

In the news...

The Institute of Mental Health seeks to help transform the understanding and treatment of mental illness.

We are a partnership between two highly respected organisations, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and The University of Nottingham.

Mental Health Hero award for Dr Ahmed Hankir at star-studded event

Dr Ahmed Hankir was named Caroline Flack Mental Health Hero at The Sun's star-studded Who Cares Wins Health Awards recently. The award was presented to Dr Hankir by Martin and Roman Kemp, along with Davina McCall, and a special dedication from Formula One superstar Sir Lewis Hamilton.

The Sun's Who Cares Wins awards, in partnership with NHS Charities Together, honours those across the health and social care sector who go above and beyond for their patients or causes. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Leader of the Opposition Sir Keir Starmer were both in attendance on the night.

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- MindTech Symposium
- Researchers head to Parliament
- Art returns to the Institute
- PhD opportunities

Welcome

Our **January newsletter** shares updates and achievements from across the Institute of Mental Health and showcases the best in mental health research.

Professor Martin Orrell
Director, The Institute
of Mental Health



I always enjoy reviewing the draft of the January edition of our newsletter. It's a time to take stock of the achievements of the past 12 months and to start to look at what the year ahead may bring.

It has been terrific to see our programme of events increase this year, with more and more face-to-face events taking place. We have plans for plenty more events in 2023, so do [check our online event listings for the latest information.](#)

We have also been delighted to welcome a new art exhibition by Nottingham artist Edwina Kung at the Institute in conjunction with City Arts. As we are now free to have visitors back into our building, sharing engaging artworks from a new Nottingham artist has been wonderful.

I hope you enjoy this edition and agree that we have a lot to be proud of from the past year, and much to look forward to.

Stay safe and well.

Please visit our [website](#) or follow us on Twitter [@InstituteMH](#) for all our latest news and updates.

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Mental Health Hero award for Dr Ahmed Hankir at star-studded event

Some of Britain's best-loved charity campaigners and famous faces were on hand to present the awards including Anthony Joshua, Christine Lampard, Ellie Simmonds, Harry Redknapp, Susanna Reid, and Mel B. The night also included video messages from David Beckham, and Olena Zelenska.

Ahmed is Public Engagement and Education Lead at our [World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Mental Health, Disabilities and Human Rights](#). He's also an NHS psychiatrist at the Maudsley Hospital, better known as The Wounded Healer to his 69,000 Twitter followers.

Now, Ahmed uses his experiences to help others and remove the stigma around mental health. A survivor of psychological trauma triggered when he was forced to flee his home in war-torn Lebanon, he declared when receiving his award:

“ Things can change with the right support. Because if I can change and realise my dreams, other people out there living with mental health conditions can recover and realise their dreams too. ”

To add to his award success, Capstone Books, an imprint of Wiley, announced they will be publishing Dr Hankir's incredible story in 2023. [This is a remarkable end to a year which also saw him awarded a prestigious WHO Director-General's Health Leaders Award.](#)

Congratulations Ahmed!

2022: a year in review

As we emerged from the pandemic, the Institute returned to some sort of normality. Events were held in person, we hosted our first art exhibition since Covid-19, and we launched a programme of workshops aimed at nurturing our early career researchers, many of whom began their studies during lockdown. It's great to look back on 2022 and see what a busy and vibrant year we've had.



January

The Alpha-Stim-D trial successfully recruited 236 participants, meeting their recruitment target 25 days ahead of time, despite a six month delay due to Covid19. Alpha-Stim AID is a portable device for people with depression, providing electrotherapy stimulations that change the electrical activity of the brain to more relaxing rhythms.

April

In a landmark development, psychological therapy has been automated in virtual reality in the largest ever clinical trial of VR for mental health. Supported by our Research Delivery Team, MindTech and Nottinghamshire Healthcare colleagues, the results were published in The Lancet Psychiatry in April.

May

The Narrative Experiences Online (NEON) study team won a national award for their work in involving participants in research to improve care. The prestigious annual Mental health research service user and carer involvement awards celebrate the work of those dedicated researchers and service users who go above and beyond to design research and involve participants to improve care.

February

All About Us, a new life-storytelling board game was released to help boost the self-confidence and wellbeing of people with dementia as they adjust to their diagnosis. Jointly developed by a team of international researchers, including colleagues from MindTech and the Institute of Mental Health, the game is already in use by therapy groups and is available to buy online.



March

Institute colleagues led a multimillion pound, Wellcome-funded, Midlands-wide, doctoral training programme, specifically for healthcare professionals. Admissions opened in March, with the first cohort beginning their studies in October.

June

Institute researchers helped turn Nottingham landmarks green for Tourettes Awareness Day. The iconic Wollaton Hall, Nottingham Council House and Trent Building at the University of Nottingham were all lit up in green on Tuesday 7th June to raise awareness of Tourette Syndrome (TS).

Image credit: Jennifer Salvage



Looking back

July

Institute colleagues published their latest review of evidence in the field of digitally delivered, remote therapy for tic disorders. They presented key advances in the field, outlining the research evidence for the clinical and cost-effectiveness, and acceptability of digital or remotely delivered therapy.

September

Following her work on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) referrals in primary care, Dr Blandine French was awarded a new investigator grant to continue her pioneering research into neurodiversity diagnosis. Blandine will use the funding to investigate the social, personal, and economic costs of undiagnosed ADHD.



October

London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) published a report into neighbourhood violence written by our Centre for Health and Justice colleagues, led by Professor Eddie Kane. Read the story in full on our website.



November

MindTech and Digital Youth visited Parliament for Evidence Week, sharing their expertise about young people's mental health in an online world. Professor Chris Hollis, and representatives from young people's advisory group Sprouting Minds, travelled to Westminster to speak to politicians and policymakers about their research.

August

In August we partnered with Nottingham charity City Arts to launch the first in a series of four online exhibitions, each exploring young people's experience of mental health issues. The series showcased artwork by a mix of UK-based and international artists aged 13-25.



Detail from Body Memories II by Jeng Hang Kung, 2020

December

Dr Ahmed Hankir, Public Engagement and Education Lead at our WHO Collaborating Centre for Mental Health, Disabilities and Human Rights, was named Caroline Flack Mental Health Hero at The Sun's star-studded Who Cares Wins Health Awards this week. The award was presented by Martin and Roman Kemp, along with Davina McCall, and a special dedication from Formula One superstar Sir Lewis Hamilton.





Lillian Greenwood MP (left) chats with Prof Chris Hollis (centre) and Nkem Naeche (right) from Sprouting Minds, during their visit to the Houses of Parliament

Institute experts head to Parliament

Researchers from the Institute of Mental Health visited Parliament in November, sharing their expertise about young people's mental health in an online world.

Colleagues, including Professor Chris Hollis and representatives from young people's advisory group Sprouting Minds, travelled to Westminster to speak to politicians and policymakers about their research into the impact of the digital world on the mental health of young people.

Chris Hollis, Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Nottingham and director of MindTech, and Professor Ellen Townsend of our Centre for Mood

Disorders, are co-leaders of the Digital Youth multimillion pound research project which works with Sprouting Minds, a young people's advisory group, to investigate what causes online mental health harms, identify the biggest risks facing young people, find ways to build online resilience, and create effective online mental health support and interventions.



Read the full story at mindtech.org



Find out more about Digital Youth and Sprouting Minds at digitalyouth.ac.uk

Art returns to the Institute of Mental Health

We're delighted to host an art exhibition once again, the first since the pandemic began. In partnership with Nottingham's City Arts, we are exhibiting a collection of artworks by Edwina Kung. Edwina's work also featured in the recent online exhibition 'Re-Imagine' which explored young people's mental health. We're delighted to welcome her to the Institute to lead a short presentation and creative activity, followed by a Q&A hosted by Prof Elvira Perez.

Inner Rooms, Inner Minds can be viewed until 15 February 2023 at the Institute of Mental Health, 10am – 4pm, free. [Full details can be found on the City Arts website.](#)

Our Q&A event is on 24 January, 2023 1.30pm – 2.30pm. Free, all welcome, registration essential.



Original artwork by Edwina Kung ©

ECR CoLab

In November we hosted a workshop for early career researchers (ECR), as we explore new ways to support and nurture our colleagues at the beginning of their research journey.

The workshop included an insightful presentation from the Nottingham Clinical Trials Unit who introduced their services. We also heard from Dr Fiona Ng who shared an inspirational and honest account of her journey through academia. Finally, Institute director Prof Martin Orrell joined the workshop and gave his advice on how best to tackle funding applications. We will be holding more of these ECR-focused workshops in March and June next year - read more in our Events section on page 13



New blog from SoFU

On 13th December Anna Greenwood, Professor of Health History, gave an excellent talk on the history of psychoactive drugs.

In a follow-up blog, 'Moral Health and Pharmacy', Dr Luca Settimo (Department of Theology and Religious Studies), joins Anna and Professor Paul Crawford in examining the often-overlooked impacts on moral behaviour in taking everyday medications.



Read the blog here

Publication success for INDUCT

The research monograph, Improving the Lives of People with Dementia through Technology explores the practical application of recent improvements in technology for people living with dementia, highlighting the positive outcomes on care, quality of life, and services on patients through exploration of 15 research projects, described in the book, to redefine the future of dementia care.

Editors include Professor Martin Orrell and Dr Orla McDermott of our Centre for Dementia. Read more about the INDUCT network at www.dementiainduct.eu

Centre for Dementia - publication news

The over 55s constitute a growing proportion of the forensic mental health patient population and are vulnerable to health outcomes similar to other individuals with serious mental disorders of the same age.

A new paper from our Centre for Dementia colleagues focuses on health and wellbeing of older patients in forensic mental healthcare. Available to read now at [NIHR Open Research](#). Meanwhile, the Centre's Esther Gerritzen, Dr Orla McDermott and Professor Martin Orrell also published a new paper, exploring how people with young onset dementia use online platforms for peer support. Read it now in the journal 'Dementia'.



Neurobiology of schizophrenia and psychosis annual meeting, 2022

The Centre for Translational Neuroscience in Mental Health hosted its annual symposium, 'Neurobiology of schizophrenia and psychosis' in November, with an international panel of expert speakers.

The event was hosted by Dr Musa Sami, who was joined by renowned researchers, clinicians, and academics in the field, from the UK and the USA.

Topics included genetics, inflammation, and dopamine, amongst other bases for psychotic disorders. Speakers included:

- Professor Rachel Upthegrove, University of Birmingham, UK
- Professor Peter Liddle, Institute of Mental Health, University of Nottingham, UK
- Professor Anissa Abi-Dargham, Stony Brook University, USA
- Professor Joel Kleinman, Lieber Institute for Brain Development, USA
- Professor William Carpenter, Maryland Psychiatric Research Center, USA

Panellists, joined by Professor Matthew Broome, University of Birmingham, had a rare opportunity to discuss their research with one another, in a lively and illuminating debate.

Along with around 50 paying delegates, excerpts from the meeting were live-tweeted to engage with a wider audience, with related tweets being seen over 8,000 times. The online format of the event gave delegates a unique opportunity to question and interact with some of the leading theorists in the field of schizophrenia.

With so much still to be discovered, we look forward to next year's meeting and the opportunity to hear the latest developments in the neuroscience of schizophrenia.



Stay up to date about our events,
visit [institutemh.org.uk](https://www.institutemh.org.uk)

"Absolutely fascinating presentation about the role of dopamine in schizophrenia by Professor Anissa Abi-Dargham. I am so lucky that I have been able to attend this truly educational afternoon"

"Such an interesting and inspirational afternoon. A lively and educational end to my Wednesday. Thank you."

Take Part

What are your views on different interventions for brain health? Dr Marcus Kaiser, of our Centre for Translational Neuroscience and Mental Health, invites you to take part in a short survey, taking around 10 minutes.

For several years, many neuroscience research projects aimed to develop new approaches to change brain functioning (so-called neuromodulation). However, the view of patients on these new approaches, such as brain stimulation, remains unclear.



Share your opinions on a range of
existing and new techniques

The 2022 MindTech Symposium

The 10th annual MindTech Symposium took place in London in November, the first in-person meeting since Covid-19.

Delegates from across the UK attended the event at the Royal College of Physicians, with commercial partners and sponsors showcasing the latest technology in the field. The theme for the day was New Frontiers for Digital Mental Health, with researchers and public involvement contributors sharing the latest findings from their work.

We were delighted to welcome representatives from the young people's advisory group Sprouting Minds, sharing their work as part of the [Digital Youth](#) programme, a multimillion-pound project researching risk and resilience for young people in a digital world.

It was particularly encouraging to see the number of clinical trials taking place in digital mental health, such as the [ECoweB](#) trial of an app to promote emotional wellbeing in young people. Alongside apps, projects incorporating VR, online access to mental health narratives, assistive robots, and gaming were among the exciting areas of research happening in the field right now.

There were some fantastic poster presentations, with the prize for best poster going to Rachel Rodrigues and the team for 'Co-design of the Imaginator App to Support a Novel Blended Digital Intervention for Young People with Self-harm' (pictured).

In tandem with our panel debate, we carried out an online poll, tabling the motion: "This house believes that the only realistic way to deliver digital mental health services at scale in the NHS is to commission commercial and other non-NHS providers." Whilst the majority of twitter-voters agreed with the motion, the debate in the room was far more nuanced, with issues raised around commissioning, a fragmented NHS, workforce and resources, safety and integrity.

The event, [sponsored by Psymics](#), and attracting 147 delegates, was live-tweeted throughout the day by Andre Tomlin, aka the [Mental Elf](#), generating interest both in and out of the conference room. There were a staggering 21.6 million twitter impressions using #MindTech2022, with 110 people sharing tweets with the hashtag.



Mental Elf debut

Congratulations to MindTech's Dr Sue Brown, who has made her debut on the Mental Elf blog pages. Sue reviewed a trial of clinician supported computerised-CBT and its impact on digital inclusion. Read the blog in full at nationalelfservice.net





All About Us features on BBC World Service

A board game developed by a team of international researchers, including MindTech, has featured on the BBC World Service.

All About Us is a life-storytelling board game designed to help boost the self-confidence and wellbeing of people with dementia as they adjust to their diagnosis.

Jointly developed by a team of international researchers, including colleagues from MindTech and the Institute of Mental Health, it was included in the BBC radio programme 'People Fixing the World' in an episode focusing on board games.



The show aired in December and is available to listen to now on BBC Sounds



Read more on All About Us

New paper explores impact of school closures on children referred to CAMHS

Institute researchers have published findings on children and young people's mental health during different phases of the pandemic.

Using data gathered during the STADIA trial researchers and clinicians, led by Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Institute of Mental Health, and the University of Nottingham, focused on children and young people who have been referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) across different areas of England, including Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Published in the European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry journal, their findings suggest there were greater levels of mental health difficulties amongst clinically referred children and young people after returning to school following pandemic-related national lockdowns and school closures.



Find out more at [institutemh.org.uk](https://www.institutemh.org.uk)

2022 Publications Awards – now open

We are now accepting entries for our annual Publication Awards, highlighting the best publications of 2022. The Awards aim to celebrate and promote the work of people within Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust or at the University of Nottingham working in the fields of mental health or learning disability.

Categories, entry criteria, and rules can be viewed on our website.

Closing date 28 Feb 2023.

Funded PhD opportunities

In an exciting collaboration between Nottingham's two universities, applications are invited for two fully-funded PhDs.

Both projects will explore the potential for biophilic design to improve the mental health and wellbeing of different groups of people.

The first, in partnership with Trent Bridge Community Trust, will focus on people living with dementia and their relationship with the environment around them. Supervisors include Dr Michael Craven and Dr Kyle Harrington.

The second project will examine the influence of architecture and biophilic design on the mental health of people living in a high secure hospital. In partnership with Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, supervisors include Dr Ada Hui and Dr Martin Clarke.

Both projects are offered through the Co(l)laboratory programme and have a closing date of 6 Feb 2023.

Christmas foodbank fundraiser

In December we hosted a Christmas Foodbank Fuddle with colleagues and public contributors - it was fantastic to see so many friendly faces!

A special thank you to all our bakers and cake-bringers, we enjoyed a huge spread plus many, many donations to our foodbank collection. Donations for our cake sale raised £175 for the Trussell Trust, along with the collected food items which were donated to a local foodbank.

Our Head of Research and Operations, Sarah Jones, and our Management Accountant, Sam Banton, also visited the picket lines at Highbury Hospital and QMC to share some of the cakes with our nursing colleagues who were on strike. All were very gratefully received on such a cold day.

Our winning baker was Kathryn Bryan for her enormously popular chocolate fudge, while the winning quiz team – Linda, Adele, Jo and Becky – were triumphant in their Christmas knowledge!



Institute researcher on Mental Elf podcast

NEON trial manager Dr Stefan Rennick-Egglestone appeared on a recent Mental Elf podcast, interviewed by Mental Elf founder Andre Tomlin.

Stefan spoke in depth about recovery narratives and the NEON trial, following his appearance at the 2022 MindTech Symposium. Speakers also include members of the gameChangeVR study team, and Professor Tim Kendall, keynote speaker at the symposium.



Listen to the podcasts online now

Notts Healthcare welcomes new Chief Executive

Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has announced that Ifti Majid has been appointed as the Trust's new Chief Executive.

Ifti, formerly Chief Executive of Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, started in his new role on 1st December and we look forward to welcoming him as a member of the Institute's Board.



2 x PhD opportunities with the Recovery Research Team

We're pleased to announce two PhD opportunities through the [Midlands Mental Health and Neuroscience PhD Programme](#), which provides PhD funding for healthcare professionals. Successful applicants will be based at the IMH, as part of the Recovery Research Team.

The first is with Dr Yasuhiro Kotera and Professor Mike Slade, looking at [the impact of the NEON Intervention on self-compassion](#).

The second is with Dr Fiona Ng and Dr Stefan Rennick-Egglestone, looking at [what the NHS can learn from published narratives](#) providing feedback on mental health treatment experiences.

This PhD Programme intends to support healthcare professionals, registered with a healthcare regulatory body, who wish to combine a clinical and academic career. Applicants from diverse backgrounds

and professions with an interest in mental health or translational neurosciences are encouraged to apply. The programme is also seeking applications from people with lived experience of mental health difficulties who meet the [eligibility criteria](#).

The closing date for initial expressions of interest is 31st March 2023 and [applications can now be made online](#).

Conference success for Dr Eirini Kontou



Clinical Psychologist Dr Eirini Kontou contributed to a popular session at December's [UK Stroke Forum \(UKSF\) 2022](#), the UK's largest multidisciplinary conference for stroke healthcare professionals and researchers.

Dr Kontou has been the British Psychological Society representative on the UKSF Scientific and Steering Committees since 2018 and this year was co-organiser and one of four speakers for a session on '*Mood and cognitive changes following Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA) and minor stroke; How we identify and follow up?*'.

Over 500 people pre-registered to attend the session, keen to hear about the long-term effects of TIA and less severe strokes. Dr Kontou talked about unmet needs as well as why it is important to develop mood and cognition care pathways for TIA and minor stroke. She highlighted the key findings of her previous postdoctoral research in this area funded by the Stroke Association [OPTIMISM study](#) and her experience working in stroke services as a clinical psychologist.

Dr Kontou currently holds an NIHR/HEE Clinical Lectureship that will focus on the development, evaluation, and delivery of psychological care pathways for people with TIA and minor stroke.

Take part in the EPOCH study

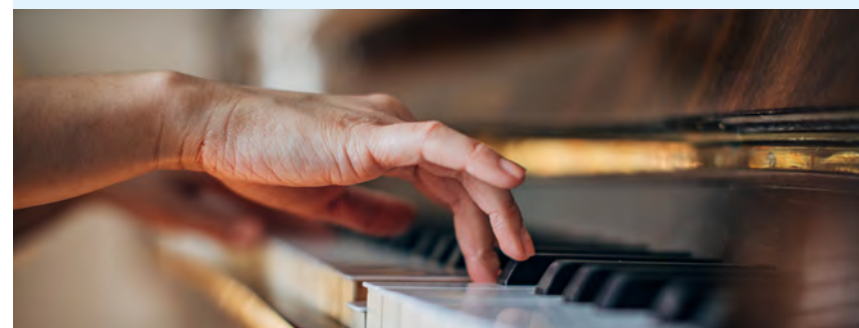
Do you have lived experience of psychosis?
You may be able to take part in the latest study from the Recovery Research Team.

If you:

- Are over 18
- Hear voices
- Have experienced positive growth



The study team would love to hear from you



Music and mental health

Debbie Butler, long-time contributor to research at the Institute and active member of our Patient and Public Involvement Advisory Group, has written a new blog post.

In it she shares her experience of the positive impact of music on mental health and her forthcoming performance at the Institute.



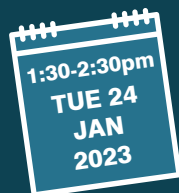
View Debbie's blog post on the Institute's website

Events

Meet the artist: Q&A with Edwina Kung

A floor seminar rooms, Institute of Mental Health

Join our current exhibiting artist, Edwina Kung, as she leads a short presentation and creative activity on how she created the 'Inner Rooms, Inner Minds' artwork currently on display at the Institute of Mental Health. This event is open to all and is free to attend.



Visit our website to find out more information

Involvement in Research

Middle Street Resource Centre, 74 Middle Street, Beeston, NG9 2AR

You're invited to our public research event

Ever since the Institute of Mental Health was launched in 2006 patient and public involvement has added real value to our research, our teaching, and how we carry out activities within the Institute.

We are hosting an event at Middle Street Resource Centre to tell our local community more about Patient and Public Involvement in research, and the work we do at the Institute of Mental Health.

Come along to:

- Find out more about involvement in research
- Learn more about the Institute of Mental Health
- Get to know other people involved in research



Visit our website to find out more information

Liverpool Dementia and Ageing Research Forum



Join our Centre for Dementia colleague Dr Eithne Heffernan who will be presenting at the forthcoming Liverpool Dementia and Ageing Research Forum: **"The link between hearing loss and dementia: who is listening?"**



Reserve your tickets online now

ECR CoLab sessions



10.30am-12noon
A floor seminar rooms, Institute of Mental Health

The Institute is continuing its events aimed at all early career researchers who are affiliated to the IMH (experienced PhD students, other experienced researchers, and post-docs up to and including assistant professor level). These events are free to attend and are an excellent opportunity for learning and networking.



Details coming soon to our events page

Surviving by Storytelling



Free workshops for NHS staff - Surviving by Storytelling

Join workshop hosts Anne Holloway, Nikki Disney, and Mark Pearson as they invite NHS staff to take part in a one-off poetry, writing, yoga, and movement inspired workshop to nourish the mind, body, and spirit of healthcare staff.

The two hour "Surviving by Storytelling" workshop will explore how past experiences can unlock how we can navigate the world around us and what lies ahead in the future.



View the Surviving by Storytelling event page

Refocus on Recovery



The Refocus on Recovery international conference will be returning in 2023 with "Changing Conversations, Fostering Connections, Building Communities".

In-person event at Crowne Plaza, Wollaton Street, Nottingham, NG1 5RH

Registration and abstract submission coming soon!



Read more details on our website