



the institute of
mental health

Nottingham

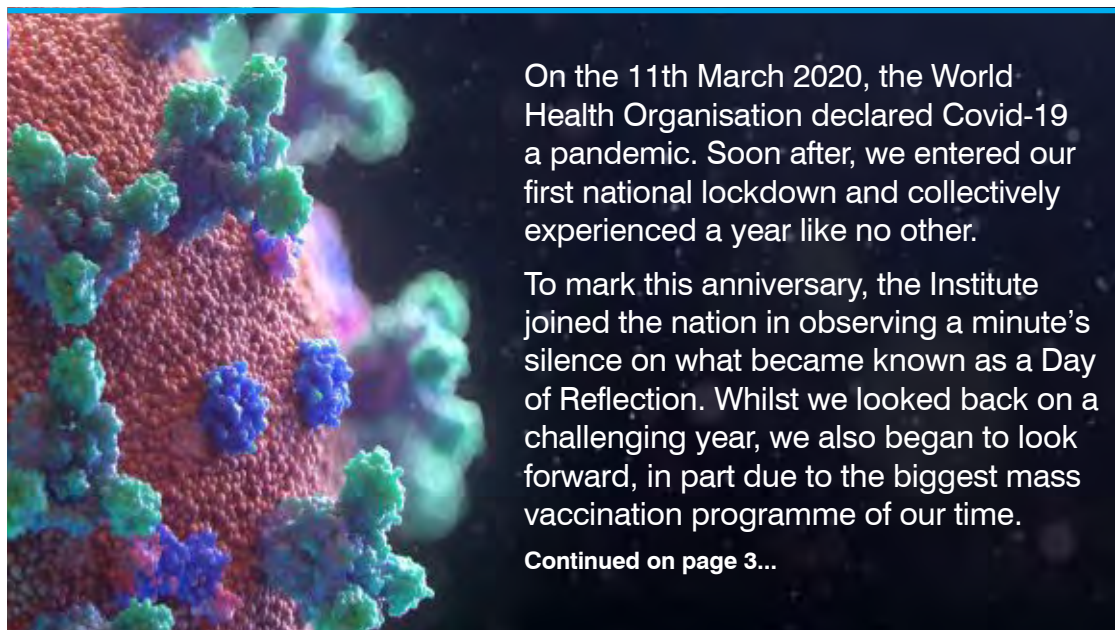
Research and Education
Excellence **for Innovation**

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.

Covid-19: reflecting on a year in research



On the 11th March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared Covid-19 a pandemic. Soon after, we entered our first national lockdown and collectively experienced a year like no other.

To mark this anniversary, the Institute joined the nation in observing a minute's silence on what became known as a Day of Reflection. Whilst we looked back on a challenging year, we also began to look forward, in part due to the biggest mass vaccination programme of our time.

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In this issue...

- Two new NIHR Development & Skills awards given
- Twitter star joins our WHO Collaborating Centre
- New papers published from Centre for Dementia
- New 'Long Covid' study starts recruiting
- Award win for long-standing PPI volunteer



Welcome

Our **May 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



Over the last few months, we have been reminded of the positive national and international impact our research and collaborative projects have.

We joined forces with researchers up and down the country as part of the NIHR's recent #ResearchVsCovid social media campaign, promoting the progress and achievements made in research since the pandemic began. Follow the hashtag on Twitter and see for yourself the impact that's been made.

Our work with the World Health Organization (WHO) continues as we recently appointed a new ambassador to our Collaborating Centre for Mental Health, Disabilities and Human Rights. Dr Ahmed Hankir, better known on Twitter for his "Wounded Healer" account, will be our new lead for Public Education and Engagement working alongside Prof Peter Bartlett and as we develop the projects work for our global collaboration. Read more about our plans on page 4.

Developing research talent to investigate new areas and topics is a pivotal part of our work. We were delighted to hear the announcement of two new NIHR Development and Enhancement Awards given recently to two Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust staff who also work within the Institute of Mental Health. Congratulations to Sam and Eirini; read more about their awards on page 14.

Working without borders and in a virtual world has become common place while our buildings and projects are operating with COVID safe restrictions in place. Our events calendar is filling up again with online symposiums, conferences and workshops (page 15), and please visit our website or follow us on Twitter @InstituteMH for all updates and our latest news.

Stay safe and well.

Visit our website
www.institutemh.org.uk

Over the past year we have been refreshing and updating different parts of our [website](#), with plans for new things to come.

We have recently brought the [Institute's blog](#) page into the main structure of the website, so now it is even easier to read the latest blogs from our researchers, community partners, service users and research participants.

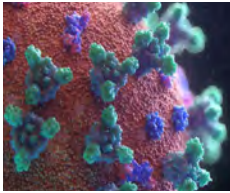
We're also keen to show who is working at the Institute, whether that's leading our Centres of Research Excellence or making operational decisions. You can put names to faces on our [Meet the team page](#). Our Centres of Excellence each have their own section on our website so that they can share the latest news and research findings. We're going to be giving these pages a refresh over the coming months and providing new project updates – visit our [Research section](#) to see the newly updated CANDAL area. We're also planning to relaunch our Involvement section and our Events page is filling up.

If you would like to send us your comments about our website then please [email our Communications Team](#).



Take a look around the site:
www.institutemh.org.uk





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Covid-19: reflecting on a year in research

As scientists took to their lecterns night after night, research became central to our journey through Covid-19.

From how to treat the disease to developing a vaccine; urgent public health studies were expedited to save lives and help us understand this novel virus. One year on, over a million people at 5,559 sites across the UK have taken part in Covid-19 research, including 34,527 volunteers in vaccine trials.

Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has supported an incredible 3,152 local participants to join this national effort, primarily through the Research Delivery Team, based at the Institute of Mental Health.

Ordinarily, the team manage research in the Trust, from local small-scale projects, to national, international, and commercial studies, across all services, especially mental health. But in the last year they've had to adapt to working in roles or teams different to their own, including vaccination clinics and Covid testing laboratories.

Many studies were paused, particularly those involving hospital or clinic visits. Others have adapted their procedures to deliver research safely, whilst some have launched as a matter of urgency.

Across the NHS, staff are having to work in areas they're unfamiliar with, to help their colleagues and keep services running. Research Delivery Nurse Veronica French (pictured here with Research Delivery Assistant, Rebecca Coales) is usually based in a local mental health team, supporting service users to take part in research. As the focus shifted to Covid research, Veronica, along with several other members of the team, volunteered to work on the SIREN study, processing blood samples in a laboratory setting.

In addition to clinical research, many of our colleagues have contributed their expertise and knowledge to national and international scientific debate. Professor Tom Dening, Director of our Centre for Dementia, spoke to CNN last year about the importance of dealing with grief and trauma even when restrictions are in place. Offering his personal observations, Tom has written a new blog, one year on. More recently, Professor Paul Crawford of our Centre for Social Futures commented on findings in the Lancet regarding the mental health fallout from Covid-19.

None of this would have been possible without the efforts of a multitude of teams across Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Nottingham.

Thank you.



One year on, over a million people at 5,559 sites across the UK have taken part in Covid-19 research, including 34,527 volunteers in vaccine trials.

Twitter star “Wounded Healer” joins our WHO Collaborating Centre

Dr Ahmed Hankir MBChB MRCPsych, a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Mental Health Research (in association with Cambridge University) and Honorary Research Fellow at the Department of Old Age Psychiatry at King’s College London, has been announced as the new Lead for Public Education and Engagement for the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Mental Health, Disabilities and Human Rights.



Dr Hankir brings a wealth of research interests with him, including global and Muslim mental health, pioneering and evaluating innovative programmes that challenge mental health related stigma and Islamophobia, with research published extensively in these areas. Dr Hankir will also be drawing from his lived experience as a psychiatrist with a mental health condition, the insights from which inform and guide his activities to ensure mental healthcare policy and provision are grounded on a human rights framework. He is passionate about empowering and dignifying people with mental health conditions and public engagement and

education about mental health. Dr Hankir is author of, ‘The Wounded Healer’, an innovative anti-stigma programme that blends the power of the performing arts and storytelling with psychiatry.

In his capacity as Lead for Public Education and Engagement with the WHO Collaborating Centre for Mental Health, Disability and Human Rights at the Institute of Mental Health, his contribution will raise awareness of the projects that the Institute is involved in through his social media platforms (Dr Hankir is fortunate to have over 40,000 connections on Twitter and tweets regularly as,

‘The Wounded Healer’ [@ahmedhankir](#)) and speaking engagements. He will also be involved in teaching and training on the WHO QualityRights initiative.

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Mental Health, Disability and Human Rights is a partnership that utilises the knowledge and expertise of the members of the Institute of Mental Health’s Centre for Mental Health and Human Rights to support the development and understanding of this area within the WHO’s policy, education, legal and advocacy programmes. [Read more](#) about the partnership and its goals for the next three years.

European network prizes for early career researchers

Dr Claudio Di Lorito (Research Fellow, Centre for Dementia) and Dr Harleen Rai (centre for Dementia) have been awarded first and second prizes respectively in this year's INTERDEM Academy publication award competition.

A network of researchers that spans across Europe, INTERDEM exists to bring together the very best minds in dementia research collaborating with people living with dementia.

Claudio's publication, "Adding to the knowledge on Patient and Public Involvement: Reflections from an experience of co-research with carers of people with dementia" was judged as:

"This article is innovative and inspiring for other researchers attempting to include informal caregivers of people with dementia as co-researchers. The fact that the author managed to change the process evaluation of a RCT into a co-creation project shows his engagement the research topic. The article is well written with high levels of transparency and provides clear recommendations."

Dr Rai's publication "Involvement of People With Dementia in the Development of Technology-Based Interventions: Narrative Synthesis Review and Best Practice Guidelines" was commended for its clear methodology, logical approach and strong involvement of people living with dementia. The paper focused on how to best involve people with dementia in developing technology-based interventions, best-practice guidelines for optimising this involvement.

The INTERDEM Academy publication awards aim to stimulate communication between junior and senior members of the INTERDEM network and share research results from those members in the early stages of their research careers.



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Centre for Dementia celebrate two publications

Prof Tom Dening and Dr Jen Yates of the Centre for Dementia have both seen their work published in international journals in recent weeks.

Jen Yates and colleagues featured in the journal International Psychogeriatrics, with their systematic review of disclosing and receiving a diagnosis of dementia. They worked with the Alzheimer's Society, who welcomed their findings.

Meanwhile, Centre director Tom Dening and his team feature in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. Findings from their recent study were published, looking into the subjective experience of apathy in dementia.



Read the full article here:
www.institutemh.org.uk

ACAMH podcast:

In conversation with Blandine French

Listen again to the recent podcast with Blandine French, ESRC PhD student at the Institute of Mental Health's CANDAL centre of excellence and the Association of Children and Adolescent Mental Health (ACAMH), looking into the awareness of ADHD in primary care. Blandine was also nominated for the 2020 ACAMH Awards Trainee of the Year.

In this fascinating interview Blandine discusses her research on understanding GPs awareness of developmental disorders, such as ADHD, and what the implications are of a lack of awareness within primary care, and its impact for young people and their families.

Blandine, who was diagnosed with ADHD in adulthood, talks about why early diagnosis and

intervention are so important for children and young people with developmental disorders, the implications if it is not recognised, plus the positive impact when it all goes well.

Blandine explains the free psycho-education online tool she has developed for understanding ADHD and the role of the GP in the diagnosis pathway.



Listen again here:
www.acamh.org



Santander funded study launched

A new study has launched, funded by a generous donation from financial services group Santander.

Organised by the University of Nottingham and the Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) East Midlands, the funding will be used to study the impact of Covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing.

Researchers are inviting people who have struggled to return to work after Covid-19 to complete an online survey, with the option to have a further telephone interview. They would also like to hear from people who have found it difficult returning to day-to-day activities following a diagnosis of MS.

Whilst COVID-19 is an infectious disease targeting the respiratory system, it has also led to some patients developing a post-COVID-19 syndrome, or 'long-Covid.'

This study aims to understand the characteristics of 'long-Covid' syndrome in order to develop a programme of support to help people back to work. Participants should have been in employment, education, or charitable work on 1st March 2020.

Contact: [Clem Boutry](#)



To find out more, or to complete the survey [click here](#)

BRIGHtMind study continues despite Covid-19

Nottinghamshire Healthcare sponsored BRIGHtMIND study continues to enrol participants with new Covid-safety measures in place.

Antidepressants and talking therapies help only two thirds of people with depression – for the remaining third, the struggle to cope can be especially tough. With sites in Nottingham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and London, the study is researching the effectiveness of two types of Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) treatments, designed to help people with ‘treatment resistant depression.’ TMS uses a magnetic device to stimulate the parts of the brain related to mood.

“The safety of trial participants is paramount” reassured Sandra Simpson, Research Delivery Officer, “So, BRIGHtMIND has adapted to COVID by going ‘virtual’ for assessments and reducing the number of ‘in person’ visits required. Treatment and scan teams have spaced out their appointments to allow for thorough cleaning between each one”.

BRIGHtMIND offers people the chance to try a new treatment for depression. The study team would like to hear from people who:

- Are 18 or over.
- Have tried at least two treatments for depression which haven’t worked
- Are happy to take part in treatment involving an MRI scan and 20 sessions of TMS.

The BRIGHtMIND team understand how difficult it is to live with depression and will offer anyone who takes part a warm welcome, care, and support.

BRIGHtMIND is funded by the National Institute for Health Research ‘Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation Programme’ and is guided by a Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP).



Email:
BrightMind@nottshc.nhs.uk



[Visit the website](#)
for more information

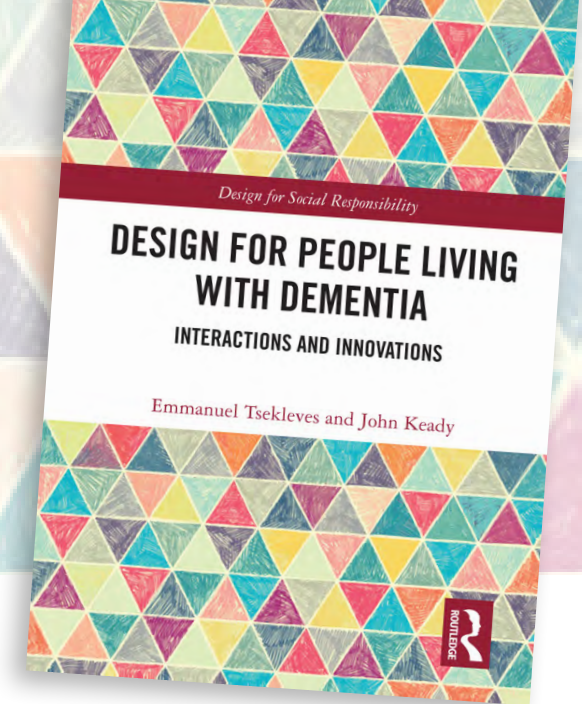
MindTech case study features in new book

The recently completed MinD project, is to be included in the forthcoming publication, 'Designing for people living with dementia', due out in May.

MinD used the concepts of design and mindfulness to support people with dementia with self-empowerment and social engagement. There were three distinct stages to the project: data collection, design development, and evaluation, with MindTech leading the evaluation workstream.

Each stage featured user participation to help develop several products: the ***This is Me*** life story board game; the ***Living the Life*** mindful reflective booklet; the ***You and Me*** interactive decision-making tool; and ***Let's Meet Up!***, a digital platform for social interaction with chosen family or friends.

These products aim to reduce anxiety and enhance quality of life, well-being, confidence, social contact and engagement for people living with dementia. Seeing the person with dementia as a capable and unique individual benefits their families, and so could reduce the costs of care.



The programme resulted in co-design and evaluation guidelines (co-authored by our Centre for Dementia lead, Professor Tom Denning, Julie Gosling, Michael Craven and MinD's PI Kristina Niedderer of Manchester Metropolitan University) representing the combined effort of all of the partners including Dons Coleston, who also took part in the MinD secondments, and involvement volunteers at Nottingham.

A new model for evaluation AIR (activities, internal world, relationships) model was developed. [These resources are freely available.](#)

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 691001.



Read more about the MinD project [here](#)

New video to help promote “gold standard” in Tourette Syndrome treatment pathway

A new video created by Dr Bethan Davies (MindTech) and Dr Seonaid Anderson (neuro-diverse.org) aims to explain the, sometimes complex, clinical pathways in the treatment of Tourette Syndrome and tic disorders in the UK.

The video makes recommendations for families starting on a diagnosis journey and helps explain the different treatment and service pathways that can be on offer depending on where you live in the UK. The video also helps to explain medical terminology and shares the experiences of patients and families in the UK.



Watch the video online [here](#)



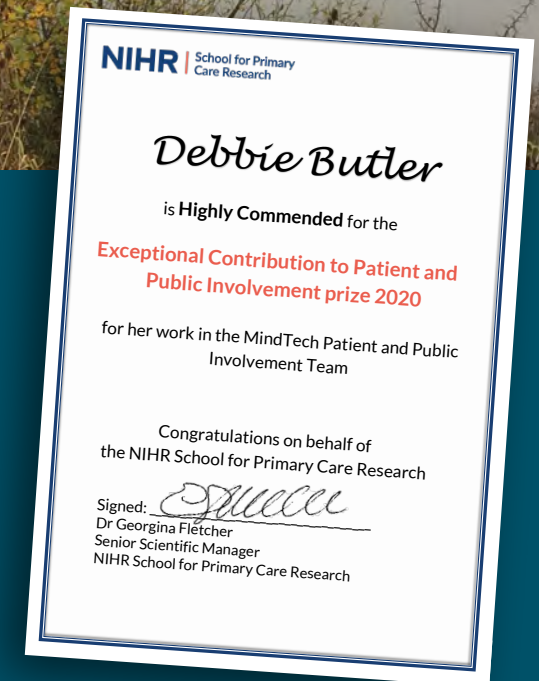
Debbie Butler ‘highly commended’ for her contribution to patient and public involvement

Congratulations to Debbie, who recently received this well-deserved accolade from the National Institute for Health Research, following twenty years of PPI work.

Highly commended for her ‘exceptional contribution’ to public involvement in MindTech, Debbie’s commitment to improving mental health care pre-dates her PPI work with the Institute of Mental Health, where she has been a familiar face for many years.

During this time, she has faced her own mental and physical health challenges, particularly over the last year. Her dedication continued throughout the pandemic, as she walked the equivalent from Lands End to John O’Groats to raise money for Mind.

Congratulations Debbie!



Let's get digital: a commentary on the development and evaluation of immersive digital interventions

In the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry Annual Research Review for 2021, Halldorsson and colleagues (2021) presented a systematic review of applied games and virtual reality interventions for treating mental health problems in children and young people, looking at the effectiveness of interventions upon mental health outcomes but also on the experience of using such interventions.

Dr Bethan Davies and Dr Aislinn Bergin (both MindTech team members) were invited to publish their comments on the systematic review and they found four key areas of discussion:

- Co-designing interventions with children and young people
- Repurposing existing, proven, platforms for new uses
- Using digital interventions as part of a package of care
- Equality of access to digital tools



[Read their comments in full](#)

gameChangeVR presented at international summit

MindTech Research Fellow, Dr Aislinn Bergin presented at the international Evidence and Implementation Summit this week, discussing the gameChangeVR study. Hosted in Sydney, Australia, this year's event was held online.

One of the world's leading evidence and implementation sector events, the summit is an opportunity for researchers in the fields of evidence synthesis and translation, evaluation, and implementation science to share research at the intersection of research, policy, and practice.

Aislinn's presentation was during the discussion event, "Towards better health outcomes: the 'what' and the 'how'". Speakers from the UK, EU and Africa came together to explore implementation from the perspective of understanding how and why something works, along with how to make scaling up possible.

The topic of Aislinn's presentation was, "Addressing implementation and sustainability in digital mental health: lessons from the gameChange virtual reality project". It focused on the research MindTech are doing for gameChange, looking at how to embed consideration of implementation and sustainability into

clinical research through understanding complexities and finding solutions from early on.

The gameChange project involves the development and evaluation of an innovative VR psychological therapy that aims to support people with psychosis to overcome their fears in everyday situations and has been funded by the 2017 NIHR i4i Mental Health Challenge Award. The clinical trial, which is near completion, has been led by Oxford University across five trial sites including Nottingham. If you are interested in learning more about the work that MindTech are doing to support its implementation and adoption into the NHS please [contact Dr Aislinn Bergin](#).





STADIA - Nottinghamshire Healthcare becomes first site to recruit 200 participants



Paula Brown
Research Delivery Psychologist

Despite the challenges facing many research projects over the last year, the team at Nottinghamshire Healthcare have worked tirelessly to ensure STADIA continues to run safely and successfully.

The STADIA trial, commissioned and funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), focuses on children and young people with emotional difficulties who have been referred to Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Led by Chief Investigator Kapil Sayal, it's investigating whether the use of a standard information-gathering package - helps with the assessment and diagnosis process.

Recruitment to the STADIA trial commenced in August 2019 and, despite the challenges presented by coronavirus, has enrolled over 500 study participants since March 2020.

Lead researcher, Paula Brown puts the success of STADIA down to several factors, including excellent

communication and collaboration between the study teams, the local CAMHS 'Single Point of Access' (SPA) team, and the parents and young people taking part in the study. In addition, the local Research Delivery Team have worked hard to ensure the smooth running of STADIA whilst having to shift their attention to urgent public health studies.

The online nature of the study activities and the intervention has also enabled it to continue safely when many face-to-face research projects were paused. This has been very helpful in recent months but will also continue to be a major benefit going forwards. The focus of the trial, on remote assessment in CAMHS, is also now especially timely as clinical services have had to adopt new ways of working due to the pandemic.

Find out more about STADIA [here](#) and [read more](#) about Paula and the team's collaborative approach that led to the project's success.



NEON study finishes recruitment and hits targets

Recruitment is now complete for all three trials in the [Narrative Experiences Online \(NEON\) study](#), which is looking at whether receiving online access to real-life stories of recovery from mental health problems can be helpful for people affected by mental health problems.

Both the NEON Trial and NEON-O Trial have over-recruited to their original targets. There are 741 participants randomised for the NEON Trial, 1035 participants randomised for the NEON-O Trial, and 54 participants randomised for the NEON-C Trial.

Collectively, this will enable the study team to make a very substantial contribution to knowledge about the impact of mental health recovery narratives on people. If you'd like to keep track of the study's progress, you can visit the [NEON news page](#).

All trials results are hoped to be published in late 2022 or early 2023, with papers from initial findings published throughout the duration of the study.



[Read the latest release online now](#)



It's Tricky to Talk: Webinar celebrates positive impact of reading

Featuring guest speakers from the University of Nottingham and Nottingham City of Literature, Nottingham Forest Community Trust and the Institute of Mental Health co-hosted a webinar on April 20th focusing on how reading and literature can benefit our wellbeing and improve our mood.

The event was held for the "It's Tricky to Talk" campaign, a long-standing partnership between the Institute of Mental Health and the Nottingham Forest Community Trust, championing better support and understanding for mental health issues.

[Watch a recording of the online event on our website.](#)

Two Nottingham Clinical Psychologists win NIHR Development and Skills Enhancement awards

Two of Nottinghamshire Healthcare's clinical psychologists have won National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Development and Skills Enhancement (DSE) awards.

The NIHR Academy DSE award is part of the NIHR Fellowship Programme and funded by the Department of Health and Social Care. The awards aim to support both the development of specific skills and experience that are relevant to key research areas and hope to foster collaborations between clinicians, researchers and healthcare industries.

Clinical Psychologists Dr Sam Malins and Dr Eirini Kontou were offered one-year funded awards for their work in cancer and stroke care respectively. The awards are particularly special as this is the first time Trust staff have won this award and both are working on projects within the Institute of Mental Health.

Dr Sam Malins works in cancer care and is using his award to work on a way to automatically rate psychological therapy sessions using a type of artificial

intelligence called natural language processing. He is also collaborating with a digital health enterprise to build on work he has already done within the Trust using a smart-messaging tool to reduce relapse from anxiety and depression as well as reducing dropout from group psychological therapies.

Dr Eirini Kontou will use her award to build on the work she has completed as part of her postdoctoral fellowship funded by the Stroke Association. The emphasis of her research is to improve the evidence for the provision of psychological care in stroke from acute to community settings, which is limited locally and nationally.



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Events

Wednesday 12th May

Centre for Dementia seminar series: Mindfulness and Dementia

11.30am to 12.30pm

Speakers: Natalie Marchant

Presentation via Microsoft Teams –
[Register online](#)

Tuesday 18 May 2021

Annual IMH Research Day

Online via MS Teams

Plenary Speaker: Professor Sir Graham Thornicroft, Kings College London

A series of Q&A panel sessions throughout the day (times to be confirmed)

The Annual IMH Research Day aims to highlight the work of the Institute's doctoral candidates, Managed Innovation Networks (MINs), and all early-career researchers (including research assistants, research fellows, and research-active clinicians and service users). The event celebrates the breadth of ideas and research work currently taking place within the Institute of Mental Health.

[Find out more.](#)

Thursday 13th May

DAN Soup: The friendly dragons' den event for arts and mental health projects

7pm – 9pm

Have you got an idea for using arts or creative activities to enhance mental health or tackle specific mental health issues in Derbyshire or Nottinghamshire? Or would you like to cast your vote and watch pitches for different ideas using arts/creative activities to enhance mental health?

[Book your tickets](#)



Monday 17th May

Research on Mental Health Recovery Co-Created with Survivors of Modern Slavery

10am-1pm

Learn about a unique research project that elevates the lived experiences of survivors of modern slavery in the UK. MOMENTS (Modern Slavery, Mental Health and Survivors) is a study co-created by the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab and Survivor Alliance to explore survivors' perspectives on mental health recovery.

Online event - [Register here](#)

Summer seminars

CANDAL research seminars

This summer CANDAL is running a series of three online seminars across June and July. The seminars are accessible to everyone, will be 90 minutes long, and include presentations from academics, clinicians and service users on a broad range of neurodevelopmental disorder topics. The topics of each seminars are:

- Design of mental health services for and with autistic people
- Access to care for neurodevelopmental disorders
- The impact of Covid-19

To join the mailing list for more information about these events please contact karen.sugars@nottshc.nhs.uk

Wednesday 14th July

Forensic Research Nottingham: Summer Symposium 2021 **‘Neuroscience in Forensic Mental health - is it translatable?’**

1-5pm, online event

In this opening symposium hosted by the Forensic Research Nottingham group, we will hear from researchers leading projects in the neuroscience of antisocial behaviour in the UK, US, and Canada. We will learn of recent developments, including from these projects, and of the challenges facing translation of this work into the clinical setting.

£45 (includes online access to the recorded sessions for six weeks after the event)

£25 for Forensic Research Nottingham group members.

[Register online here](#)

Forensic Research Nottingham (FRN) is a new research group based at IMH with links to Nottingham Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Nottingham. The group's members include leading researchers in neuroscience, including Professor Peter Liddle, clinicians working in forensic settings, and academics in multiple related fields including criminology, health and justice, and human rights. This is the inaugural FRN summer symposium. It is an online only event, though we hope to have face to face annual summer events from next year.

Thursday 20 May 2021

Centre for Mood Disorders: Research Meeting

9.30-13.30, Free to attend Via MS Teams

A showcase of the latest research from members of the Institute of Mental Health's Centre for Mood Disorders, in the development of innovative tools and support in areas of emotional wellbeing and mental health problems.

[Full programme and registration available online.](#)