



Data Linkage Service User Advisory Group Newsletter

Issue 20, January 2019

News

Happy New Year

We hope you all had a fantastic Christmas and New Year! We look forward to continuing to work with you all over the next year!

New CRIS Blog

Dr Karyn Ayre, NIHR Academic Clinical Fellow at King's College London, was awarded second prize in the 2018 Duncan Macmillan essay competition for her essay "The future of psychiatry research" which argued for new digital methodologies to be used in psychiatry research in order to improve the links between research data and the lived experience of people with mental health problems. Her essay has been republished as a CRIS blog post which is available to read [here](#).

Research Spotlight

In each newsletter we will highlight recent research that has been conducted using linked data, if you would like to know more about any particular piece of work please let us know.

Clozapine and all-cause mortality in treatment-resistant schizophrenia

Clozapine (also known by the brand name Zaponex) is an anti-psychotic medication that is used to treat specific mental disorders such as psychosis. In the UK, clozapine is used to treat people with schizophrenia in whom other medications have not worked - known as treatment-resistant schizophrenia. Rarely, clozapine can have the side effect of lowering the number of white blood cells in a patient's blood, making it harder for the patient to fight off infection. Due to this, regular blood monitoring of patients on clozapine is required.

Previous studies have found that people with schizophrenia and other psychoses have approximately three times higher rates of mortality when compared to the general population. A number of studies have examined how pharmacological treatments may be associated with

differences in survival in individuals with psychoses and have consistently found that clozapine users had a reduced mortality risk when compared to patients who have not used clozapine.

However, these findings have only been demonstrated in studies which compare individuals on clozapine who have treatment-resistant schizophrenia with people who are not taking clozapine but do not necessarily have treatment-resistant schizophrenia. The effect of clozapine within an exclusively treatment-resistant schizophrenia sample is inconclusive. Therefore, a group of researchers at the Maudsley BRC set out to examine the effect of clozapine on mortality exclusively in a group of individuals with treatment-resistant schizophrenia.

The researchers identified a group 2,837 patients who met the criteria for treatment-resistant schizophrenia using information from CRIS linked to the Zaponex Treatment Access System (ZTAS). ZTAS is the system used by the South London and Maudsley Trust to monitor the blood results of individuals on clozapine. Using information from the linked ZTAS data the researchers were able to distinguish which patients within the treatment-resistant group were taking clozapine.

When comparing the non-clozapine treatment-resistant group with the clozapine group they found that clozapine was associated with a reduced risk of mortality. It was concluded that clozapine reduced the risk of mortality in patient who meet the criteria for treatment-resistant schizophrenia thus providing further evidence that improving access to clozapine for individuals with treatment-resistant schizophrenia is likely to help reduce the mortality gap.

If you would like to read the full paper, it is available [here](#).

Upcoming

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on **Thursday 21st March**, from **4-6pm**, in Seminar Room 6 in the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience main building. We look forward to seeing you then!

Future Newsletters

If there is anything that you would like to see in future newsletters or if you would like more information about something mentioned in a newsletter, you can contact Amelia or Megan via email: amelia.jewell@slam.nhs.uk / megan.pritchard@kcl.ac.uk, or phone: 020 3228 8554.