Dear Investigators

Welcome to the summer newsletter.

SRN say farewell to Professor Matthew Walters and welcome to Dr Jesse Dawson (pictured). Dr Dawson joins the network as new Stroke Champion.

“I was delighted to be appointed as Professor Walter’s successor in the Scottish Stroke Research Network and want to thank him for all his hard work. The network continues to be strong and is recruiting to a number of important clinical studies.

We face a number of challenges in the coming years but there are also a number of exciting developments that will ensure Scotland remains a leading destination for stroke research. We want to make it easier for you to conduct and recruit to studies and to offer as many patients as possible the chance to participate.

I look forward to working with all of you and we would be delighted to hear your views on how we can make things even better”.

UK Clinical Trials Gateway

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has set up the UK Clinical Trials Gateway (UKCTG) on behalf of NHS England, NHS Wales, NHS Scotland and Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland (HSC).

The new website provides lots of useful information about clinical trials for both members of the public and researchers.

For members of the public, to help people make informed choices, the website provides information about clinical trials, reasons to join one, and what happens while taking part in the trial. Clinical trial information can be searched for using the 'trial search' in the navigation bar.

For Researchers, the UKCTG makes it easier for you and potential trial participants to find each other.

https://www.ukctg.nihr.ac.uk/
TREAT-UI : TPTNS for REhabilitation And Treatment of Urinary Incontinence

A feasibility study for a randomised controlled trial of Transcutaneous Posterior Tibial Nerve Stimulation to alleviate stroke-related urinary incontinence.

Urinary incontinence (UI) persists in more than one third of stroke survivors at one year. It is associated with significant burden and reduced quality of life and is highly distressing for stroke survivor and carers alike. Stroke survivors with UI are less likely to go home and three times more likely to be depressed than survivors who do not have UI. Urgency UI is the type of UI most commonly experienced following stroke. Current continence care is limited to advice about lifestyle and behavioural interventions such as bladder training and pelvic floor muscle exercises and the provision of absorbent pads, which contain the leakage but do nothing to assist recovery. Although drug treatment with anticholinergics may help, the long term adherence is low because of adverse effects, mainly dry mouth and constipation. Urinary incontinence is a hidden consequence of stroke which is not seen as a priority by staff and the lack of available options for active treatment of UI following stroke persists.

Intermittent electrical stimulation of the posterior tibial nerve (TPTNS) using surface electrodes at the ankle is effective for treating non-stroke neurogenic UI but it has not been tested in the stroke population. The Treat UI study is a pilot randomised controlled trial (RCT) which aimed to test the potential effectiveness of TPTNS for post-stroke UI. The pilot study has just finished recruiting and will report in July 2016. Our aim was to recruit 80 stroke survivors from 5 stroke units over a period of a year. We recruited 53 stroke survivors who were taught to use the equipment. They self-delivered a programme of 12 X 30 minute sessions over a 6 week period and completed symptom questionnaires at baseline, and after 6 weeks, 12 weeks and 6 months. Health care costs, quality of life and views on the acceptability of the new approach to treating UI have been recorded.

The results of the pilot study will be used to inform the design of a definitive trial to test how effective TPTNS is for treating post-stroke UI.

Research PI – Prof Jo Booth
Funder The Stroke Association
PISTE trial provides new evidence for effectiveness of thrombectomy treatment in the UK

Presented at the International Stroke Conference 2016, the final results from the PISTE trial (Pragmatic Ischaemic Stroke Thrombectomy Evaluation) add new evidence for the effectiveness of mechanical clot retrieval (thrombectomy) treatment in the UK.

PISTE was funded by grants from the Stroke Association Project Grant Details and the NIHR HTA

To find out more, visit the Stroke Association Research News page.


The study closed to recruitment in the UK in February 2014. A massive 13,759 Cases and matching 13,847 Controls were recruited worldwide. UK’s contribution was an outstanding 1002 Cases and 983 matching Controls—a total we are extremely proud of, and of the 33 participating countries, UK came third!

INTERSTROKE paper is now available to view online in the Lancet and we hope to have some coverage in the Scotsman and the Glasgow University website.

NEW HEAD OF CSO

Message from Andrew Morris

A note to say that during a very competitive interview process, Ricky Verrall has been appointed as Head of the Chief Scientist Office. Ricky will join us on Monday 29 August.

Ricky brings considerable experience to CSO from his previous roles in Health Care Quality Strategy, Human Resources, Workforce Planning as well as roles in the Environment Division and Department of Business Innovation and Skills.

Congratulations to Ricky, I hope you will join me in wishing him well in his new role.
NHS Fife SRN Research Nurse Mandy Couser kindly offered to exhibit the SRN stand at the recent EOSRES conference which was held at Crieff Hydro in Perth. Here is what Mandy had to say . . .

On the 20th May 2016 I attended the East of Scotland Research Ethics Service Conference at Crieff Hydro in Perth, where I manned a stand to represent the Network which was situated in the meeting room where the conference was being held.

I must admit, I was a bit nervous and apprehensive on doing so and thought, what if someone asks me a question and I don’t know the answer! However, these feeling soon disappeared - the Danish pastries at coffee time may have contributed to this!

From start to finish the day was full of interesting talks and speakers. The conference attracted a wide range of professionals; trial managers, representatives from ethic’s department, research nurses, doctors and graduate students. This allowed for different angles and opinions to be explored on the topics that were discussed. Dr Catrina Forde gave a very interesting talk on ‘LET’S TALK CONSENT’. Here a debate was generated at the end of the talk, in which interesting issues were raised, and different views and opinions were expressed.

Of the whole day, I think the speaker that captured me most was a patient who gave her view from participating in research, from when she was approached, to when she participated in research. She informed us of her own patient pathway, the ‘ups and downs’, and gave us some very useful hints and tips on what to do and what not to do, as research staff.

During the many coffee breaks throughout the day, many delegates visited the stand and to my relief, no tricky questions were asked. SRN leaflets and newsletters on display were gratefully received by those who visited the stand. I networked with many people and spoke to a few who didn’t appreciate the role of the Stroke Research Network.

From feeling nervous and apprehensive about going to the conference, I’m glad I did as I learned from it, and most importantly I hope that I managed to raise awareness of the Stroke Research Network.

SRN would like to thank Mandy for attending the conference, and manning the exhibition stand for the Stroke Research Network – well done!
Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum - new website unveiled

The Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum website has received a make-over, and is now up and running. The website promises to be more user friendly with lots of new features.

The website will also be a useful resource for the most up to date information on research and development in the field of stroke and stroke nursing. You can also follow these developments on their Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Visit the new SSNF website.

Funding Opportunities with the Stroke Association

The Stroke Association have available a wide range of research awards for those looking to further their research journey.

For all the information about the awards visit the Stroke Association website:

5th Annual Managing Stroke in 2016 Symposium

The day will give practicing clinicians an opportunity to update their knowledge in the rapidly changing field of stroke care.

Date: Tuesday, 8 November 2016
Venue: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow

BOOK ONLINE AT http://rcp.sg/events
or call +44 (0)141 241 6210 or email caity.ryan@rcpsg.ac.uk


For information about what and how much you can apply, guidance, deadlines, application forms and more visit:

NHS GG&C Research Endowments
‘Treating Anxiety after Stroke (TAS)’ has completed recruitment of 250 participants with the support of SRN.

TAS is a project which aims to develop a psychological intervention to help treat anxiety disorders after stroke.

Anxiety is very common after stroke, affecting around a quarter of stroke survivors. Anxiety can be persistent and impact negatively on quality of life. We do not yet know if treatments are effective in stroke patients. The TAS research project will develop methods to identify, characterise and treat anxiety after stroke, in a way that is practical for the National Health Service in Scotland.

This project is led by Dr Yvonne Chun, together with Prof Gillian Mead, Dr Alan Carson, Dr Will Whiteley and Prof Martin Dennis at the Centre of Clinical Brain Sciences at University of Edinburgh.

Dr Chun joined the Stroke Research Group in Edinburgh in 2014 after being awarded a Princess Margaret Research Development Fellowship, which provided support and mentorship that led to her success in gaining a personal award of a clinical academic fellowship from the Chief Scientist Office of Scotland in September 2015. With this fellowship, Dr Yvonne Chun will continue to hone her research skills whilst carrying out the project TAS, with the overarching aim of developing an intervention that will be ready for testing in a large-scale randomised controlled trial.

The first part of TAS is an observational study to assess the types of anxiety experienced by stroke survivors at 3 months following their diagnosis, using psychiatric interviews and questionnaires. The patient interviews will provide rich and useful information on how common anxiety is, the impact it has on people’s lives, the different types of anxiety people experience, how best to measure anxiety and deliver treatment for anxiety after a stroke.

We are delighted that this study has achieved its recruitment target of 250 participants in 9 months, 3 months ahead of schedule. We would like to express a special thanks to the SRN nurses, Seona Burgess and Pat Taylor, at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh for their immense help and efficiency in patient recruitment.

We will shortly begin the next phase of the project—anxiety intervention development, with the hope that we can test our new intervention in a pilot randomised controlled trial in the Summer of 2017.

Dr Yvonne Chun, on behalf of the TAS team.
The Scottish Stroke Improvement Programme Report, containing Scottish Stroke Care Audit (SSCA) data is now published and is available to view on the SSCA [http://www.strokeaudit.scot.nhs.uk/Publications/Main.html](http://www.strokeaudit.scot.nhs.uk/Publications/Main.html)

This report is different from previous SSCA reports as it contains a section dedicated to the Stroke Improvement Plan priorities. The SSCA website will also, for the first time, contain a Summary Dashboard. This Tableau based dashboard summarises information about performance against the current Scottish Stroke Care Standards for inpatients and outpatients.

Please visit the site and view the report, accompanying excel files and summary dashboard.

Feedback is welcomed and should be sent to the National Clinical Coordinator Moranne MacGillivray

[mailto:Moranne.macgillivray@nhs.net](mailto:Moranne.macgillivray@nhs.net)

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New—STARS advancing module

The latest STARS (Stroke Training and Awareness Resource) advanced module titled: **Sensitive and effective conversations at end of life in acute stroke care** - was launched at the UK Stroke Forum in January. The module has been completed by 147 users in Scotland so far.

The results of a survey of educational needs of healthcare professionals used to develop the content for the module and a poster based on this was chosen for first prize for the poster presentations on Thursday of the UKSF.

This module aims to help healthcare professionals reflect on their current practice and develop skills in having difficult conversations with patients and families when the patient is likely to die within hours, days or weeks of an acute stroke. The module includes the recently published Scottish and UK guidelines and documents to inform best practice.

There are practical tips to improve communication with patients, families and within multidisciplinary teams. Giving bad news, dealing with distressed relatives, discussing nutrition and hydration for the dying patient and documenting family meetings are included. The module has films of case scenarios, interactive learning and a module test.

[www.stroketraining.org](http://www.stroketraining.org)
Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum Conference—2016

‘The Stroke Beat’

Practice, Quality, Research in Stroke

This year’s conference takes place on Thursday 29th September 2016, at the Dewar’s Centre, Perth.

The conference programme is broken down into four exciting topics; Practice, Quality, Research—top 3 Nursing Priorities, and Stroke—one nurse’s personal experience.

Presentations from Professor Keith Muir, Katrina Brennan and Professor Jo Booth are just some of the featured speakers.

Visit the SSNF website for more information about this year’s programme, and 2015’s programme of presentations.

Further information about registration and conference costs will follow soon.

UK Stroke Forum Conference — 2016

The UK Stroke Forum Conference is the largest multidisciplinary stroke event in the UK, attracting over 1400 delegates from across the stroke care pathway.

This year’s conference takes place Monday 28 to Wednesday 30 November 2016 at the Arena and Convention Centre Liverpool (ACC Liverpool).

Registration is now open, and the early bird rate closes 31 August.

For lots more information visit: Stroke Association website

MOOD, MOBILITY and PLACE
International Conference

The conference will take place in Edinburgh on 11th – 14th October 2016.

To register your interest and receive future conference announcements, please email OPENspace@ed.ac.uk

The conference is the fourth in the international Open Space: People Space (OSPS) series. Previous OSPS conferences have taken place in Edinburgh in 2004, 2007 and 2011.

NHS GGC Stroke MCN Best Practice Afternoon

‘Managing Executive Dysfunction to Optimise the Participation of People with Stroke’

Dr Charlie Chung, Occupational Therapy Manager, NHS Fife

Date: Thursday 27th October
Time: 12.30—1630
Venue: The Lecture Theatre, New Lister Building, Glasgow Royal Infirmary.

For more information contact Dr Gillian Alexander galexander2@nhs.net
Invitation to attend a workshop on Driving After Stroke

Section 3.3 of the National Stroke Improvement Plan recommends that ‘Specialist advice with regards to return to driving following stroke is available to all patients across the MCN area’

The criteria for achievement of this standard is:-

**BLACK**  No local protocol or access to specialised advice is available, for return to driving following stroke.

**RED**  Plan to develop local protocol & access to specialised advice regarding the referral process & pathway for return to driving following stroke.

**AMBER**  Local protocol for return to driving assessment & access to specialised advice is available but not documented, and referral for assessment at a specialised driving assessment service is ad hoc across the MCN area.

**GREEN**  There is a documented referral process and pathway available, with provision of specialist advice for return to driving in some MCN areas.

**COMPLETE**  Clear, documented protocol for accessing specialist advice and referral to driving assessment at an accredited driving assessment service is evident across MCN area.

Each health board is rated in terms of achievement against these criteria and this workshop aims to share good practice and support all areas to develop improvement plans to improve and maintain current service standards.

We would ask that you send 2-3 representatives from your Health Board who are aware of and are able to influence improvements for driving assessment service pathways, to attend a workshop on ‘The Stroke Improvement Plan - Specialist Driving Assessment’ on Tuesday 20th Sept at Stirling Management Centre, University of Stirling, from 0945 - 1530 (timings TBC)

Speakers at the workshop include Dr Kate Radford, Associate Professor in Rehabilitation Research, Nottingham University and Dr Lynne Hutton, Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine, Astley Ainslie Hospital.

To register please contact:

**Lois Peat**  
Services Administration Assistant  
Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland  
0131 243 0154  
Lois.peat@chss.org.uk
University of Strathclyde
PhD student, Michael Hamilton has taken on the role of managing the Stroke Group at Strathclyde. Michael will organise meetings, seminars and invite speakers to present to the group.

The meetings are excellent opportunities to keep up to date with and share the latest stroke research, encourage collaborations between researchers across disciplines.

If you would like information circulated to the stroke group and/or you would like to present to them please get in touch with Michael and he will organise this for you.

michael.hamilton@strath.ac.uk

Visit the University of Strathclyde web page for information about the groups aims, expertise and ongoing research.