

PhD Opportunities at PCPH

Research Group	Title	Primary Supervisor	Secondary and additional supervisors	Content
BRHS	Possible role of blood clotting factors in British winter mortality	Richard Morris	Goya Wannamathee Peter Whincup	<p>The phenomenon of excess winter mortality is well-established in the UK, especially among older people, and cardiovascular disease is one of the leading causes of this excess. Certain blood clotting measures, known to be predictive of cardiovascular disease, carry seasonal patterns and are higher in winter months. Recent genetic research has highlighted genes which may highlight mechanisms for this association. The project will involve relating blood clotting measures, together with relevant genetic data, to death from cardiovascular disease. Compelling evidence for causal roles of the blood clotting factors will provide a basis for prevention of winter deaths through primary care.</p> <p>Data from the British Regional Heart Study, a prospective study with follow up of several thousand British men since 1978, will be used as the primary data source, together with other major studies of cardiovascular disease.</p>
BRHS	Inequalities in revascularisation and their contribution to social inequalities in CHD mortality	Richard Morris	Goya Wannamathee Peter Whincup	<p>Inequalities of provision of tertiary cardiological services (in particular revascularisation) have been consistently reported in the UK, with older, more socially deprived, and female patients being particularly disadvantaged. Overall provision has increased however and has possibly made some contribution to declining mortality from coronary heart disease (CHD). The project will examine the role of revascularisation in preventing CHD deaths, the extent of social and geographic inequalities in revascularization and their contributions to social inequalities in CHD mortality.</p> <p>Data from the British Regional Heart Study, a prospective study with follow up of several thousand British men since 1978, will be used as the primary data source, together with other major studies of cardiovascular disease.</p>
BRHS	Prediction and prevention of stroke in older men	Goya Wannamathee	Peter Whincup Richard Morris	<p>This project aims to use an existing prospective cohort of older British men (British Regional Heart Study, http://www.ucl.ac.uk/pcph/research-groups-themes/brhs-pub) comprising >4000 subjects aged 60-79 years, who were followed up for over 7 years. We will examine the effectiveness of both simple strategies for predicting stroke risk (suitable for use in primary care settings) and more complex strategies using blood markers to identify older people at high risk of developing stroke. The results will improve our understanding of</p>

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				factors responsible for high stroke risk and define the scope for interventions to prevent stroke in later life.
EHU	The Electronic Prescription Service: impact on interactions in the consultation	Fiona Stevenson	Elizabeth Murray	The large number of prescriptions issued means that the potential for benefits, or harm, of changes that affect interactions around prescribing is substantial. The Electronic Prescription Service Release 2 (EPSR2), currently being implemented across England, eliminates the need for paper prescriptions. This will disrupt interactions in the GP consultation. Research thus far has focused on the technicalities of the system. There is a need for research on the impact on interactions and the safe, effective and cost effective use of medicines compatible with patients' health beliefs.
EHU	Discourse analysis of sexual health consultations	Fiona Stevenson	Julia Bailey	This project aims to explore the complexity of sexual health consultations in primary care, with a particular focus on difficult consultations, for example discussion of sexually transmitted infection diagnoses or risk behaviour. Methodological approaches are likely to include discourse analytic approaches such as socio-linguistics and discursive psychology.
EHU	Competing demands in relation to knee pain: experiences, treatments and the maintenance of health	Fiona Stevenson	Paul Higgs	The ageing population and increasing prevalence of long term conditions means there are a number of expectations around self-care. This proposed PhD will examine how competing demands for the maintenance of personal health and views of the self as ageing well are managed alongside potentially debilitating symptoms of knee pain. A discourse analysis will be conducted on an existing rich and substantial longitudinal dataset of 138 interviews with people who took part in a RCT of a physiotherapy intervention consisting of three arms; group exercise programme, the same programme in individual sessions and a control group. The analysis will be informed by the current literature on the sociology of health in later life as well as the literature on chronic illness. The understandings gained will form the basis for the future development of an online intervention for the management of knee pain through exercise.
EHU	Methodological issues in conducting on-line trials	Elizabeth Murray	Julia Bailey	The on-line environment is a new context for conducting randomised controlled trials. Although there are certain advantages (e.g. recruitment, data collection), there are also specific challenges. This PhD will explore the methodological pros and cons of conducting on-line trials and add to the available methodological literature.

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Mental Health	Evaluation of the effectiveness of prevention of depression in general practice	Irwin Nazareth	Michael King Rumana Omar	To evaluate the effectiveness of identification people at risk of developing depression and prevention of the disorder in people seen in primary care. The successful candidate will work in an interdisciplinary environment which combines mental health, primary care and epidemiology within the Division of Population Health and methodology through direct supervision from Department of Statistics at UCL. The studentship offers an exciting opportunity to work with an established team of researchers.
Mental Health	Sexual dysfunction in men diagnosed and treated for testicular cancer	Irwin Nazareth	Sally Stennings Michael King	To examine the risk of developing sexual dysfunction in men who have been diagnosed and treated for testicular cancer. The successful candidate will work in an interdisciplinary environment which combines primary care, mental health, sexual health epidemiology and statistics. The studentship offers an exciting opportunity to work with an established team of researchers at UCL and MRC Clinical Trials Unit.
Mental Health	The use of computer-tailored advice in community pharmacy to help patients stop smoking	Irwin Nazareth	Hazel Gilbert	To examine how community pharmacists can contribute to smoking cessation using computer-tailored behavioural feedback. The successful candidate will work with an established team of researchers in the field of smoking cessation and will have the opportunity to contribute to PCT initiatives by helping to promote the uptake of pharmacy smoking cessation services, as well as enhancing training for health professionals.
Mental Health	Insomnia, sleep problems and risk of cardio-vascular disease.	Kate Walters	Goya Wannamathee Irene Petersen	To evaluate the effect of poor sleep (insomnia, sleep duration and sleeping tablet use) on cardio-vascular outcomes including heart attacks, stroke and death using two existing large data sources at UCL, The Health Improvement Network (THIN) database and the British Regional Heart Study. The PhD student will work with an established team of researchers in an interdisciplinary environment combining expertise in mental health, cardio-vascular disease, epidemiology and medical statistics.
THIN	Earlier recognition of Parkinson's disease - Development and validation of a prediction algorithm in a primary care database	Irene Petersen	Kate Walters Anette Schrag Rumana Omar	This study aims to identify early pre-diagnostic features and risk factors for Parkinsons Disease and combine these in a risk model to facilitate early identification of those with Parkinson's disease. It will use The Health Improvement Network (THIN) database. The student will be part of a research team including statisticians specializing in primary care data, risk modeling and clinical experts in primary care and neurology.

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THIN	Missing data in primary care databases	Irene Petersen	Kate Walters James Carpenter	Primary care databases are used for a number of epidemiological and drug safety studies. However, missing data often is an issue in these studies. This PhD studentship will examine different methods to deal with missing data in longitudinal databases. The PhD student will be a part of a research team working on multiple imputation of missing data in primary care databases.
THIN	Illicit drug and alcohol use in pregnancy	Irene Petersen	Irwin Nazareth Ruth Gilbert	<p>While there have been some studies on illicit drug and alcohol abuse in pregnancy very little is still known about the effects of these. This PhD studentship will gather information from a large, linked mothers-children cohort from The Health Improvement Network (THIN), primary care databases. Our initial research has identified a number of women with illicit drug and alcohol abuse in this database who also receive a range of prescribed medicines during pregnancy.</p> <p>This studentship will examine the combined effects of drug exposures and alcohol abuse in more detail and identify possible consequences on child and maternal outcomes. This includes issues related to preterm birth, still birth, withdrawal syndromes and long-term health and care of the child.</p>