



DARC Summer Newsletter 2017

The past year has been busy and successful. DARC members have secured new research funding; several major projects (including the Identification and Brief Advice for alcohol and the EU alcohol survey RARHA) have been completed on time and the results continue to be disseminated in a variety of formats. We have contributed to conferences and meetings held at Middlesex and elsewhere; we are broadening our links with community groups and encouraging students to link in to our activities. Our PhD students are doing well and we continue to attract enquiries regarding post-graduate study. The DARC website has been revamped and is now much more up to date and informative than previously – and we now have a Twitter account. You will find full details of our activities and publications as well as notification of forthcoming events on the website: <http://drugandalcoholresearchcentre.org>. You can also follow us on twitter: [@DARC_Mdx](https://twitter.com/DARC_Mdx). We welcome suggestions for holding seminars or relevant events of any kind or ideas for new research and knowledge exchange.

New projects and initiatives

The EPPIC Project

DARC Co-Directors Professor Betsy Thom and Associate Professor Karen Duke are leading a new three year European project Exchanging Prevention Practices on polydrug use among youth In Criminal justice systems (EPPIC). The study is funded by Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA) and involves partners in six European countries (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom). The project focuses on prevention and addressing all types of illicit drug use among young people (15-24) who are in touch with the criminal justice system. The aim is to gather knowledge, exchange best practice and identify transferable ideas about interventions that are currently in use or being developed. The project started in January 2017 and lasts for three years. Project website: <https://www.eppic-project.eu>

Polish drinkers project

Dr. Rachel Herring and Marian Bayley have been awarded a Research Innovation Grant from Alcohol Research UK for a study exploring the experiences of Polish women and men in a community based alcohol treatment service in London. The main aim is to further understanding of the pathways into, through and out of treatment, thinking about what helps people come into, stay and complete treatment, what challenges they face and how they can be overcome. It is a collaborative project involving a service provider (HAGA) and individuals and organisations with specific knowledge of the Polish community. The findings will be used to inform the delivery and design of services. Helen Gleeson will be joining the research team and the project will begin in September 2017 for 15 months.

Experiences of e-cigarettes

Our new studies also include examination of the experiences of e-cigarette users: The development of e-cigarettes as a stop smoking intervention has been contentious and there is great debate on a number of issues including their safety, regulation and its effectiveness in helping smokers quit. Research in this area is led by Dr. Camille Alexis-Garsee and focuses on (1) the experiences of smokers who tried and stopped using e-cigarettes, to better understand how these experiences may hinder the transition from smoking to 'vaping' and (2) young peoples' reasons and experiences of using e-cigarettes. Findings from current studies suggest that particular factors may hinder the conversion from smoking to vaping and e-cigarette users may need more tailored support in their efforts to quit smoking if using the e-cigarette. This work is being developed further in collaboration with colleagues in the USA.

The role and perceptions of nursing academics towards addiction teaching

Professor Clancy, along with Professor Trish Hafford-Letchfield, Dr Tim Weaver, Nicky Lambert, and Dani Collins are leading a transnational exploratory study to investigate the role and perceptions of nursing academics towards teaching about addiction on their curricula. The study which is due to commence in September 2017 will involve colleagues from UK; Ireland; Netherlands; Finland; Denmark; Albania; Macedonia; Canada; USA; Brazil; and Israel.

Community based care for older people with alcohol-related harm

Being able to identify, prevent, manage and support older people with drinking problems is important for recovery or managing their situation. But little is known about the daily challenges faced by the social care workforce when an older person is at risk or neglects themselves – or when and who to involve if they are unsafe. This interactive workshop is an offshoot of recently completed research on identifying and responding to alcohol issues in non-clinical settings. Led by Professor Trish Hafford-Letchfield (email: p.hafford-leitchfield@mdx.ac.uk), the workshop aims a) to explore and describe current issues for the community-based workforce, b) to explore the potential for using visual imagery to convey information about the issues in an accessible format. The workshop will be held on 4 September 2017.

Conferences and Seminars 2016-2017

DARC annual conference June 2017

This year the conference focussed on *Young people, drugs and the criminal justice system*. The conference was organised by Associate Professor Karen Duke and was well attended with participants, comprising students, academics, practitioners in the criminal justice field and a range of people working in the community in prevention and intervention with young people. Speakers included Dr. David Porteous from Middlesex University as part of a distinguished group of academic and professional contributors. A brief report from the conference will be made available on the DARC website.

The national alcohol & drugs education conference October 2016

DARC was a collaborating partner in a conference run by The Alcohol Education Trust and Mentor to consider 'Evidence based practice in alcohol and drugs education: empowering young people to make healthy choices'. The conference, which took place at Middlesex, was attended by teachers, PSHE leads, academics, local authority representatives and others working with young people and substance use. The keynote address was given by Sarah Newton, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State. Professor Betsy Thom spoke on programme evaluation: 'How do we recognise a good alcohol or drug programme'.

Results from a cross- national survey in 19 European countries. (RARHA) April 2017

This seminar reported key findings from a recently completed study on alcohol consumption and related harms, a joint action project funded by the EU. The Middlesex research team comprised Professor Betsy Thom, Professor Carmel Clancy and Dr. Gary Hearne, with collaboration from Dr. John Foster at Greenwich University. Report: Moskalewicz J., Room R., Thom B. (eds) (2016) *Comparative monitoring of alcohol epidemiology across the EU. Baseline assessment and suggestions for future action. Synthesis report*.

Publications

Journal special issues

Papers from the 2016 DARC Annual Conference *Workforce Development: Challenges, Opportunities and the Way Forward 'where we have been, where we are, and where we are going'* are now all available online and will be published in a Special Issue on workforce development in the addiction field in the journal *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy* in autumn 2017. The collection includes papers from Australia, New Zealand, the UK and Europe.

DARC members have also contributed to a Special Issue collection of papers on delivering alcohol brief interventions (IBA) in non-health care settings published in *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy* (Vol 23, No. 5, 2016). Drawing on the findings of a study funded by Alcohol Research UK (ALRUK) Betsy Thom and colleagues examined the role of training in IBA implementation. Rachel Herring and colleagues considered issues around the moves to extend the IBA delivery to social housing settings; Arun Sondhi

and colleagues reported the findings of a qualitative study of delivering alcohol IBA in prison settings. An additional paper from the same study by Trish Hafford-Letchfield and colleagues looks at the role of social workers and social carers in responding to alcohol (in press).

Books

Power and politics in relation to drug and alcohol use are examined in two books by DARC members published in 2017.

Butler, S., Elmeland, K., Nicholls, J. and Thom, B (2017) *Alcohol Power and Public Health* (Routledge). The authors examine the emergence of the public health perspective on alcohol policy in Europe. Using cases studies from four countries - Denmark, England, Scotland and Ireland- the authors provide a historical perspective on the development of alcohol policy in Europe, explore the relationship between evidence, values and power and consider what conditions create – or prevent – policy change.

MacGregor, S. (in press) *The Politics of Drugs: Perceptions, Power and Policies* (Palgrave Macmillan). Susanne MacGregor explores the complexities of drug policy in Britain focusing on developments since the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 covering debates at national level and local experiences set in international and European context. She discusses arguments around drug policy reform, in particular the role of politicians, the media and advocacy organizations.

January 2017 saw the launch of a handbook aimed at students and researchers: Kolind, T., Thom, B. and Hunt G. (eds.) (2016) *Handbook of Drug and Alcohol Studies* (SAGE Publ). The Handbook contains contributions from DARC members: Professor Betsy Thom and Dr. Carmen Aceijas (homelessness and substance use), Associate Professor Karen Duke (the prison population) and Professor Susanne MacGregor (public health).

A full list of DARC publications is available on the website.

DARC PhD students

Congratulations to Dr. Nimesh Samarasinghe who successfully defended his thesis: Drug policy-making in Sri Lanka: people, politics and power. Dr. Samarasinghe formerly worked as a manager in the NHS and HMPS developing and implementing community and prison drug and alcohol services respectively. He is currently working in Qatar where he is employed as a Consultant within Professor the Lord Ara Darzi's Team, supporting the modernisation of health services in Qatar. He is hoping to publish a book from his thesis in the near future. He was supervised by Betsy Thom, Karen Duke and Jenni Ward.

Arun Sondhi, one of our DARC Associates, started his PhD in September 2016 examining the reconviction of prisoners presenting for prison based alcohol treatment in England. Arun is an experienced independent researcher and consultant with a strong track record of drug research within the health and criminal justice systems. Arun is supervised by Betsy Thom, Rachel Herring and Karen Duke.

Following a competitive application and interview process, the ALRUK- Middlesex studentship was awarded to Andrew Coventry. Andrew, who is currently a mental health worker with people with dual diagnosis, has a background in criminology and a Masters in Drug and Alcohol from Glasgow University. He will start his studies in September 2017 supervised by Rachel Herring, Betsy Thom and Carmel

Clancy. He will examine the role of peer mentors and volunteers within alcohol treatment services, in relation to issues of workforce wellbeing and development.

Teaching

New development

MOOC planned for the autumn: 'Falling Down' – older people and substance use

In collaboration with colleagues from NCETA, Australia and Matuaraki, New Zealand, Profs Carmel Clancy and Trish Hafford-Letchfield, are leading on a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) – called 'falling down' – older people and substance use which will be delivered in the Autumn (October) 2017.

Evidence on the extent of problematic substance use in older people (defined as 65+) is limited, making it difficult to estimate the precise extent and implications of this concern. According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drug and Drug Addiction this lack of intelligence challenges health and social care agencies ability to scope an appropriate response framework in coming years for a "neglected problem among our neglected citizens" (EMCDDA, 2008). From information that is available trends suggest that figures will double by 2020.

Open sessions on drugs and alcohol

As always, we have contributed to the Schools Interprofessional Learning (IPL) Symposia which runs over the academic year. Professor Carmel Clancy delivers 1.5hr seminars - repeated three times throughout the year long schedule on Drug and Alcohol Awareness (IPL seminar 1); and Brief Assessment and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT). These sessions are open to all School of Health and Education students but primarily attended by nursing, midwifery and social work. They offer an introduction and overview on how health and social care professionals can play a role in primary prevention, early intervention, and the importance of building positive therapeutic alliances to facilitate service user engagement. Average attendance per seminar is 70 students – so this year the throughput has been approximately 450 students.

International training: Universal Treatment Curriculum for Substance Use Disorders

Professor Carmel Clancy, was invited to participate in the Universal Treatment Curriculum for Substance Use Disorders (UTC) for 'global trainers'. This programme delivered over two separate weeks (November 2016; July 2017) at the UN Headquarters, Vienna, Austria, is part of the Drug Advisory Programme (DAP) of the Colombo Plan in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and with funding from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), US Department of State. On completion Professor Clancy will be a 'certified trainer' and part of the Colombo Plan DAP training team. The Colombo Plan is a regional organisation that embodies the concept of collective intergovernmental effort to strengthen economic and social development of member countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The primary focus of their activities is on human resources development. In addition to delivering the training, the materials are provided as a 'free resource' and training can be offered and disseminated by the certified trainer within their own country.