with depressed patients. It informed the Lewisham PCT and South London and Maudsley NHS Trust depression programme which aims to evaluate the use of the Depression Guidelines and improve depression detection and management.

Patients-As-Teachers – depression/ concordance study

Finding

This study has shown the depth and patient-centred learning achievable when using Patient As Teachers (PAT) in research. PAT's are patients who are trained in research methods and involved in workshop delivery of results. Depth themes on how to improve the delivery of depression care and the type of care required has been produced by this work.

Output

Benson, A., Waterhouse P. Hannon, J., Fisher, B. 'Shared decision-making? Patients' views about their treatment for depression in Primary Care: A qualitative research study'. Grey literature report (2003).

LRU Researcher: Dr. Brian Fisher, General Practitioner



Impact

The roadshow involved older people in the Single Assessment Process planning process and has provided GP's with an understanding of older people's needs and what older people view as desirable in interactions with GPs.

LRU Researcher:
Dr. Brian Fisher,
General Practitioner

Patients-As-Teachers – single assessment process for older people

Findings

The single assessment process study produced a video and promotion leaflet that set guidance for the single assessment process for older people.

Output

Video and promotion leaflet that have set guidance for single assessment process. Findings presented via Department of Health Roadshow for Single Assessment Process, London (presented to single assessment process project managers and health and social care managers).

Impact

The project has been taken up by the Department of Health as a key example of Choice in healthcare and quoted in the government's new Choice paper. The PAERS programme will soon be taken up by 2 practices in Lewisham and East London and maybe in Manchester area. PAERS is under discussion as an alternative to Copying Letters to Patients. It is under discussion with NHS Direct on-line and MyHealthSpace as an approach to the NHS's plan for national record access. PAERS has helped to shape the national discussion on electronic access and received the London Modernisation Award in 2003.

LRU Researcher:
Dr. Brian Fisher,
General Practitioner

Patient Access to Electronic Records (PAERS)

Findings

Investigation of patient access to electronic records (PAERS) has provided insight into the utility and benefit of this method of patients' access to their clinical information.

Output

Suzana Bottino Boavida, Chee-fone Chu, Misha Engineer, Cheryl Kam, Deeksha Kashyap, Chang-Bon Man. 'Electronic Patient Record: Management And Health Care: A report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Intercolated BSc degree' (June 2004). Imperial College Of Science, Technology And Medicine (University of London), The Business School.



Impact

This project has informed and given rise to the "Bronchial Boogie - School Trial Viability Pilot". The Boogie project is being discussed by Deptford Green School, the PCT and Healthy Schools Initiative which is a Lewisham-wide approach as a possible method for health interventions in schools. The project has informed Lewisham Housing Department discussion with regard to damp, mould and asthma to improve the Local Authority's response to damp in the residents of families with asthma.

Bronchial boogie – pilot Findings

The pilot investigated the suitability of singing classes in managing and ameliorating asthma in children. Results indicated the suitability and agreeableness of the intervention. The study provided themes indicating strategies for treatment/intervention with parents and children with asthma. These were presented to practitioners in a workshop. Practitioner self-completed ratings of behaviour showed a positive trend of change.

LRU Researcher: Dr. Brian Fisher, General Practitioner

Output

Smith, S. 'Bronchial Boogie: An evaluation of a Health Action Zone funded project'. Grey literature report (2002).

Impact

Early results from the initial evaluation fed back into the Time Bank project and resulted in improvements that led to the project's success. The Rushey Green Group Practice Time Bank now has a hundred members and has attained charitable status. It has clocked up over 4,000 hours of community service. (The Time Bank is a database held at the surgery where residents 'bank' an hour of their time helping out members of their community in return for an hour's help back for themselves.) Iterative feedback for complex evaluations has been fed into the evaluation of the complex Lewisham PCT and SLAM Depression Programme with GP's and practices.

Rushey Green Time Bank evaluation

Findings

Results of the early days of the Time Bank programme showed that the project was under-utilised and that little difference was being made to the lives of the participants. The Time Bank evaluation provided key learning for evaluating interventions: i.e. evaluation of new complex interventions is best done as an iterative process that incorporates feedback of the evaluation into the intervention.

LRU Researcher: Dr. Richard Byng, General Practitioner, KCL Honorary Research Fellow, consultant to the project
Collaboration with Prof. Tirril Harris, Institute of Psychiatry

Output

Report being completed for King's Fund.



LRU Membership and Support Services

Practitioners and managers interested in research are encouraged to register as members with the LRU in order to be kept up to date with research news in their local area.

Members of the LRU receive regular notifications of research relevant events, training and funding opportunities. Members are also invited to monthly research meetings that provide peer support for fellow practitioner researchers.

Any practitioner or manager in primary or community care in Lewisham employed by a practice or the PCT can utilise the research support offered by the Lewisham Research Unit.

The Lewisham Research Unit operates a responsive model of research support. The LRU research fellow supports practitioner researchers in:

- developing research ideas,
- writing a research proposal

- seeking funding
- ethics and research governance applications
- assisting with writing up results

Research funding can be applied for at any time of the year.

The LRU offers two types of funding that can be applied for:

Support for research time scheme

This scheme funds time release to free the practitioner to develop a research protocol, execute a project, and implement the findings.

Pilot research projects scheme

This scheme funds small pilot projects to aid future grant applications.

Interested persons are asked to consult the Lewisham Research Unit website: www.lru.org.uk
or contact the LRU Research Fellow on: lru.research@lewishampct.nhs.uk



Looking to the Future

Current projects receiving LRU support are:

- Evaluation of an innovative PCT led programme to improve the management of depression
- Youth Access project
- THREAD study (LRU practices involved in recruitment)
- Self-screening for hypertension in
- General Practice waiting rooms using electronic sphygmomanometers
- Appropriateness of Elective Referral
- Bronchial boogie – school trial viability pilot
- Clinical Priority Initiative
- Building oral language skills to support literacy and academic attainment of primary school children
- Social representations of medications: ideas about potency, perceived efficacy and side effects of drugs, and influences on medication-strategies.
- An evaluation of the user experience and practical application of language translation software in primary care
- Patient compliance with self-care advice following nail surgery

Projects under development receiving LRU support are:

- Horticultural therapy in a community garden
- Does infant carrying in a soft carrier promote secure infant attachment and maternal care? A randomised controlled clinical trial
- Reducing inequalities in health through promoting infant attachment in socially disadvantaged groups
- Neuro Developmental Treatment (NDT) or hydrotherapy for children with Cerebral Palsy – which is more effective?
- Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties: what is the risk of language difficulty?
- Swimming for patients with COPD in primary care? A pilot study

If you are interested in any of the research findings or current projects mentioned here, please contact us for more information.

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