



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.

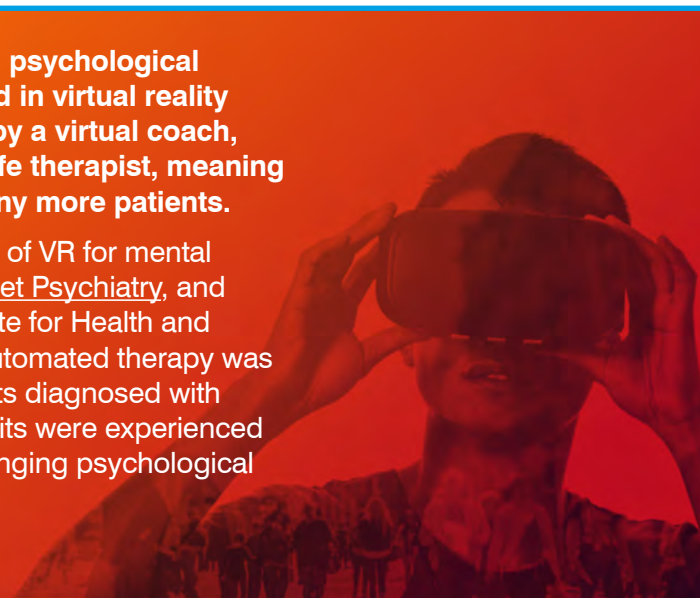
We are a partnership between two highly respected organisations, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and The University of Nottingham.

Breakthrough success in provision of automated psychological therapy using virtual reality

In a landmark development, psychological therapy has been automated in virtual reality (VR). With the user guided by a virtual coach, there is no need for a real-life therapist, meaning the treatment can reach many more patients.

In the largest ever clinical trial of VR for mental health, published in *The Lancet Psychiatry*, and funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), the automated therapy was shown to work well for patients diagnosed with psychosis. The biggest benefits were experienced by those with the most challenging psychological problems.

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In this issue...

- New five-year strategy launched for Institute of Mental Health
- £2.3m funding boost for research into sleep and ADHD
- Opera premieres based on Centre for Dementia research
- HSJ Award for Focus ADHD partnership
- ARC East Midlands research showcase



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



We start this edition of our newsletter with the exciting new findings from the recent gameChange study. This national, interdisciplinary project using pioneering technology to improve therapies and outcomes for NHS patients, encapsulates the purpose and principles at the very heart of the Institute of Mental Health.

We launch our new five-year strategic plan this month and with it we focus on our ambitions for the future and reaffirm our purpose and partnerships. We share our new mission, vision and values and you can [follow the links to read more](#) about how we will bring these to life through our strategic objectives, as well as through our work with our founding partners, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Nottingham.

But a strategic plan is more than a single document, it needs the people we work with and the research we produce, to bring it to life.

I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate and thank the staff, researchers, health and care professionals, volunteers, partners and community members who work with us and have supported the Institute as it has grown over the past 16 years. Your contribution is vital to our success, and long may it continue over the next five years and beyond.

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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Breakthrough success in provision of automated psychological therapy using virtual reality

The gameChange VR program was developed by a multi-partner team of university, health and industry experts including Oxford University spin-out: OxfordVR, creators of immersive technology for mental health. It is led by researchers at the University of Oxford and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, and targets a problem that is common in people diagnosed with psychosis: intense fears about being outside in everyday situations.

For many patients, these fears develop into a severe agoraphobia that means they avoid leaving the home, severely disrupting relationships with family and friends, their education, and careers. gameChange is designed to treat this agoraphobia and help patients re-engage with day-to-day activities. It takes them from a housebound existence to life back in the world outside.

The trial included 346 patients with psychosis in nine NHS Trusts across five English regions - Bristol, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, and Oxford. Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust consultant psychiatrist Dr Eileen O'Regan and Research Delivery Officer Dr Kate Bransby-Adams led the Nottingham study delivery, working alongside colleagues from the [NIHR MindTech team](#) whose role in this project was to lead on the Implementation and NHS Adoption of VR technology workstream (Dr Jen Martin, Dr Sue Brown and Dr Aislinn Bergin) and the Health Economics, Commissioning and Commercialisation workstream (Dr Michael Craven and Dr Aislinn Bergin).



To read this news in full, [visit our website](#)



Five-year strategic plan

Institute of
Mental Health
2022 - 2027

Our new strategy maps out the Institute of Mental Health's vision for the next five years: what our ambitions are, where we wish to have influence and make improvements, and how we can deliver impactful research that can change lives.

We have defined our research objectives and the purpose of our centres of excellence. Over the next five years we will undoubtedly see new and emerging research areas, influenced by a post-pandemic healthcare system, a rise in health inequalities and social disadvantage.

“

We must build the capability to not only deliver what we have aspired to do but have the flexibility to adapt to unforeseen challenges and opportunities.

”

Looking to our founding partners the University of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, we must reflect their key priorities to retain relevance and connection and engage the scientific and healthcare workforce in evidence-based research.

Our research will have global aspirations. Technology has broken down the barriers that can prevent international collaboration – we must embrace these opportunities and work across borders to become multi-cultural as well as multi-disciplinary. To have influence at a national level we must ensure our research is relevant to the mental health research priorities of our major funders, such as the [NIHR](#). As the legacy of the Covid pandemic remains unclear, we cannot ignore the changes it has already caused in the research world and the pressure it has placed on the global population's mental health.



Five-year strategic plan

Institute of
Mental Health
2022 - 2027

We have refreshed and refocused our mission and vision to reflect the changes in healthcare, innovation and our fields of research.

Mission:

Inspiring research that improves mental health care and connects academic, clinical, and lived experience expertise.

Vision:

Through our unique partnership, and by involving people directly affected by mental health problems, we will together produce research that will inspire change and improve the mental health of people locally, nationally, and internationally.

Values:

Collaboration

Inclusion

Impact

Effectiveness

The Institute of Mental Health's future research projects will continue to be inextricably linked to the collective experiences of recent years and the ongoing need to increase public awareness about mental health issues – **the need for our research has never been greater.**

To find out more about our new values and ambitions for the future, [visit our website and read our 2022-2027 strategy in full.](#)

WHO Quality Rights e-training launched

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently launched its global QualityRights e-training on mental health featuring Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus the WHO Director-General.

Over 3000 people viewed the launch live and a recording of the event is available to watch [here](#). As a [WHO Collaborating Centre](#), the work of our Centre for Mental Health and Human Rights was highlighted. Institute colleagues supported the development of this e-training, analysing results and demonstrating that it was effective in improving attitudes to human rights in mental health.



To find out more and to access the training, [visit our website](#)



Welcome Dr Danny Whiting

We're pleased to welcome Dr Danny Whiting to the Forensic Research Nottingham group. Danny completed his medical training at the University of Oxford and undertook core psychiatry training in Oxford as an NIHR Academic Clinical Fellow.

After completing his higher training in forensic psychiatry in 2018 he was awarded an NIHR Doctoral Research Fellowship to complete a PhD, based at the Forensic Psychiatry Research Group in Oxford. His doctoral work validated and clinically translated a violence risk prediction model for use in Early Intervention in Psychosis services. His primary research interests are in applying prediction tool approaches in psychiatric settings, as well as clinical forensic research and the epidemiology of violence in mental illness. He will be based at the Institute of Mental Health and will be working clinically in Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust prison mental health services.

Welcome on board!



£2.3m funding boost for research into sleep and ADHD

Institute colleagues have been awarded £2.28 million to develop a digital sleep intervention to help children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Professor David Daley, in collaboration with colleagues from our Centre for ADHD and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Across the Lifespan (CANDAL), NIHR MindTech, and the University of Nottingham, has been awarded the funding from the National Institute for Health and Care Research.

Digital Sleep Support for Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (DISCA) aims to develop and evaluate a new digital sleep intervention for children with ADHD. The project is led by University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust, in partnership with the University of Nottingham, University of Southampton, and Kings College London.

ADHD affects at least 250,000 children in the UK, with up to 73% reporting sleep problems. Difficulty sleeping contributes to worse daytime behaviour, school performance, and quality of life. Yet practitioners working in ADHD clinics are taught little about sleep in their training, often prescribing melatonin; NHS melatonin costs for children have risen from £28 million to £39 million in the last 5 years.

To support clinicians in identifying sleep problems in children with ADHD, DISCA researchers will first modify existing sleep screening tools to create one specific to ADHD. The University of Nottingham Health and E-Learning ([HELM](#)) team will work with clinicians to use an adapted questionnaire, develop online training, and help them better understand children's sleep problems.



To find out more, email:
David.Daley@nottingham.ac.uk

On receiving the award, Professor Daley remarked,

“Good quality sleep is so fundamental for health, this funding will help support the majority of parents of children with ADHD who do not currently benefit from good sleep”

Dr Eithne Heffernan joins INTERDEM Advisory Board

Congratulations to our Centre for Dementia colleague Dr Eithne Heffernan, who has been appointed to the Advisory Board of the INTERDEM academy.

The INTERDEM Academy was founded in 2014 to provide training and support to early career researchers in Europe who conduct research on psychosocial interventions for individuals living with dementia. The academy has approximately 200 members across 20 countries. These members can access a range of excellent career development opportunities, including masterclasses, online networking events, and travel fellowships. The academy is overseen by an Advisory Board comprising both senior and early career researchers from several countries and disciplines. Their goal is to develop and organise activities that stimulate collaboration and knowledge exchange and that support early career researchers in their pathway to senior posts in the field.

Eithne was appointed to the INTERDEM Academy Advisory Board as a 'late-stage representative,' or as a researcher with relevant postdoctoral experience. Speaking of her appointment, she says: "I am honoured to become a member of this board, which provides valuable support to future leaders in the field of dementia research. I look forward to working alongside the board members to enhance and expand the academy and to create exciting opportunities for training, networking, and collaboration. I believe it is vital to nurture early career investigators to improve research and practice in this field, which will ultimately benefit individuals living with dementia and their families/carers."

Eithne joins Institute Director Professor Martin Orrell on the INTERDEM Advisory Board and brings her knowledge and experience to its Dementia and Hearing Loss group, as members establish research priorities in this area.



Read more about
INTERDEM [here](#).

Silva Linings podcast nominated for prestigious media award

The Silva Linings podcast, based on research by Professor Justine Schneider and the Centre for Dementia, has been nominated for a Rockie Award at the Banff World Media Festival.

Recognising excellence in global television and digital content, the Rockie Awards are awarded by an international industry jury of entertainment and media professionals.

The Silva Lining podcast is competing against a host of international productions in the "Podcast: Fiction" category, alongside well-known TV shows and documentaries in the other categories

Read more about the festival and nominees [on the Rockie Awards website](#).



Premiere for opera based on Centre for Dementia research

Nottingham Lakeside Arts saw the successful premiere of a new, research-based opera on 2 April 2022. 'Take Care' was commissioned in 2018 by Professor Justine Schneider, from composer Douglas Finch and writer Cindy Oswin.

Based on field notes made during the BOUGH study of home care for people with dementia (funded by the NIHR School for Social Care Research, 2016-18) the aim of 'Take Care' is to shine a light on the complex job of home carers in dementia. The narrative follows a work-day for Katie Moore, sung by Nottingham-born soprano Donna Bateman.



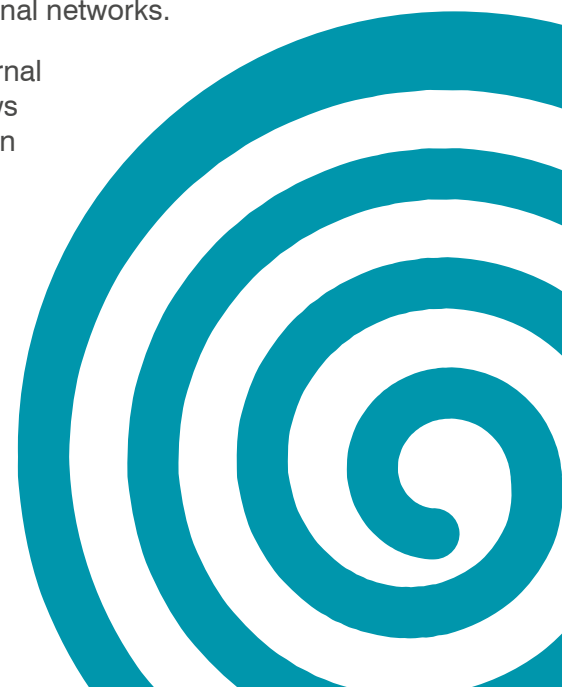
Find out more about the BOUGH study that inspired this new opera [here](#).

Image © Lisa Gilligan-Lee

Understanding why hallucinations occur in some dementia patients

Visual hallucinations are a common feature of Lewy body dementia and differentiate it from Alzheimer's disease dementia. A Precision Imaging team led by Prof. Marcus Kaiser (University of Nottingham, School of Medicine) found that compared to non-hallucinating patients, those with hallucinations feature consistent weakened connectivity within the visual ventral network, and between this network and default mode and ventral attentional networks, but not between or within attentional networks.

Recently published in the journal [Brain](#), the present study shows that the hallucinating condition is associated with functional network segregation in Lewy body dementia and supports the involvement of the cholinergic system.



New network to develop non-invasive brain stimulation therapies

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) have awarded £1.26m to health, academic, charity and industry partners, including Institute colleagues, to develop a new network to research non-invasive brain stimulation for treating mental health conditions.



Read more about
NeuroMod+ [on our website](#).

Focus ADHD wins HSJ Best Mental Health Partnership Award

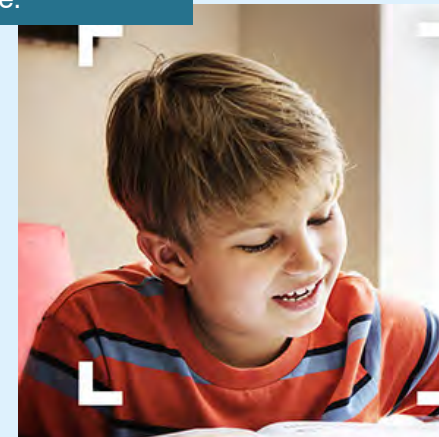
Congratulations to our colleagues in the Academic Health Science Network (AHSN) who have been awarded the Health Service Journal (HSJ) Partnership Award for Best Mental Health Partnership.

Almost 57,000 people (aged 6-18 years) have received an objective assessment for ADHD since Academic Health Science Networks began to support a new digital innovation, QbTest.

Evaluation of the national implementation is being led by MindTech's Dr Charlotte Hall and project managed by Caitlin Hand of Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.



Visit the [MindTech website](#)
to find out more.



The AHSN Network

FOCUS

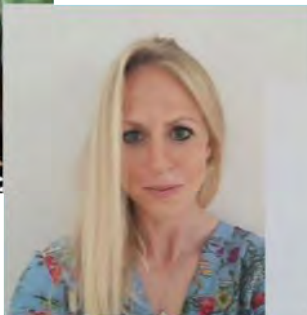
Transforming ADHD Diagnosis

Promotion success for MindTech colleagues

Congratulations to our MindTech colleagues Dr Blandine French, Dr Charlotte Hall, and Professor Elvira Perez Vallejos who have recently been promoted by the University of Nottingham.

Dr Blandine French becomes a Research Fellow, with a special interest in ADHD. Blandine's focus is on increasing awareness of ADHD and supporting families through the care pathway through her research.

Dr Charlotte Hall is now Principal Research Fellow, specialising in children and young people's mental health. Charlotte will continue leading on the design and delivery of clinical trials evaluating digital interventions for children and young people's mental health, and the implementation of technology in routine practice.



Finally, Dr Elvira Perez Vallejos has been appointed Professor of Digital Technology for Mental Health and Digital Technologies. Elvira is interested in the ethical challenges posed by digital interventions in and brings a wealth of experience to her role.

Their promotions are well deserved and a testament to the dedication to healthcare research and the communities they work alongside.

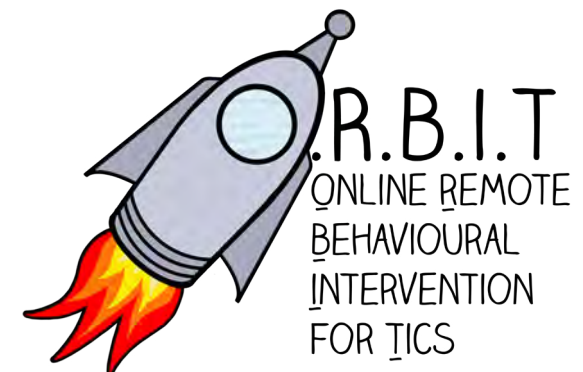
New paper evaluates app for children with anxiety

Data from the ORBIT trial has been used in new research to explore the impact of Covid-19 on tics.

ORBIT, which investigated the use of online behavioural therapy in tics, enabled researchers to examine data gathered pre and during the pandemic. Led by Dr Charlotte Hall, the team found that – despite anecdotal evidence to the contrary – the impact of Covid 19 neither worsened nor improved tic severity.



Read the paper, published in [Child Psychiatry & Human Development](#).



MindTech contribute to remote assessment pilot in ADHD

Dr Maddie Groom has been working with a team of researchers at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, investigating remote measurement technology in ADHD.

The ADHD Remote Technology (ART) research programme, led by Professor Jonna Kuntsi and Professor Richard Dobson, focuses on the development and application of a new remote measurement technology system for ADHD and associated disorders.

The ART pilot study included people with ADHD and a comparison group, using a new remote assessment system to gather data. Remote measurement technology included questionnaires and tasks alongside monitoring via a wearable device and smartphone sensors.

Data collection has now ended, giving researchers valuable information about how well these new remote measures capture the symptoms of ADHD and changes over time, and how individuals with ADHD and the comparison group found these measures.

Long-term, the aim of the ART research programme is to improve outcomes and support healthy lifestyles for people with ADHD by enabling self-management, personalisation of treatment and engagement with clinical teams.

Data from this pilot project will be used to inform a larger clinical study, the ADHD Remote Technology study of Cardiometabolic Risk factors and Medication Adherence ([ART-CARMA](#)), recruiting 300 adults with ADHD in the UK and Spain.

MindTech's Dr Maddie Groom is Director of the Centre for ADHD and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Across the Lifespan ([CANDAL](#)) at the Institute of Mental Health.



To find out more about the ART programme [visit the project website](#).

Or follow [@ADHD_RemoteTech](#) on Twitter.



New paper

Management of ADHD in prisoners

Dr John Tully of our Forensic Research Nottingham group has published a paper outlining evidence gaps in ADHD in the prison population. He offers suggestions for a measured and evidence-based approach in prison psychiatry settings.



Read the paper in [Frontiers in Psychiatry](#).

Afro-Caribbean Medical Network Journey to Success

“Define what success means to you.”

This was one of the significant pieces of advice highlighted at the Afro-Caribbean Medical Network’s (ACMN) **Journey to Success** event, sponsored by the Institute of Mental Health, which took place on Saturday 26th March.

From academic workshops and sessions to inspiring talks and seminars, ACMN – a University of Nottingham society – provides a vast support network for Afro-Caribbean healthcare students.

Journey to Success is ACMN’s annual event, where Afro-Caribbean healthcare professionals speak about their differing paths into healthcare. It allowed current and future healthcare students to gain insight into the different versions of success, while also understanding the reality it involves.

Dr Efosa Uwubamwem, enlightened the attendees on balancing your healthcare career with other aspirations you have, which for him includes modelling and a mental health business called Healthpush. Stacy Johnson MBE emphasised the importance of fully inhabiting the space you are in – a lesson she implemented throughout her 20+ years nursing career.

A quote from her talk that stood out was:

“Know your craft, master the skill, and redefine the criteria”

This belief system helped her break down existing barriers. The attendees enjoyed the opportunity to network and meet like-minded individuals.

Health workers need tech training

NEON Programme Co-ordinator writes in Times Higher Education

Institute colleague Stefan Rennick-Egglestone recently featured in The Times Higher Education, exploring the benefits and risks of a move towards increasing technology in healthcare.

Stefan, a Senior Research Fellow and Programme Co-ordinator for the NEON trials reflects on the rapid shift to online consultations during the pandemic, enabling some vital services to continue. Patients in remote areas or with accessibility issues can undoubtedly benefit from such technological advances.

However, he uses his experience in recovery research to highlight the potential pitfalls and risks both patients and healthcare professionals might face if adequate attention isn't given to training and education in technology use, including risks to mental health.

"Opportunities for technology-mediated treatment are developing rapidly, and we must be aware of the risks if healthcare professionals are asked to engage in new forms of practice without sufficient training or support."

To read the article in full, visit the [Times Higher Education](#) website.



Read more about [NEON and the Recovery Research Group](#).



Calling all blog writers!



**Do you have an idea for a blog post?
We'd love to hear from you!**

The Institute blog has been running for many years, with posts from researchers, students, service-users, public contributors, clinicians and more.

- Are you a PhD student with thoughts on your journey in research?
- Have you been involved in research as a member of the public? Would you like to share your experience?
- Has your research career taken you to unexpected places?

No writing skills needed, the blog is an informal space for sharing a range of voices and experience. If you have an idea for a post, **get in touch** – we'd love to hear from you.

Institute joins NHS organisations in Nottinghamshire to normalise sharing inclusive pronouns

In October 2021, as part of National Hate Crime Awareness Week, Nottinghamshire Healthcare, Sherwood Forest Hospitals, Nottingham University Hospitals and the Institute of Mental Health worked together to raise awareness of the important issue around the use of pronouns.

With contributions from the Institute's Communication and Involvement teams, Professor Jon Arcelus and the Nottinghamshire Healthcare LGBTQ+ staff network, a public statement was created uniting each of the organisations in their pledge and future actions.

We are delighted to announce that all new staff to each organisation will be given the option of adding their pronouns to their work ID badges. This will help ensure that staff are addressed by their correct pronouns, which is part of creating a workplace where everyone feels valued and supported.



Read more
[on our website.](#)



Bug Hotel brings nature closer to the Institute!



A new "Insect Meditation Hotel" has been built by a team of volunteers outside the Institute of Mental Health building on the University of Nottingham Jubilee Campus. If you have visited the Institute in the last couple of weeks you may have spotted the new luxury bug retreat nestled in the trees just behind our Gordian Knot sculpture near the front entrance. Built by Nadia Frowd and Angela Holland from the Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Research Delivery Team, assisted by members of the University of Nottingham Conservation Society students, the handmade hotel will encourage a variety of insects and wildlife to take up residence on campus.

A huge thank you to all involved for their hard work and enthusiasm!

