From the Director…

It is my pleasure to present the second issue of ndanews, the newsletter of the New Dynamics of Ageing (NDA) Research Programme. The NDA Programme is a multidisciplinary collaboration between five Research Councils: the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), the Medical Research Council (MRC), and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). This is the first time that five Research Councils have mounted a common research programme and their combined support, in excess of £22 million, makes it the largest research initiative on ageing ever mounted in the UK.

Because of the scale and scope of the NDA Programme commissioning the research projects is a complex and time consuming process. In fact, although the Programme was launched in 2006, the commissioning will not be completed until the end of 2008. Since the last newsletter nine new Collaborative Research Projects (CRPs) have been added to the portfolio (details on p.3). Three of these were commissioned via a special IDEAS Factory, sponsored by EPSRC, called the New Dynamics of Nutrition. This brought together 20 scientists from a wide range of disciplines for a week of intensive activities aimed at generating high quality, innovative research projects. The IDEAS Factory was a great success and special thanks are due to EPSRC not only for organising it but also for contributing substantial additional funding to the Programme.

The second group of CRPs were commissioned in the normal way following an open call. Five of the six funded had previously been Preparatory Networks and so the value of this new approach to the encouragement of multidisciplinary research proposals was demonstrated very clearly. It may serve as a model for other multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research initiatives.

In the past a major barrier to multidisciplinary research has been the commissioning process and especially the peer review process. I am pleased to note that the NDA Programme is combating this barrier by building up a database of peer reviewers and constituting a commissioning panel that is fully committed to the multidisciplinarity of the Programme.

The NDA Programme is unique in another respect: it has a group of older people dedicated to supporting its objectives. The work of the Older People’s Reference Group is outlined on p.14.

I do hope that you will find something of interest in this newsletter and will want to keep in regular touch. (You can download copies from the NDA website www.newdynamics.groups.shef.ac.uk.) On behalf of the five UK Research Councils behind this Programme and myself let me thank you for your attention and urge you to help us to ensure that this massive research effort achieves what it is primarily intended to, that is to ensure that both the quantity and the quality of later life is enhanced.

Alan Walker
Professor of Social Policy and Social Gerontology
The University of Sheffield
The NDA Commissioning Process

Because the NDA Programme is such a large and ambitious one it has a complex commissioning process to ensure that the best range of projects are supported. The projects commissioned to date are:

**Collaborative Research Projects**
(Large scale, multi-site projects)

**Commissioned in April 2006:**

SomnIA – Optimising Quality of Sleep Among Older People in the Community and Care Homes  
Sara Arber, University of Surrey

MAP2030 – Modelling Ageing Populations to 2030  
Mike Murphy, London School of Economics

**Commissioned in May 2008:**

NANA: Novel Assessment of Nutrition and Ageing  
Arlene Astell, University of St. Andrews

MAPP-MAL: Multidisciplinary Approach to Develop a Prototype for the Prevention of Malnutrition in Older People: Products, People, Places and Procedures  
Paula Moynihan, University of Newcastle

MINA: Migration, Nutrition and Ageing Across the Lifecourse in Bangladeshi Families. A Transnational Perspective  
Janice Thompson, University of Bristol

**Commissioned in July 2008:**

SUS-IT: Sustaining IT Use by Older People to Promote Autonomy and Independence  
Leela Damodaran, University of Loughborough

Working Late: Strategies to Enhance Productive and Healthy Environments for the Older Workforce  
Cheryl Haslam, University of Loughborough

Grey and Pleasant Land? An Interdisciplinary Exploration of the Connectivity of Older People in Rural Civic Society  
Catherine Hennessy, University of Plymouth

A Life Course Approach to Healthy Ageing: Capitalising on the Value of UK Life Course Cohorts  
Diana Kuh, MRC Centre London

Design for Ageing Well: Improving Quality of Life for the Ageing Population Using a Technology Enabled Garment System  
Jane McCann, University of Wales, Newport

Tackling Ageing Continence through Theory Tools and Technology TACT3  
Eleanor van den Heuvel, Brunel University

**Programme Grants**
(Standard projects)

**Commissioned in June 2007:**

Ageing, Well-being and Development: A Comparative Study of Brazil and South Africa  
Armando Barrientos, University of Manchester

Transitions, Choices and Health at Older Ages: Life Course Analyses of Longitudinal Data  
David Blane, Imperial College London

Psychometric Testing of the Multidimensional Older People’s Quality of Life (OPQOL) Questionnaire and the Causal Model of Quality of Life Under-pinning it  
Ann Bowling, University College London

Detecting and Preventing Financial Abuse of Older Adults: an Examination of Decision-making by Managers and Professionals  
Mary Gilhooly, Brunel University

Maintaining Dignity in Later Life: a Longitudinal Qualitative Study of Older People’s Experiences of Supportive Care  
Liz Lloyd, University of Bristol

Innovation in Envisioning Dynamic Biomechanical Data to Inform Healthcare and Design Practice  
Alastair Macdonald, Glasgow School of Arts

New Metrics for Exploring the Relationship between Mobility and Successful Ageing  
Lynn McInnes, Northumbria University

Promoting Independence and Social Engagement Among Older People in Disadvantaged Community  
Michael Murray, Keele University

Older People’s Use of Unfamiliar Space  
Judith Phillips, University of Wales Swansea

Ageing, Poverty and Neoliberalism in Urban South India  
Penny Vera-Sanso, Birkbeck College, University of London

Families and Caring in South Asian Communities  
Christina Victor, University of Reading

Landscapes of Cross-generational Engagement  
Peter Wright, Sheffield Hallam University
MAP2030 - Modelling Ageing Populations to 2030

Mike Murphy, London School of Economics
Contact: m.murphy@lse.ac.uk, 0207 955 7661

Work Package 1:

Mike Murphy has been working on socio-demographic differentials in mortality and use of acute and long-term care facilities in relation to proximity to death using Finnish register data in the absence of appropriate British data. He presented “Demand for Long-term Residential Care by Older People in Finland in Relation to Age and Proximity to Death” in a Workshop on Aging, Care Need, and Quality of Life – Rostock Jan/Feb 2008. Publication expected late 2008 or early 2009 of:

“Demand for long-term residential care and acute health care by older people in the context of ageing populations: a general overview of drivers for care and a case-study of Finland with particular emphasis on age and proximity to death” by Mike Murphy & Pekka Martikainen, University of Helsinki.

A paper "Gender, living arrangements and social circumstances as determinants of entry into and exit from long-term institutional care at older ages - a six-year follow-up study of older Finns," With Pekka Martikainen, Heta Moustgaard, Elina Nihtilä, Seppo Koskinen, Tuija Martelin, Anja Noro has been accepted for publication in The Gerontologist.

Mike Murphy was a member of the Mortality Research Working Group of The Board For Actuarial Standards which produced in March 2008 its discussion paper On Mortality Assumptions (http://www.frc.org.uk/bas/publications/pub1558.html) used to underpin debate about appropriate mortality assumptions for actuarial calculations.

Work Package 2:

• Further work aligning projections of total population with GAD projections
• Finalisation of DFLE module on existing (not gender-specific) model
• Programming of new gender-specific model begun
• Abstract accepted at the Australian Population Association meeting in July 2008 (see attached)
• Application made to DWP for further work on disability comparisons
• Papers in preparation from old model to illustrate the potential policy applications of WP2:
  - The effect of dementia trends and treatments on longevity and disability
  - A simulation model based on the MRC Cognitive Function and Ageing Study (MRC CFAS)
  - Will Disability in the Older Population Increase or Decline in the next decades? (working title)

Work Package 4:

Emily Grundy presented the paper ‘Transitions from independent households to supported environments over three decades in England and Wales: changing roles of family and state?’ Paper accepted for presentation in the session “The Elderly and their Kin: The Family, the Market and the State” at the Population Association of America Conference New Orleans, April 2008.

Work Package 5:

WP5 work since the last report has included a focus on improving consistency between the PSSRU, PPI and CARESIM models and on-going model maintenance and development.
Personal Social Services Research Unit:

- development of scenarios to model for the Department of Health led work on the forthcoming Green Paper on adult social care and support;
- updating and improving various modules of the PSSRU projections model, including informal care, home care and disability benefits modules;
- comparative analyses of data on disability, data on income and data on informal care from various population surveys including GHS, ELSA, CFAS and FRS.

Pension Policy Institute:

Briefing Note on the future costs of pensions and long-term care.  
http://www.pensionspolicyinstitute.org.uk/news.asp?p=312&s=6&a=0  
MAP2030 was mentioned in the Financial Times on 1st May.

University of East Anglia:

Richard Berthoud and Ruth Hancock spoke on 27th March at a follow-up to the Smith Institute seminar, held at the King’s Fund, to discuss the issue of the role of disability benefits in paying for care which was a more in depth discussion of our chapter in the report which was launched in February.

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SomnIA – Optimising Quality of Sleep Among Older People in the Community and Care Homes

Sara Arber, University of Surrey  
Contact: s.arber@surrey.ac.uk, 0148 368 9292  

A very successful two-day SomnIA project meeting was held at Loughborough University in April 2008, attended by academic partners, seven SomnIA researchers, three linked PhD students, our five Project Partners (Help the Aged, Phillips Ltd, Relatives and Residents Association, DIPEx and Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust), and members of the SomnIA Advisory Committee. The project meeting provided excellent opportunities to discuss preliminary research findings from the first 5 work packages and research plans for two work packages which will start shortly, as well as for networking between researchers from the four universities collaborating in SomnIA and with Project partners and Advisory Committee members.
Current figures suggest that one in four older people are likely to be undernourished. Under-nutrition in older people is closely linked to physical frailty, which is a major factor in the development of disability and dependency in old age. There are many reasons why older people are undernourished which include physical factors, such as problems with chewing and swallowing or reduced mobility; mental health factors such as depression or social isolation; and cognitive factors such as dementia or other neurological illnesses.

In order to treat malnutrition in older people, it is important to be able to assess not only a person’s food intake but also physical, mental health and cognitive factors that might be contributing to the problem. Currently it is difficult to examine the links between diet, physical health, mental health and cognitive factors because the measurement methods are inadequate. For example, measures of food intake rely upon people writing down what they have eaten or recalling what they ate on the previous day or days. These methods are especially difficult for older people who may have impaired cognition, memory loss and visual problems. Similarly, measures of cognition often rely on questionnaires that can be burdensome for individuals to complete. Because of the nature of these methods the scope of the assessments is often limited, assessments are often inaccurate and measurements provide only a snapshot rather than an integrated or progressive picture of the individual.

NANA is a three-year multidisciplinary project with two specific aims:

The first is to improve the methods available for collecting nutritional information from older people using advanced technology to overcome the limitations of current pen and paper methods.

The second aim is to develop a comprehensive assessment package that integrates nutritional information with information on health status; function in activities of daily living; cognition; and mental health to improve the targeting of interventions. The assessment package must be suitable to monitor events over time so that changes and rates of decline or improvement can be detected.

These two aims reflect the underlying principle of the NANA project to improve recognition of poor nutritional status in older people alongside improved identification and understanding of the factors that contribute to this.

The NANA research team comprises partners from four disciplines and four institutions: Psychology (Arlene Astell, St. Andrews); Nutrition (Liz Williams, Sheffield), Engineering (Tim Adlam, Bath) and Software Engineering (Faustina Hwang, Reading).

The NANA programme

The programme of work comprises three phases, which will commence in October 2008 and run until October 2011.

Phase 1: User Needs Analysis. The first phase will involve consulting with a broad cross-section of older people, and caregivers and health professionals who work with older people, to establish what technical approaches would be useful and acceptable to all groups.

Phase 2: Development of Integrated Measurement Toolkit. This phase contains three inter-related subsections. The first is an iterative programme to develop the assessment technology, led by Engineering and Software Development, closely liaising with Psychology and Nutrition. The second subsection focuses on techniques for dietary assessment in older people and is led by Nutrition, working closely with the other three disciplines to facilitate integration into the assessment toolkit. The third subsection is a parallel investigation of measures of cognition and mental health in older people, led by Psychology but working closely with Nutrition, Engineering and Software Engineering to ensure integration between the three subsections.

Phase 3: Full Validation of the Assessment Toolkit. This phase will comprise a comparison of the new integrated assessment with traditional ‘pen and paper’ methods with volunteers having the equipment installed in their homes.

This research will not only improve measurement of nutrition, physical health, mental health and cognitive function but will also improve our understanding of the relationships between these factors. This will be useful for informing strategies to prevent physical and mental decline in ageing, and improvements in the medical treatment and social provision for older people.
Some 60% of older people are at risk of malnutrition whilst in hospital, increasing complications, reducing quality of life and, in the UK, costing healthcare approximately £3.5 billion per year. With an overriding aim of addressing the problem of malnutrition in older patients, MAPP-MAL is a three year NDA multidisciplinary research project that will exploit new technologies to rethink and test new ways that food can be produced and delivered to older patients using a 'joined-up' approach that considers all stages of the food journey, from production to consumption (i.e. products, people, places and procedures). The amenability of this new systems prototype to become embedded in current UK practice in hospitals and other care settings will also be investigated by engaging end users and key stakeholders throughout the development.

The MAPP-Mal cross disciplinary research team comprises partners from seven disciplines and four institutions – nutrition and dietetics (Paula Moynihan, Newcastle), medical sociology (Carl May, Newcastle), food sensorial science (Lisa Methven, Reading), design engineering (Alastair Macdonald, Glasgow), ergometry (Martin Maguire, Loughborough), medicine care of the elderly (Margot Gosney, Reading) and computing science (Patrick Olivier, Newcastle).

In developing and testing the new systems prototype, the MAPP-Mal team will liaise with the NHS, relevant professional bodies (e.g. Royal College of Nursing, Hospital Caterers Association, National Association of Care Caterers, British Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition, British Dietetic Association) and key charities (e.g. National Patient Safety Agency, Age Concern and patients organisations).

Objectives

MAPP-Mal will address the current crisis of malnutrition in older people in hospitals by devising a new prototype for products, people, places, procedures that encompasses a multidisciplinary approach to prevent malnutrition in hospitals in a user participative proof of concept study. This will be achieved through 5 overall objectives:

1) To explore and define the current interactions between food, people, places and procedures in the elderly care hospital setting and identify areas within this for intervention to prevent malnutrition.

2) With input from key users and stakeholders, to devise a new system concept in four key areas which are: (a) The actual food product provided (sensorial quality); (b) The food journey from production to consumption; (c) The older patient’s eating environment and; (d) Monitoring of food/nutrient intake.

3) To conduct a proof of concept in each of these defined areas collecting qualitative data on feasibility and acceptability from stakeholders, and key end users who are collectively referred to as ‘The Food Family’ (i.e. food producers, caterers, ward staff, nurses, dieticians, physicians, speech and occupational therapists, carers and older people).

4) To collect qualitative data from the Food Family on the perceived effectiveness and application of the new prototype to other settings e.g. care homes, patient’s home.

5) To design a new prototype for food products, people, places and procedures that, based on qualitative evidence, is amenable to becoming embedded in practice thereby reducing malnutrition and enhancing quality of life.

Programme of research

The objectives described above will be achieved through 5 integrated Work Packages outlined below and illustrated by the diagram.

Work Package 1: Defining current systems

The first stage of the project is to map out existing systems. In an ethnographic study, observations will be conducted in the NHS hospital setting (catering through to older people’s wards). Interviews will be conducted with the Food Family and key stakeholders to identify opportunities for intervention to prevent malnutrition with respect to products, people, places and procedures (contact Paula Moynihan p.j.moynihan@ncl.ac.uk/ Carl May c.r.may@ncl.ac.uk).

Work Package 2: End user and stakeholder engagement

Once current systems are mapped an IDEAS factory will be held with the Food Family and stakeholders to initiate the ideas for the new prototype of systems. Subsequently, at all stages of prototype development
feedback on the new prototype will be obtained from the Food Family and Stakeholders to inform prototype development (contact Paula Moynihan p.j.moynihan@ncl.ac.uk/ Carl May c.r.may@ncl.ac.uk).

**Work Package 3: Developing new food products for older patients**

This work package will review the sensorial quality of existing foods provided and will develop foods with improved sensorial quality for older people using appropriate ingredients and processes. The prototypes will be developed around delivering foods that meet the nutritional requirements of three specified groups of older patients known to be at risk of malnutrition (stroke, dementia and falls patients). This work package will use state of the art technology to improve the sensorial quality of food for patients with swallowing difficulties. The potential use of releasing food aromas at ward level to stimulate patient appetite will also be tested (contact Lisa Methven l.methven@reading.ac.uk).

**Work Package 4: Utilising innovative design & technology to optimise the Food Journey and the older patient’s Eating Environment**

With input from work packages 1-3 on the existing expectations, means and quality of food within a food delivery service for older patients, this WP will involve the generation of novel approaches to mobile food preparation, delivery, the older patient’s eating environment and monitoring of food intake, exploiting current and new technologies. Development of the prototype for the food journey and patient environment will involve an iterative design and evaluation process using scenario-building, prototyping and visualisation tools: sketch, physical mock-up simulation/enactment prototypes used together with virtual 3D modelling of ward and patient environments to develop convincing scenarios of the new service in operation. The prototype component elements will include: engineering: identification and specification of products and technologies for enhancing and preserving the quality and delivery of food products; digital technologies for controls, interfaces and interactions; environment and ambience where eating takes place (spatial layout, colour, lighting) contributing to a more enjoyable eating/experience; design of the total system of products (trolleys trays, crockery, utensils, beds, chairs); ergonomic evaluation and design of the system of products for safety, hygiene, comfort, privacy, and dignity; design integration of monitoring technologies e.g. how can automated inventory technologies be better exploited to maintain food quality and evaluate patient consumption? (contact Alastair Macdonald a.macdonald@gsa.ac.uk).

**Work Package 5: Potential application of the new systems prototype to other settings**

The work package will collect data on the potential application of the new prototype to other care settings for older people including residential and nursing homes. Interviews/focus groups with the Food Family and stakeholders will collect feedback on the potential application of the new concepts to these other settings. This will inform on which elements of the prototype are of potential value for the prevention of malnutrition in other care settings (contact Paula Moynihan p.j.moynihan@ncl.ac.uk/ Carl May c.r.may@ncl.ac.uk).

The ultimate output from the MAPP-Mal project is the specification for a new prototype of a joined-up approach to providing adequate and appealing food to older patients, ready for trialling throughout the NHS, with the ultimate aim to minimise malnutrition. The study will complement existing initiatives e.g. the DH/NHS Joint Action Plan.
MINA is a three-year NDA research project which addresses ageing, migration, and nutrition across two generations of Bangladeshi women. The Bangladeshi population is one of the fastest growing ethnic groups within the UK, and are amongst the most socially disadvantaged. They have poorer self-reported and measured health status indicated by higher rates of disability, centralised obesity and chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Older Bangladeshi women are particularly affected as they play a lead role in caretaking for multiple generations within relatively large extended families and many struggle to cope with the complex challenges of ageing, poverty, racism, and social exclusion.

As in the general population, nutrition plays a crucial role in the health status of the Bangladeshi population. Despite this there is no clear understanding of how eating patterns and migration affects this group's nutritional status and experiences of ageing. Without this information we cannot develop effective culturally tailored interventions. MINA will address these gaps by combining approaches, methods, and expertise not used in previous research to gain an in-depth understanding of Bangladeshi women's nutritional status, food practices, beliefs and experiences of ageing in the UK and Bangladesh.

The MINA interdisciplinary research team comprises partners from eight disciplines and universities – public health nutrition and exercise (Janice Thompson, Bristol), public health nursing (Joy Merrell, Swansea), biological anthropology (Barry Bogin, Loughborough), health psychology (Petra Meier, Sheffield), ethnobotany (Andrea Pieroni, Bradford), environmental and media design (Vanja Garaj, Brunel), migration and social anthropology (Katy Gardner, Sussex), and social gerontology (Christina Victor, Reading).

Additional MINA partners include researchers at the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh, the NGO International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) and local UK Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) organisations.

Objectives
MINA’s overall aim is to develop processes and products to reduce existing health inequalities and promote healthy, active ageing among Bangladeshi women by gaining a better understanding of their nutritional status, food practices and beliefs, and experiences and perceptions of ageing among this group. The project participants include older women (45+ years old) who migrated from Bangladesh to the UK, younger women (18-35 years old) born to migrants in the UK, and women of the same two age groups living in Bangladesh. The study aim will be achieved through the following objectives to:

1. Understand how migration impacts on nutritional status, food practices, health, and ageing among first and second generation Bangladeshi women living in the UK and among non-migrating women of similar age in Bangladesh.

2. Conduct a secondary analysis of existing UK national survey data to improve our understanding of mechanisms underlying well-documented health inequalities experienced by Bangladeshi women with a focus on nutrition-related behaviours and conditions.

3. Obtain detailed accounts of Bangladeshi women’s migration and biographical experiences to explore the impact on nutritional status, health beliefs, health behaviours and transmission of nutritional knowledge.

4. Understand typical food environments (acquisition, preparation and consumption) and traditional plant food uses, their social and medicinal meanings, and management of home gardens and allotments in the UK and Bangladesh.

5. Develop a multi-media collection (e.g., photographic, video, user-friendly website) of Bangladeshi food-related products including historical stories, interactive cookbook, and a food plant book for use by Bangladeshi families.
6. Showcase the diversity and impact of differing food and living environments on ageing in Bangladeshi communities in the UK and Bangladesh through a travelling photography exhibit.

7. Develop a prototype of integrated, multidisciplinary methods and outputs for researchers, health and social care practitioners, policy makers, and community leaders to examine and promote healthy ageing and nutrition in communities at risk.

These objectives and outputs will be achieved through the four integrated Work Packages. The figure below shows the Work Packages, their inter-linkages, and the involvement of co-investigators.

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**Decision Making in Detecting Financial Elder Abuse**

**Mary Gilhooly, Brunel University**

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September 15th is the official starting date for this project. Debbie Cairns, a psychologist by training, will join the team on this date as a research fellow. Miranda Davies and Libby Notley joined the team in May as attached PhD students. Libby is an occupational therapist and Miranda is a health psychologist. By way of preparation for the official start date the team has begun the process of gaining NHS ethical approval, as well as contacting primary care trusts for the various permissions needed to contact health and social care professionals. We have also set about making further contacts with banks. As part of a conference a workshop was conducted with health and social care professionals about the cues that trigger suspicious of financial abuse of older adults. Most of the workshop participants found it difficult to pinpoint exactly what it is that makes them suspect financial elder abuse, noting only that ‘abnormal behaviour’ is the main cue. There was an interesting discussion of what counts as abnormal behaviour. This preliminary finding will be followed up during the pilot focus groups which will be conducted in October. A poster, outlining the aims and project methods, is to be presented at the annual conference of the British Society of Gerontology annual conference in Bristol in September. The project web page is under development and project brochures were handed out to delegates at an international conference in Turkey in April and a conference in Dublin in May.
Ageing, Well-being and Development.
A Comparative Study of Brazil and South Africa

Armando Barrientos, University of Manchester
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The project kicked into life in January. Our main activities to date have involved re-establishing research partnerships with colleagues in Brazil and South Africa, planning the next three years’ work, and disseminating the project to the research community and policy stakeholders. We have found strong policy interest on the implications of ageing for developing countries, especially as regards old age income security. Our first team meeting took place at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa on the 1-7 June 2008.

Transitions, Choices and Health at Older Ages: Life Course Analyses of Longitudinal Data

David Blane, Imperial College London
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The project’s three research questions have been scheduled. Year 1: Health and labour market position. Year 2 first six months: Add informal caring. Year 2 second six months: International comparisons.

Three quarterly project meetings have been held, to review completed work and plan next steps. Project meetings are attended by non-academic collaborators (Help the Aged; Office for National Statistics; Department for Work and Pensions) and by international colleagues (Turin, Finnish, Scottish, Northern Ireland Longitudinal Studies).

Maintaining Dignity in Later Life: a Longitudinal Qualitative Study of Older People's Experiences of Supportive Care

Liz Lloyd, University of Bristol
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This project was delayed initially due to delays in obtaining ethical and governance approval from the NHS. However we have completed three pilot interviews with Experts by Experience recruited via Help the Aged and are currently reviewing our approach to interviews following these. We have also made progress on these selection of potential participants in readiness for the time when approval is granted.

Psychometric Testing of the Multidimensional Older People's Quality of Life (OPQOL) Questionnaire and the Causal Model of Quality of Life Under-pinning it

Ann Bowling, University College London
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The study is progressing well and the qualitative interviews have begun. The contracted out national omnibus and ethnibus surveys are also going well.
Innovation in Envisioning Dynamic Biomechanical Data to Inform Healthcare and Design Practice

Alastair Macdonald, Glasgow School of Arts
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All data has been visualised and a speedy means of selecting – by gender, age, and condition – from the 900+ animation files has been devised. The interviewing of the requisite number of older people is nearing completion, and the interviewing of different discipline groups of professionals is well underway. Focus group sessions were held in June/July, in which a selection of the older and professional participants took part. Detailed plans are in place for the NDA/SPARC seminar and workshop programme for November.

Families and Caring in South Asian Communities

Christina Victor, University of Reading
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The focus in the initial phase of the project has been upon creating the framework within which to conduct the project. We have successfully completed all the ethical and governance requirements for the project in preparation for starting the fieldwork. We have translated all the project materials into Bengali and Urdu which is a time consuming process. We have created a local advisory group, consisting of our project partners, and have had two meeting to discuss the project. These individuals and organisations are key to our successful undertaking a complex and challenging fieldwork phase. Our extensive literature search is ‘on-going’ and we have been actively disseminating the project locally.

Landscapes of Cross-generational Engagement

Peter Wright, Sheffield Hallam University
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The Landscapes project began on 1st January 2008. Since this time we have made contact with our two sites. We have been making visits and collecting initial data concerning participants daily lives and engagements with environment, community and technology. We have introduced a prototype Windows-on-the-World at Oliver House which has been well received and provoked further design discussions. At Poor Clares’ we have demonstrated Google Earth, and a prototype of a digital prayer book, explored some possible website designs and discussed concepts around digital music and contemplative prayer. We hope to be introducing some prototypes in the near future.

Older People's Use of Unfamiliar Space

Judith Phillips, University of Wales Swansea
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The OPUS project is close to progressing on schedule, with the second researcher now in place who has much relevant experience and ideas for the project. This has been accompanied by sound development on the GIS-related aspects of the project by the first researcher. A first draft briefing paper (literature review) covering the GIS research framework is complete which includes a methodological outline for spatial analyses and a framework for testing and evaluating the prototype. An abstract has been submitted for the British Society of Gerontologists 2008 conference.
New Metrics for Exploring the Relationship between Mobility and Successful Ageing

**Lynn McInnes, Northumbria University**  
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This project began on 1st January 2008 with the appointment of a research assistant. A battery of tests has been collated to assess mobility, gait and cognitive performance, and a GPS 'locating' device and accelerometer have been tested and are ready for use. All materials and procedures have now been submitted for ethical approval and once this is received letters will be sent to volunteers of a longitudinal study of ageing inviting them to take part.

Promoting Independence and Social Engagement Among Older People in Disadvantaged Community

**Michael Murray, Keele University**  
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Friederike Ziegler (research associate), Amy Bennion (Administrator) and two PhD students (Amanda Crummett and Sharon Middleton) have joined the project team. In collaboration with our partners in Manchester City Council we have selected four neighbourhoods in Manchester for the community initiatives. Talks and discussions have taken place with representatives of community groups and other potential collaborators in some of the communities. We are currently developing our research tools such as interview and group discussion schedules and questionnaires. Ethical approval for pilot data collection is being sought.

Ageing, Poverty and Neoliberalism in Urban South India

**Penny Vera-Sanso, Birkbeck College, University of London**  
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The aim of this project is to identify the forces shaping the urban poor’s capacity to be self-supporting or to access family, market-mediated and state resources in later life in order to identify policy measures that could strengthen older people’s capacity to earn a living. Our approach is comparative, taking as its base line research undertaken by some of our team between 1990-2 - the period just prior to the implementation of India's neoliberal policies after the foreign exchange crisis of 1991. The project started in November 2007 in Chennai (formerly Madras), a city of approximately 4.5 million inhabitants which many consider a neoliberal success story.

We are researching six low-income sites; three were part of our original investigation. In all six sites the vast majority of people work in the informal economy. We have undertaken an 800 household survey which is currently being analysed and have begun in-depth semi-structured interviews. We are also at an early stage of reviewing the impact of policies, law, jurisprudence and indigenous cinema both for the way they conceive of older people as well as their direct impact on older people’s lives.

As part of our research we are in regular contact with organisations working with people in later life. In addition to this and because of the breadth of our contacts with Indian activists, lawyers, students, NGOs and government institutions we have had many informal discussions with people on the need to mainstream the needs/rights of older people and of women-only households (almost all of whom will be women in later life). We have spoken at organising meetings for a public hearing on food security and the public distribution system, at an activist/NGO/academic workshop on the JNNURM and at a rally of the older urban poor. This has been a very rewarding part of the project as, without exception, we have found that older people are conceived of as physically and economically dependent on younger people, not as working people whose vulnerability is as much conditioned by the way the economy and society is organised as by their physical capacities.
Older People's Reference Group

Appointing a dedicated programme reference group of older people is a novel departure and experiment for scientific research. The Rowntree Foundation had something similar for its Older People’s Research Programme but it has never been tried in a Research Council initiative. The idea goes back to the ESRC Growing Older Programme. When it was nearing completion I invited Help the Aged to assemble a group of older people to comment on the research carried out by the Programme. The resulting booklet was one of the highlights of the GO Programme and a phenomenal success with thousands of copies being distributed to local groups of older people. With this new Programme came the opportunity to build into its foundations the involvement of older people, rather than to bolt it on at the end. This is done in two main ways: via a requirement for projects to engage with older people and other research users and, at the Programme level, by the Older People’s Reference Group (OPRG).

Some may question why a scientific research programme should involve older people and the short answer is that it is both in the interests of the research and a matter of human rights (for a fuller exposition of the case there is a link to my Age and Ageing editorial of December 2007 on the NDA website).

What is the OPRG intended to do? It was established with four objectives:

• to advise the Director on how to ensure that the Programme reflects the perspectives of older people.

• To monitor the outputs from the Programme and consider their implications for older people.

• To act as a resource to the Programme on issues concerning the involvement of older people in the research process.

• To give advice where requested to individual projects within the Programme.

These objectives were intended as a starting point and were sufficient to secure funding for the Group’s operations. At its first meeting, however, the Group decided to develop its own evaluation criteria:

• The OPRG will have raised significantly awareness within the Programme about the major issues of concern to older people.

• The OPRG has provided constructive advice and comments on how the NDA should reflect the different perspectives of older people.

• The OPRG has engaged constructively with individual projects and encouraged awareness of the specific needs of older people.

• The OPRG has acted independently, flexibly and proactively to help to ensure that the NDA Programme achieves its objectives.

A quick glance at these criteria demonstrates the strong collective commitment of the OPRG to the NDA Programme and the evident desire to further its objectives. This is good news for the Programme. Early discussions among the Group also emphasise a desire to be involved constructively in the research conducted by the Programme; to contribute to its outcomes; to explain how the research fits in with older people’s lives; to break down barriers between researchers and professionals, on the one side, and older people on the other; to translate research-speak in everyday language; and to be active researchers themselves.

The OPRG consists of 23 older people from a wide variety of UK localities and a mix of age groups, men and women, and ethnicities. It meets four times per year and has its own chat room on the NDA website.

Special thanks are due to Amy Swan at the Help the Aged for locating the members of the OPRG.

Alan Walker
If you would like to receive further copies of the ndanews and/or future ones please let us know. Also comments on the content and design of the ndanews would be welcome.

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