Spring came and brought with it the inevitable mass migration of the Psychosis Studies department to attend the International Congress on Schizophrenia Research. The fact that the temperature had barely reached 10°C in April further enthused the department to jet off to San Diego, leaving their SPSS spreadsheets behind (and, allegedly, laptops in airport lounges).

Although ICOSR is the cousin of the European held SIRS conference, the IoPPN left a pretty strong impression on our American counterparts. Professor Philip McGuire was the clinical plenary speaker, showcasing the ongoing work by the department to predict clinical outcomes in Psychosis. Our department also received the most invites for poster and oral presentations, and organised the most symposia at the conference. This leaves me in the unenviable position of attempting to summarise this huge number of talks and presentations on one side of A4.

The unofficial award for the most presentations at ICOSR would have to go to Dr Gemma Modinos, who presented a total of three times (once on behalf of Prof Hilleke Hulshoff Pol). Gemma discussed the role of GABA in the Neurobiology of Schizophrenia. In UHR patients she found reduced GABA levels in the dmPFC, with a positive correlation between GABA levels and hippocampal resting-state perfusion.

Further work in the UHR population was presented by Matilda Azis, who reported that the range of symptoms measured by the CAARMS fit into 5 dimensions, and the use of a dimensional approach could help us to better understand clinical vulnerability and treatment options in these patients.

There were many symposia dedicated to the use of MRS imaging in schizophrenia. This included myself presenting a meta-analysis of MRS data, finding that schizophrenia is associated with elevated levels of glutamatergic metabolites.

Lucy Vanes, on behalf of Dr Elias Mouchlianitis, presented exciting new findings, indicating a loss of cortical glutamatergic control of reward processing in treatment resistant patients. Finally, the potential applications of functional MRS were discussed by Dr James Stone.

Several members of the department discussed peripheral biomarkers and psychosis. Dr Tom Pollak reported that a minority of subjects at risk for psychosis are seropositive for neuronal surface autoantibodies, and this is associated with...
worse negative symptoms and cognition. Young Investigator Awardee Dr Alexis Cullen, was interested in the overlap between immune system disorders and psychosis, and her meta-analysis showed an increased prevalence of psychosis among individuals with non-neurological autoimmune disorders. Epigenetics even had something to contribute to the debate, with Amy Gillespie reporting that clozapine treatment is associated with a reduction in overall global DNA methylation, located on genes associated with the immune system.

Dr Toby Pillinger decorated the statue of Sir Henry Maudsley with Mars bars, in an attempt to remind ICOSR attendees that Sir Maudsley first noted that diabetes seemed prevalent among individuals with psychosis. Toby’s meta-analysis confirmed Sir Henry’s suspicions, finding evidence of impaired glucose homeostasis in first-episode schizophrenia.

Following on from Professor McGuire’s talk there was much discussion regarding the prediction of treatment response: Dr Sameer Jauhar reported that striatal dopamine function in patients first presenting with psychosis is higher in those who go on to respond to treatment. A cheaper alternative was explored by Dr Manuela Russo using paper and pen cognitive tests. She found that patients who did not respond after 12 weeks of treatment had lower overall cognitive performance at baseline.

Dr Maria Rogdaki addressed whether dopamine abnormalities represent state or trait markers, and reported increased dopamine synthesis capacity in individuals with 22q11 deletion compared to healthy controls. Dopamine may be the final common pathway in psychosis, however both Young Investigator Awardee’s Dr Antonella Trotta and Dr Stefania Tognin emphasised how childhood adversity confers an increased risk of psychosis. Antonella investigated whether the effect of childhood adversity on psychosis is moderated by the polygenic risk score for schizophrenia; she found that both have additive effects on risk but do not interact, supporting a multifactorial threshold model of psychosis. Stefania discussed how childhood trauma also impacts upon educational achievement in UHR individuals, as childhood trauma was significantly associated to number of years of education, regardless of diagnosis.

Katie Hazelgrove found that women at risk of postpartum psychosis experience more childhood maltreatment than women not at risk, and Dr Montserrat Fusté reported structural abnormalities in brain areas relevant to the pathophysiology of affective psychoses in women with postpartum psychosis. The biochemical and social dimensions of psychosis risk were brought together in two talks; in a well-devised study. Dr Rob McCutcheon found an increased amygdala response to white faces in individuals of black ethnicity, which was greater in individuals living in areas of low own-group ethnic density. This is of interest given the increased rates of psychosis in ethnic minorities who live in areas where there are few people of that individual’s own ethnic group. Secondly, Dr Simone Ciufolini reported that FEP patients exposed to abuse showed cortical thinning in brain regions which in healthy volunteers exposed to abuse showed cortical thickening, suggesting an interaction between diagnosis and abuse.

Much was discussed in terms of the pathophysiology of psychosis, but in terms of interventions, Young investigator awardee Dr Natasza Orlov reported encouraging findings of improved working memory performance 24 hours post-tDCS, which was also associated with increased activation in the medial frontal cortex beneath the anode.

As we approach my word limit some may accuse me of being biased towards neuroimaging, and they’d probably be right, however I’m sure someone could do the other symposia justice in the next newsletter? I’d be doing a disservice if I didn’t mention Sir Robin Murray, who brought cannabis to the table; leading a symposium focusing on the significance of, and the mechanisms underlying, cannabis-induced psychosis. The symposium included Dr Marta Di Forti, who presented data from the EU-GEI study that daily use of high potency cannabis increases the risk of suffering from a psychotic episode, with an adjusted Odd’s Ratio from 4.5 to 8. Dr Vishal Bhavsar argued that cigarette smoking may also contribute to increased psychosis risk.

After a busy week the department returned to the IOPPN, at least now with summer showing itself, but missing the Hyatt hotel lunch spread!

Dr Kate Merritt
Post-Doctoral Researcher
Growing in many ways!

The MSc Organisational Psychiatry and Psychology (OPP) is one of the first of its kind in the UK and Europe and is designed for people who wish to gain up-to-date knowledge and understanding of Psychology and Psychiatry as applied to work and organisational behaviour. We are growing!

The course is following a three-year expansion plan aiming to achieve a total of FTE of 50 students by 2018-2019, after a fantastic year in 2016-2017 with a total of 30 students. From 2017-2018 the OPP course will run as an independent programme no longer integrated in the Mental Health Studies Programme.

The programme builds on knowledge from Psychiatry and Psychology as applied to the workplace to develop an in-depth understanding of occupational mental health at an individual, interpersonal and organisational level. Pivotal to the course is an overview of key aspects of mental illness enabling students to build on their existing knowledge and experience of mental health and illness, with reference to aetiology, classification, assessment and management. This overview is combined with the contemporary approach to organisational behaviour and identifies mental health and wellbeing as organisational key performance indicators. The concept of prevention, promotion and amelioration of health in relation to the occupational setting are matched with the challenges associated with organisational change, development and resilience focusing on occupational health and wellbeing. A refined course structure for 2018-2019 will add a strong component on mental capital and the different organisational practices contributing to the continuous promotion and development of individual and organisational cognitive capability, flexibility and efficiency of learning and emotional resources. In this regard, employability and trainability are considered central to the development of organisation’s mental capital, i.e., its cognitive and emotional resources.

Five main objectives summarise the aims of the OPP programme:

1. Develop knowledge and understanding of mental health and illness and the different approaches within the field
2. Better management of the cognitive and emotional resources in the workplace promoting wellbeing and resilience throughout the employment life cycle.
3. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the relationships between work, working conditions and well-being and mental health.
4. Distinguish between a range of organisational factors and conditions that may be experienced as workplace stressors and understand the association between stress and ill health (i.e., psychoneuroendocrinology and psychoneuroimmunology).
5. Understand organisations as complex, dynamic and ever changing social systems and introduce contemporary approaches to organisational change and development and their application to mental health and well-being (i.e., the prevention, promotion and amelioration of occupational health and wellbeing).

Key topics: Occupational stressors, organisational labour, emotional contagion, coping skills and emotional regulation, work-life balance and resilience, the multicultural workplace, leadership and personality disorders at work, psychological contract and workplace wellbeing, voice and silence in organisations, return to work and individual placement and support, engagement, flow and job crafting.

Dr Teresa C. D’Oliveira MSc, PhD Programme Leader for MSc Organisational Psychiatry and Psychology

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Psychosis Studies Prizes 2017

**Paper of the Year**

“Impaired glucose homeostasis in first-episode schizophrenia: A systematic review and meta-analysis”

Dr Toby Pillinger

**PhD of the Year**

“The Course of Cognitive Impairment across the Psychosis Spectrum”

Dr Josephine Mollon
The renewal of the BRC has seen the creation of the new Precision Psychiatry Cluster

Precision Psychiatry refers to the classification of patients with specific mental health disorders into sub-groups with particular characteristics based on genetics, neuroimaging, cognition or other measures.

The aim is that these sub-groups can then be treated with specific therapies. The NIHR Maudsley Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) Precision Psychiatry cluster includes Neuroimaging (Professor Steve Williams), Biomarkers and Genomics (Professor Cathryn Lewis) and the BioResource themes (Dr Gerome Breen).

In October Dr Matthew Kempton will be taking on a new role as the NIHR Maudsley Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) Precision Psychiatry Fellow. “The new Precision Psychiatry Cluster comes at a time where large scale neuroimaging studies paired with rich biological and clinical data is really taking off. Here at the IoPPN we have completed the final follow-up of the international EU-GEI study, and PSYSCAN is in full throttle of data collection. I’m looking forward to working with this data and other BRC datasets with the theme leads to investigate novel methods of data analysis that will lead to translational tools that can be used to tailor specific treatments to patient subgroups”.

Dr Matthew Kempton
Senior Lecturer and MRC CDA Fellow

In an uncertain peri-brexit world, it becomes more important than ever to have a mixed portfolio of research funding. There is a host of new research money being made available exclusively for collaborative work with commercial entities (through the MRC funding schemes and InnovateUK and Wellcome Innovation). Almost all of the research we carry out has potential commercial value – whether it be stratifying disease, clarifying mechanism, or testing therapies – devices or drugs working on psychological or biological mechanisms. The new Centre for CNS Therapeutics offers researchers the opportunity to diversify their research collaboration and funding through engaging with commercial companies. This includes small or start-up companies with novel products looking for advice on a potential application to mental healthcare, traditional pharmaceutical companies looking for biomarkers or clinical trials, or interesting research methodologies or approaches looking for commercial partners to use their ideas.

The CCNST is a partnership between King’s College London’s Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience and South London and Maudsley and King’s College Hospital NHS Foundation Trusts.

We believe “as part of King’s Health Partners, we have world-class research facilities and expertise at our disposal that only enhance commercial trials and collaborative research. In our quest to engage all staff in research and all patients as research participants the CCNST acts as first point of contact for commercial related research. By doing so we aim to promote the benefits of collaborating with industry to researchers, patients and carers across our whole partnership”.

The key person in the CCNST is our Operations Manager - Jerry Brumby. He joined the CCNST in November 2016 and brings a 20 year background in the pharma industry, aligning his long term goal to engage patients and carers in research. Jerry’s mission is to forge successful long-term partnerships that continue to support the academic and commercial goals of the vested stakeholders – but most importantly to benefit patients. The CCNST does this by profiling the internal academic excellence and resources and matching these to the opportunities of partnership with industry. Helping Jerry in this role is Professor Sukhi Shergill, who is Director of the new centre and will be applying his experience of commercial trials in schizophrenia to support our researchers in identifying commercial partners and vice versa.

Interested in learning more about working with industry? Please contact Jerry on 020 7848 5733

Jerry Brumby
Operations Manager – King’s Centre for CNS Therapeutics

Professor Sukhi Shergill
Director - King’s Centre for CNS Therapeutics & Professor of Psychiatry & Systems Neuroscience

The new Centre for CNS Therapeutics

Centre for CNS Therapeutics

Precision psychiatry cluster

JERRY BRUMBY
In March, Professor Sukhi Shergill launched his Psychology and Neuroscience of Psychosis module, delivered via distance learning, as part of the IoPPN’s Psychology and Neuroscience of Mental Health (PNoMH) MSc. Spanning biological and environmental underpinnings, the continuum of psychotic experience, clinical assessment, treatment, both established as well as cutting edge, and the greater impact on family, carers, and society, the module offers an immersive experience in psychosis studies.

The module features lectures from some of the most highly cited clinical academics in the field including Professor Sir Robin Murray, Professor Sir Graham Thornicroft, and Professor Dame Til Wykes. Using the distance learning format to its great potential, the module is ripe with a variety of innovative bespoke content. Three On The Couch segments, organic conversations between esteemed experts on timely topics, are featured including Professor Diana Rose and Professor Rodrigo Bressan discussing the importance of involving service users in mental health research, Professor Sir Robin Murry and Professor Michael Lynskey exploring the relationship between cannabis and psychosis, and Dr Derek Tracy and Professor Rodrigo Bressan reflecting on the practice of psychiatry today. Clinical assessment is presented as a triptic with Dr Derek Tracy offering a traditional academic lecture, demonstrating a clinical assessment with an actor, and then talking with a patient about their experience of being assessed while acutely psychotic. Clinical interviews with patients are presented by Dr Jonathan West, along with their case studies. In an intimate discussion, a mother and son walk through their journey as carers for their loved one with severe psychosis. The relationship between psychosis and art is explored in a piece on the Bethlem Gallery, including a feature with artist Sara Haq. In addition, six exciting research projects happening in the IoPPN are highlighted. External content was also used to round up the delivery including material from mentalhealthcare.org.uk, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and the publically available Nature video “Schizophrenia: What’s in my head?” featuring Professor Sukhi Shergill in conversation with artist Sue Morgan. In its inaugural launch, students were guided through the content by their Teaching Fellow Dr Patrick Davey, Specialist Registrar in psychiatry, and PNoMH Principal Teaching Fellow Dr Gisele Dias. The offering was a resounding success, earning some of the highest student satisfaction data in the programme and an impressive 100% of students reporting the module to be highly intellectually stimulating.

As part of PNoMH, Psychology and Neuroscience of Psychosis is available to nearly 300 active students from over 40 countries around the globe. In addition, this module, as well as Pharmacotherapies in Mental Health led by Dr Derek Tracy and Dr Dawn Albertson, will be available to Mental Health Studies MSc students as options for their degree via a new module share agreement with the PNoMH programme. The next module run will begin 26th October 2017.

Rodrigo has always been keen that his research should be of value to society. He has been a leading light in communicating psychiatry to medical students and to families and carers of people with schizophrenia. One of his key collaborators in this work is Jorge Assis who has lived with experience of schizophrenia, and lectures with Rodrigo on these courses. Rodrigo feels that the students learn much more from somebody with schizophrenia than from a professor. He has also written a series of psychoeducation books with people with schizophrenia, contributed to anti-stigma campaigns, and created a school mental health program called “Cuca Legal” (Cool Mind). Finally, he has worked with Mara Gabrilli, a politician who developed tetraplegia after an accident, but recovered to become one of the most important members of the Brazilian Congress. Rodrigo has worked with her to implement policies to improve the rights of people with mental disorders. Most recently, Rodrigo, together with Prof Jair Mari, another IoPPN alumnus, has founded ‘Y-Mind’, a Brazilian foundation that integrates neuroscience, psychiatry, and social science to improve mental health in young people.
Dr Paolo Fusar-Poli’s research focuses on the detection, assessment and treatment of adolescents and young adults at risk of developing psychosis. He is working to identify the specific factors which make an individual vulnerable to developing psychosis, leading to better, more tailored preventative treatments and improved outcomes for the most severe psychiatric disorders.

Paolo has been working with colleagues at the EPIC (Early Psychosis: Intervention & Clinical-detection) lab at King’s College London and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM), to develop a new psychosis risk calculator which is available online at www.psychosis-risk.net.

Psychosis is a mental disorder which causes people to perceive or interpret things differently from those around them, sometimes involving hallucinations or delusions. If left untreated, it can potentially develop into a severe mental illness, and existing treatments for psychosis aren’t always effective.

As such, preventing psychosis from developing in the first place could improve the lives of many adolescents and young adults. To do this, we need to first identify those who are at risk, and treat them with preventative strategies.

Although there are existing clinical tools available for detecting psychosis risk, these assessments are usually used only when an individual is already accessing specialist health care services such as SLaM’s OASIS (Outreach and Support in South-London) service. Current clinical practice means that young people are not always referred to these specialist services early enough, and their illness may have already progressed to the point that it may be too late to benefit from preventative treatment.

Our new psychosis risk calculator allows us to predict an individual’s risk of developing psychosis based on simple clinical information routinely collected by mental healthcare services, such as age, gender, ethnicity and initial diagnosis. To select which factors were likely to best predict an individual’s risk of developing psychosis, we consulted the best available meta-analytical evidence from research in this field. We then developed and fine-tuned our model by testing it on anonymous real-life patient data, accessed through the NIHR Maudsley Biomedical Research Centre’s Clinical Record Interactive Search (CRIS) system.

Our evaluation of the risk calculator – published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal JAMA Psychiatry – showed that it is more useful at identifying adolescents and young adults at risk for psychosis than current clinical practice. Our tool has been externally tested and validated to rigorous international standards, and it is cheap and easy to implement in clinical practice.

Our hope is that the calculator can be used by mental health professionals in specialist (secondary) mental healthcare services to detect which of their patients are more likely to develop psychosis, allowing them to be signposted to specific preventative services such as OASIS for in-depth assessment and tailored preventative treatment.

The calculator will be soon piloted in some South London & Maudsley services to test its real world effectiveness. The EPIC lab is currently testing refined versions of the calculator, as well as proceeding with further external validations in other clinical scenarios. If these tests are successful, our risk calculator has the potential to improve the lives of many people, especially adolescents and young adults who are at risk of developing the most severe psychiatric disorders.

Dr Paolo Fusar-Poli
Reader


New online psychosis risk calculator could help identify candidates for early intervention services

Dr Paolo Fusar-Poli
Brain stimulation may improve cognitive performance in people with schizophrenia

Brain stimulation could be used to treat cognitive deficits frequently associated with schizophrenia, according to a new study from Dr Natasza Orlov and Professor Sukhi Shergill.

There is currently a lack of effective treatments and an urgent need for new interventions to address these problems in short-term memory and decision making, which are often severely impaired in people with schizophrenia. This can make it difficult for them to adequately plan necessary focus and attention, and remember information, which has a significant impact on day-to-day life. These so-called cognitive deficits are not addressed by current antipsychotic medications, which only treat more widely recognised symptoms such as delusions and hallucinations. Researchers are therefore increasingly looking towards novel interventions and ‘neuromodulation’ has emerged as a promising new technique that can physically alter and improve the brain’s functioning. In the study, published today in Brain, the researchers set out to use one particular form of neuromodulation – transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) – to see if they could undo some of these cognitive deficits in 28 people with schizophrenia. tDCS applies a small, painless electrical current across the brain through two electrodes applied to the scalp.

The researchers applied tDCS with tasks which specifically tapped into ‘working memory’ and ‘executive functioning’: the principle was that ‘training’ the brain in regions that are typically poorly performing in schizophrenia would be enhanced by the brain stimulation technique. An improvement in cognitive performance was seen in those who had tDCS (and not in participants who received a ‘sham’ intervention).

The researchers also ran brain imaging analyses to determine what was happening in the brain as these changes occurred. They found that tDCS was linked with changes in brain activity in regions associated with working memory and executive functioning, as well as in the cerebellum, a part of the brain increasingly recognised as important in learning.

Although an early study into neuromodulation and schizophrenia, this research is the first to suggest that tDCS could improve cognitive performance by changing activity in the brain. The study had a relatively limited sample size, so a larger, randomised controlled trial is now required to replicate these findings.

Dr Natasza Orlov said: ‘It’s critical that we address some of the cognitive deficits seen in people with schizophrenia, as these determine how people do in real world settings, such as work and relationships. Anything that could positively address these could be incredibly helpful to our patients and their families.’

Professor Sukhi Shergill said: ‘Our study is the first of its kind and confirms that tDCS may help with some aspects of cognitive deterioration in patients with schizophrenia. Given the lack of treatments in this area, this is enormously important.”

Dr Natasza Orlov
Postdoctoral Research Worker

Professor Sukhi Shergill
Professor of Psychiatry & Systems Neuroscience

An event for post-docs at the Grove pub was held last month, where the IoPPN Research Support Manager Ying Chen advised post docs about eligible grants such as the Wellcome Trust, MRC, NIHR and the Royal Society. Professor Christine Ecker also joined to share her wisdom for progressing in academia.

The JAC plan on organising another social event for post-docs in the new academic year and will continue to circulate information and events via email. If you’re a post-doc in the department and have not received any emails from us, then please email kate.merritt@kcl.ac.uk and we will add you to the post-doc mailing list. Similarly, if the department wish to advertise any lectureship or teaching positions to post-docs feel free to use our mailing list by contacting us.

Both the Psychosis Studies Meetings and the JAC coffee and cake will return in the new term.

We would also like to welcome our new PhD students in the department: Anna Cartwright, Andrea De Micheli, Derek Tracy, Katherine Beck, Kyra-Verena Sendt, Lilla Porffy, Lucy Burgess, Luis Alameda, Meng Di Hou, Rafaela Melo Sampaio, Ryan Hammoud, Stephen Kaar and Victoria Rodriguez.

George Gifford
PhD student, Psychosis Studies
Awards & Achievements

Staff Promotions
This year we celebrate the promotion to Reader of two of our staff members

Dr Alice Egerton
Dr Paolo Fusar-Poli

Alice’s promotion reflects her contributions to both research and education at the IoPPN (joint promotion route). Her research focusses on the neurobiology of schizophrenia, mainly using neuroimaging approaches, to support new pharmacological approaches to treatment.

She has published 50 articles in this area, with substantial grant funding mainly from the MRC. In education, Alice is the Divisional Education Co-Lead, Programme Director for the MSc Psychiatric Research and a senior fellow of the HEA.

Paolo’s promotion has been awarded on the basis of his contributions to both research and education at the IoPPN. His research focusses on the detection of individuals at risk of developing psychosis and on their preventative treatments.

He has published several articles in this area that have resulted in being very influential worldwide and highly cited. He has obtained grant funding from the MRC and NIMH. In education, Paolo is leader for the Psychopharmacology Module of the Early Intervention in Psychosis MSc

Dr Jenny Yiend made Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy

Jenny’s contribution to education has been recognized with a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

Jenny applied for the Fellowship with support from the King’s Learning Institute Teaching Recognition at King’s programme (TRaK).

Principal Fellow is the highest award that the HEA can bestow and Jenny is first HEA Principal Fellow at the IoPPN. Jenny will join other awardees at a TRaK reception to celebrate later in the year.

Dr Gemma Modinos amongst Science and Technology in Society (STS) Forum “Future Leaders” in Kyoto

The Royal Society’s Foreign Secretary, Professor Richard Catlow FRS, has nominated Gemma to join the “Future Leaders Program” at the STS Annual Meeting in Kyoto. The Program includes up to 100 young, promising leaders and includes the special event “Dialogue between Future Leaders and Nobel Laureates”.

They will also reap the benefit of building their network with top world leaders (scientists including Nobel laureates, academics, policy makers, business leaders, journalists and others) as well as their peers. Gemma is very excited about this excellent opportunity and will submit a short summary after the Forum.

She has also been selected to present at the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Royal Society and the Wellcome Trust Symposium in Beijing. The meeting commemorates the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relationships between the UK and China.

Gemma received the 2017 Luc Ciompi Award by the Swiss Association for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (SGPP). The prize is awarded for valuable scientific work on the interactions between emotion and cognition and their consequences for the understanding and treatment of schizophrenic psychosis. The award is in recognition of Gemma’s scientific work applying a social and emotional neuroscience approach to psychosis.

BAP President’s Poster Prize

Dr Abhi Ashok received the President’s Poster Prize at the British Association of Psychopharmacology Summer Meeting 2017, Harrogate.
Recently the Pay Gap working group of the Diversity & Inclusion Self-Assessment Team (D&I SAT) has been working with the Dean’s Office to review the salaries of all IoPPN staff (Grades 1-8). Some important trends were highlighted; these include:

• An over-representation of women (under-representation of men) at lower pay grades.
• An under-representation of women (over-representation of men) in the higher spine points compared to lower spine points within grades.
• Disparities in the gender distribution of fixed-term vs permanent academic contracts, with an over-representation of females on fixed-term contracts.

These conclusions also chime with the Annual Analysis of Pay survey (2017) recently published in the Times Education supplement’s (TES). The TES survey also reveals that academic pay is still falling in real terms and that equality is still an issue with regard to gender and race.

The D&I committee is developing strategies to tackle these issues and their underlying causes. Unconscious bias too often prevents the nomination and recruitment of qualified female (and other under-represented groups) into more senior roles. In addition to unconscious forms of bias it has become clear that female would-be applicants can be put off from applying for advertised positions if they are written using “gender-coded” wording and language.

The group is working to explore and address these issues and (through the central D&I committee) to effect the necessary policy changes at the IoPPN. The intention is to enable people to become more pro-active when it comes to putting themselves forward for promotion and to know that the evaluation process will be fair, objective and transparent for academics and professional services staff.

Some of these changes are already being put into effect. For instance as part of the pre-checks done by Human Resources (HR) prior to the release of new job adverts, text-mining software are now routinely used to evaluate potential adverts in terms of their use of gendered language.

Some of the discrepancy in pay is likely to reflect differences in salary negotiation strategy. Research that suggests women are just as likely to engage in salary negotiation, but are far less likely to be successful. This is particularly true for younger women and some jobs which require higher levels of education. In order to make the playing field more level in this respect the D&I SAT is developing an online negotiation toolkit. The aim is to make this available to all academic and professional services staff (female and male).

Dr Conrad Iyegbe
Postdoctoral researcher, Psychosis Studies
RECENT GRANTS

Extending the benefits of primary indicated prevention to improve outcomes of Psychosis. Fusar-Poli, P., McGuire, P., Dobson, R., Stewart, R. Funder: MRC - Medical Research Council: £80,000.00

The role of nutrition in neurodevelopment and psychotic illness. David, A., Reichenberg, A. Funder: NIH - National Institutes of Health: £53,010.00

Cardiac function in Schizophrenia. Howes, O. Funder: BMA - British Medical Association: £24,496.00

Understanding the biological mechanisms associated with anxiety in very preterm children. Nosarti, C., Counsell, S., Happe, F. Funder: Action Medical Research: £185,999.00

The role of glutamate and the N-methyl-D-aspartate receptor (NMDAR) in schizophrenia. Beck, K., Hammers, A., Howes, O., McGuire, P. Funder: Royal College of Psychiatrists: £223,955.00

Senior Investigator award. McGuire, P. Funder: NIHR - National Institute for Health Research: £75,000.00

Applying the new developments in molecular genetics for the benefit of people with Bipolar Disorder or Depression. Murray, R. Funder: Psychiatry Research Trust: £252,094.00

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


Dazzan, P. (2017). Not just risk: there is also resilience and we should understand its neurobiological basis. Schizophrenia Research.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


Fusar-Poli, P. (2017). Extending the benefits of indicated prevention to improve outcomes of first-episode psychosis. JAMA Psychiatry. 74, 7, p. 667-668


Fusar-Poli, P. (2017). Negative psychosis prevention trials. JAMA Psychiatry. 74, 6, p. 651


