

Issue 26 October 2019

News

New CRIS Blog

Dr Justin Sauer is a Consultant Psychiatrist and Clinical Lead for Memory Services in Older Adult Services in SLAM. He is the co-founder of Medichec, an online tool to help clinicians identify medicines that could cause memory and cognitive problems in older people and to improve the safety and quality of prescribing. You can read his CRIS blog discussing the development of Medichec [here](#).

Engagement Opportunity

The [Cicely Saunders Institute of Palliative Care, Policy and Rehabilitation](#), part of King's College London and based at Denmark Hill, are holding a Patient and Public Involvement workshop on Wednesday 6th November from 10.30am on the topic of the use of big data in research, including the use of routinely collected data (e.g. from patient electronic health data). During the workshop there will be discussions around why we use big data and the benefits/challenges of its use in research. There will also be two discussion sessions around service users/public views on the use of electronic health records for research including ethical and confidentiality considerations, and about how patients and public can be involved with big data projects. If you are interested in attending or would like more information about the workshop, please contact Halle Johnson by email: halle.johnson@kcl.ac.uk or phone: 020 7848 5516.

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.

Causes of hospital admission and mortality among 6,683 people who use heroin

Dan Lewer, Emily J. Tweed, Robert W. Aldridge, Katherine I. Morley

People who use illicit opioids such as heroin have higher rates of mortality and disease compared to the general population. However, the majority of previous studies examining the rates of illness in this population tend to only focus on blood borne viral infections (such as Hepatitis) and mental health problems. Drug overdose is often found to be the largest single cause of death among people who are dependent on illicit drugs, however, it usually accounts for less than half of deaths overall. Existing data suggests that cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and liver disease also cause

many deaths among people who use drugs. In order to examine the risks of mortality and disease in this population the study team used data from CRIS linked to [Hospital Episode Statistics \(HES\)](#) and [mortality data](#) to examine hospital admissions and cause of death in a large group of individuals with heroin dependence.

Using CRIS, the team were able to identify a group of 6,833 patients, aged between 18 and 64, who were receiving community-based treatment for heroin dependence between 1st January 2006 and 31st March 2017. By linking the CRIS records to HES and mortality data they found that during the follow-up period there were 732 deaths and 21,494 hospital admissions. Using statistical techniques the team were able to estimate that of the 732 deaths, 621 of these were 'excess deaths', i.e. above the number of deaths that we would expect to see in the general population over 10 years of follow-up. Similarly, of the 21,494 hospital admissions, it was calculated that 14,668 of these were 'excess admissions'.

Of the 621 excess deaths, 260 were drug-related and 361 were due to other causes - with digestive diseases causing the highest number, followed by respiratory disease, and external causes. Of the 14,668 excess hospital admissions, 3042 were drug-related and 11,790 were related to other causes including mental and behavioural disorders, digestive diseases, and external causes.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research of similar populations demonstrating the extreme risk of hospitalisation and death in this group. The majority of excess mortality and disease in the current study related to common non-communicable diseases, i.e. diseases which are not transferrable directly from one person to another such as liver disease, COPD, and head injuries. However, there are currently few interventions that aim to prevent and treat common non-communicable long-term conditions in this group. The study team concluded that their findings demonstrate an urgent need for more research in this area.

If you would like to read the article in full, it is available [here](#). Dan has also written a CRIS blog about his work, which is available [here](#).

Upcoming

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on **Thursday 12th December**, from **4-6pm**, in the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience. 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.