



**First Annual Conference** 

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# Maximising the impact of Scottish drugs research: from inception to publication

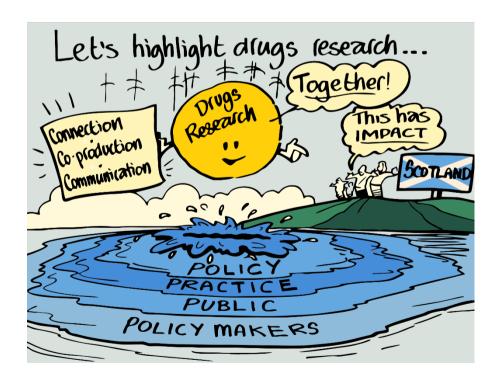
28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 Grand Central Hotel Glasgow

# 2018 CONFERENCE REPORT

#### 1 Introduction

On the 28th November 2018, the <u>Drugs Research Network Scotland (DRNS)</u> were delighted to hold their first annual conference titled **Maximising the impact of Scottish drugs research:** from inception to publication. Supported by the <u>Society for the Study of Addiction</u>, the one-day conference was designed to help the Scottish drugs research community to produce more effective and impactful research. The day included a series of presentations and workshops, as well as academic posters authored by researchers from across the UK. The event was fully subscribed, and we hosted around 120 delegates including academic and peer researchers, Masters and PhD students, researchers from the NHS, third sector service providers, and people with lived/living experience of drug use.

This report provides a summary of the event. All conference outputs, including videos and slides from presentations, workshop materials, graphics and photographs are available on the DRNS website at <a href="https://drns.ac.uk/conference2018">https://drns.ac.uk/conference2018</a>



# 2 Programme

09.15 - 09.45	Registration and refreshments			
MORNING PLENARY: Chaired by Dr Alison Munro, University of Dundee				
09.45 – 10.00	Welcome Prof. Catriona Matheson, DRNS Convenor			
10.00 – 10.30	Research into policy: some examples of success Prof. Alex Stevens, University of Kent			
10.30 – 11.00	Getting good ideas into practice: how is implementation science useful for service improvement?  Prof. Tracy Finch, Northumbria University			
11.00 – 11.20	Poster presentations			
11.20 – 11.45	Break			
WORKSHOP SES	SIONS			
11.45 – 12.45	<ul> <li>A. Democratising drugs research? Navigating the evidence and building on people's experience to make it work for everyone</li> <li>Jason Wallace, Scottish Drugs Forum</li> <li>Dr Gillian Tober, Leeds Addiction Unit</li> <li>Dr Tessa Parkes, University of Stirling</li> </ul>			
	B. Preparing a strong grant application Prof. Kate Hunt, University of Stirling			
	C. The power of large datasets and data linkage Lee Barnsdale, NHS Information Services Division Suhail Iqbal, Administrative Data Research Centre			
12.45 – 13.45	Lunch			
AFTERNOON PLE	ENARY: Chaired by Duncan Hill, NHS Lanarkshire			
13.45 – 14.15	Getting published: A how-to guide Prof. Betsy Thom, Middlesex University			
14.15 – 14.45	Using non-academic methods in knowledge exchange Prof. Harry Sumnall, Liverpool John Moores University			
14.45 – 15.05	Poster presentations			
15.05 – 15.30	Break			
WORKSHOP SES	SIONS			
15.30–16.30	<ul> <li>D. Research ethics and governance in drugs research</li> <li>Dr Anne Whittaker, University of Stirling</li> <li>E. Communicating research effectively with policy makers</li> <li>Carol Brown, Scottish Government</li> <li>F. Research into policy and practice: Successful case studies from a clinical/practitioner perspective</li> <li>Prof. Roy Robertson, University of Edinburgh</li> </ul>			
16.30 – 16.45	David Liddell, Scottish Drugs Forum  Closing notes Joe Schofield, DRNS Coordinator			

## 3 Plenary presentations

Research into policy: some examples of success

The first presentation of the day was given by <u>Professor Alex Stevens</u> from the University of Kent. During his presentation, Alex outlined power and morality as two main barriers in drug policy, and discussed four examples of how these barriers have been successfully overcome. Examples included HIV prevention and harm reduction, New Labour's expansion of opioid substitution treatment (OST) into English prisons, and development of medical cannabis in the UK. Alex finished his presentation with the following four lessons that we can learn from the successful examples:

- Appeal to shared interests in reducing harm.
- Present a threat to the 'in-group'.
- Create consequences for the powerful.
- Change the narrative.

Following from Alex's presentation, a short discussion covered topics including the puritan moralism that surrounds alcohol and drug policy, the compromises made between doctors and the Home Office, how to improve representation of people with lived/living experience of drug use in policy decisions, and the balance between facts and creating a narrative.



Getting good ideas into practice: implementation science and service improvements

The final morning plenary presentation was given by <u>Professor Tracy Finch</u> from Northumbria University. Tracy began by defining implementation science and discussing the varied terminology, approaches, activities, and levels of analysis contained within. Tracy then discussed Normalisation Process Theory (NPT) which is a way of thinking about implementation problems that focuses on:

- how interventions can become part of everyday practice;
- how different groups of people need to work together to achieve it.

Using examples, Tracy ended her presentation by discussing how NPT can be used as a tool for planning and evaluating complex health interventions.

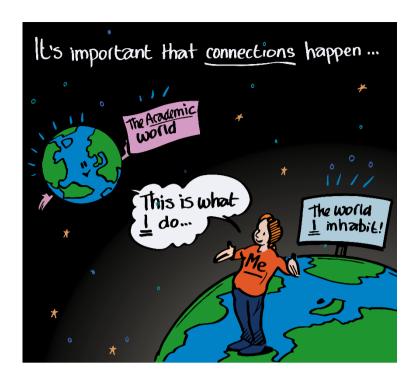
#### Getting published: a how-to guide

The first afternoon presentation was given by <u>Professor Betsy Thom</u> from Middlesex University. During her presentation, Betsy gave practical advice for researchers looking to get their work published. For example, advice was given on how to choose the most appropriate journal and avoid predatory publishing. Betsy then went on to discuss how to prepare your work for your chosen journal. This involved a frank discussion on how to navigate the common dilemma of authorship. Betsy also advised on how to delete unnecessary but much-loved sections of writing. To end her presentation, Betsy advised on how to respond to reviewer comments and start the revision process.



#### Using non-academic methods in knowledge exchange

The final presentation of the day was delivered by <u>Professor Harry Sumnall</u> from Liverpool John Moores University. Harry's presentation involved a discussion of how researchers in the substance use field can improve their public engagement to effectively transfer knowledge and impact on policy. Harry highlighted the need to go beyond publishing in journal articles to promote research. Importantly, high citation numbers do not guarantee that your research will reach the public or influence policy. Presenting a range of examples, Harry demonstrated how non–academic methods can be utilised effectively to improve knowledge exchange. Example methods included Twitter, Facebook, research podcasts, YouTube, and many more. Harry finished his talk by discussing recent examples in Scotland of campaigns that have successfully engaged with the public and Government, such as <u>#DontPinkMyDrink</u> by the Substance Misuse group at Glasgow Caledonian University.



## 4 Workshop summaries

#### Democratising drugs research?

Navigating the evidence and building on people's experience to make it work for everyone This morning workshop was delivered by <u>Jason Wallace</u> (Scottish Drugs Forum), <u>Dr Gillian Tober</u> (Leeds Addiction Unit), and <u>Dr Tessa Parkes</u> (University of Stirling). During this workshop, the facilitators drew upon their own experiences to share insights and practices that can support the research involvement of people who use/d drugs and affected family members. The workshop involved a discussion of the underpinning values, ethics, and principles surrounding involvement, with the facilitators exploring different models of involvement and their associated benefits and challenges.

#### Preparing a strong grant application

<u>Professor Kate Hunt</u>, from the University of Stirling, led a one hour workshop that taught delegates how to prepare a strong grant application. Kate's key topics included finding out about your potential funder(s), building the case for your proposal, planning and writing your research design, considering the essential practicalities, submitting your application, and responding to referees.

#### The power of large datasets and data linkage

The final morning workshop was facilitated by <u>Lee Barnsdale</u> (ISD Scotland) and Suhail Iqbal (Administrative Data Research Centre). Lee started the workshop by outlining key substance-use related data sources such as the Scottish Drug Misuse Database (SDMD) and the Prescribing Information System (PIS). Lee discussed multiple examples of how the ISD Scotland has been able to utilise data linkage and bring together multiple drug-related data sets from different organisations to produce new findings. Discussed topics included drug prevalence estimates, drug-related deaths, and older people with a drug problem. Suhail then proceeded to outline the eData Research and Innovation Service Team (eDRIS) which is a National Services Scotland (NSS) service that provides coordination and expert advice to support researchers wishing to work with health data. Presentation slides from the workshop can be accessed below:

#### Research ethics and governance in drugs research

This afternoon workshop was delivered by <u>Dr Anne Whittaker</u> from the University of Stirling. During her workshop, Anne outlined key issues that require addressing when conducting drugs research, including participant safety, consent, and confidentiality. Anne discussed a range of different research populations and contexts and gave an overview of the ethical approval process. To close the workshop, Anne facilitated an interactive discussion of different research scenarios and their varying ethical considerations.

#### Communicating research effectively with policy makers

This workshop was led by <u>Carol Brown</u> who is a Principal Social Researcher in Population Health at the Scottish Government. Carol started the workshop by shedding valuable insight into the background of policy making and role that research plays in this process. Carol then gave specific advice on how to write effectively for policy makers, which requires a different approach when compared to typical academic style. At the end of Carol's workshop, delegates separated into groups and critically discussed example posters and evaluated their effectiveness at communicating to policy makers.

Research into practice: successful case studies from clinical and practitioner perspectives. The final afternoon workshop was facilitated by <a href="David Liddell">David Liddell</a> (Scottish Drugs Forum) and <a href="Professor Roy Robertson">Professor Roy Robertson</a> (University of Edinburgh). During this workshop, David and Roy drew from their extensive backgrounds in drug research and each presented two case studies demonstrating how drugs research has been put into practice. David and Roy discussed research surrounding older people with drug problems in Scotland, trauma and recovery amongst people who have injected drugs within the past five years, the Edinburgh Drug Cohort Study, and the Muirhouse Medical Group. Both workshop facilitators identified how the discussed research has influenced practice as demonstrated in government strategy, clinical practice guidelines, and the lives of people who use drugs.



### 5 Posters

DRNS were delighted to welcome the following authors who each displayed a poster of their drug-related research during the conference. The posters were judged by <u>Dr Duncan Raistrick</u> who is the Co-Director of RESULT: a programme of research into outcome and process measures. Duncan has recently retired as Consultant Addiction Psychiatrist with Leeds Addiction Unit and has been involved in the addictions field since his psychiatric training which he completed in 1979.

We would like to congratulate <u>Karen Black</u> from the University of the West of Scotland who was awarded the prize for the best poster.

Name	Organisation	Poster Title
April Shaw	pril Shaw University of Glasgow Using Object Elic	
		Qualitative Interviews
Emma Hamilton	Scottish Drugs Forum	Developing a theory of social isolation and
		loneliness in a cohort of older male drug
		users.
Emma Hamilton	Scottish Drugs Forum	A Mixed Method Evaluation of NHS
		Tayside's Injecting Equipment Provision
		Services
Hannah Carver	University of Stirling	Perspectives of problem substance use
		treatment from those experiencing
		homelessness: Key components and
		missing voices
Karen Black	University of the West of Scotland	Alternative Voices of Recovery: Exploring
	·	the meaning of recovery for people on
		methadone treatment
Karen Dunleavy	University of the West of Scotland	Spore forming bacterial infections and
·	·	people who inject drugs: Implications for
		harm reduction
Louise Marryat	University of Edinburgh	Stakeholder perspectives of the successes
·	•	and failures of drug harm reduction policy
		in Scotland
Mathew Smith	Glasgow Caledonian University	Pre-exposure prophylaxis for people who
		inject drugs: results from an exploratory
		study carried out during an ongoing HIV
		outbreak in Glasgow, Scotland
Paul Rogon	Scottish Children's Reporter Administration	Exploring the multidimensional nature of
	& Glasgow Caledonian University	the use of substances by young people
		and the associated problematic
		consequences.
Peter Hillen	Edinburgh Napier University	The role of personal spiritual rituals
		among individuals in recovery from
		problematic substance use: implications
		for drug and alcohol workers.
Rachel Barry	University of Edinburgh	Understanding cannabis policy change in
		Uruguay: Towards policy coherence?
<u> </u>		
Tony Knox	University of Birmingham	Psychosocial Factors Influencing the
Tony Knox	University of Birmingham	Psychosocial Factors Influencing the Harmful Use of PIED in Sport and Exercise
Tony Knox Tracey Price	University of Birmingham University of Stirling	•

Name	Organisation	Poster Title
Rebecca Foster	University of Stirling	Supporting harm reduction through peer support (SHARPS): Testing the feasibility and acceptability of a peer-delivered, relational intervention for people with problem substance use who are homeless, to improve health outcomes, quality of life and social functioning, and reduce harms

We would like to thank Paul Rogon, Karen Black, Tony Knox, Emma Hamilton, Karen Dunleavy, and Tracey Price who each delivered a short presentation of their work during the conference plenary sessions.



#### 6 Feedback

We are grateful to delegates who took the time to complete our post-event feedback form. It was great to read your positive comments and thoughtful suggestions for future DRNS conferences. Positive feedback generally focussed on the following:

- The relaxed and friendly atmosphere that facilitated networking opportunities with peers and other professionals in the field;
- The chance to hear research findings from students and early career researchers;
- The breadth and quality of the topics covered which accommodated for people with varying interests and backgrounds.

Suggestions for future DRNS conferences included the following:

- Smaller sized workshops to allow for more interactive and discussion-based activities;
- More time allocated for poster viewing;
- A greater focus on research findings and emerging research;
- Additional events tailored towards development of early career and peer researchers.

All feedback received is being used to inform future events.

# 7 Acknowledgments

We would like to offer our sincere thanks to all our speakers, workshop facilitators, and poster authors for sharing their knowledge and experiences on the day. For helping us to capture the conference content, we are grateful to our video recorder and editor <u>Alex Dunedin</u>; our photographer <u>Lenny Warren</u>; and our graphic illustrator <u>Graham Ogilvie</u>.

Thanks also go to the <u>Society for the Study of Addiction</u> for supporting the event and, last but not least, we would like to thank all of our delegates for attending our first conference and making the event a success through their attendance, networking and contributions.



# 8 Delegate list

At the time of booking, all delegates were asked to indicate if they consented for their details to be included in the conference report. This delegate list includes all those who opted-in to be included and who provided full contact details.

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