

ASCOT NEWSLETTER 2020

Advancing Survivorship after Cancer: Outcomes Trial



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Since the last newsletter we have continued with data collection and now everyone has completed the 6 month assessments (approximately 1100 in total) and 730 of you have completed the 2 year assessment. Thank you! Nearly 200 of you are due to complete the 2 year assessment from April-July next year, so look out for your packs.

We felt that it was important to try to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the lives of everyone in the trial, so you will have received an invitation to complete an online questionnaire (with the option of completing it over the phone where necessary). We are delighted that nearly 600 of you have completed this and would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has answered these questions for us. The information will help when we analyse the long-term impact of the ASCOT intervention but we will also use the data to understand how the pandemic has affected those living with and beyond cancer. If you have not yet completed this questionnaire and would like to, please get in touch (ascotadmin@ucl.ac.uk, 02076791691). As we are not currently in the office, and it will soon be the Christmas break, please leave a message on this phone number and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Some findings

New published research

Dr Chloe Grimmett, a member of our Trial Steering Committee, based at the University of Southampton, led a study involving participants from ASCOT and other similar studies. Chloe conducted interviews with twenty-seven adults who had a diagnosis of a gastrointestinal cancer who had participated in interventions which aimed to promote physical activity. The aim was to characterise those who had and had not been able to increase their activity and maintain this over time. Chloe concluded that it was key to help people to find an activity that was appropriate to their physical functioning, that they valued and that therefore programs designed to help those living with and beyond cancer need to be tailored to fit the needs of each person participating.



New findings and training of students

The information you've given us in your questionnaires and diet records provided valuable data for research projects carried out by two of our MSc Health Psychology students. One student, Silje, focused on sleep patterns. She found that nearly half of the ASCOT participants experienced problems with their sleep, and that more women than men were affected.

Our other student, Freyja, used the information you've given us at the end of your diet records to explore which dietary supplements people take. She found that more than one third of participants take some form of supplement, with fish oils, calcium, vitamin D and multivitamins and minerals among the most common. She has started to look at why some people take supplements while others don't and whether it might be related to gender, age or other characteristics. If you'd like any advice on supplements please look on the CRUK website:

<https://about-cancer.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancer-in-general/treatment/complementary-alternative-therapies/individual-therapies/vitamins-diet-supplements?>



The newest member of the ASCOT team also struggles to sleep!

ASCOT welcomes two new team members



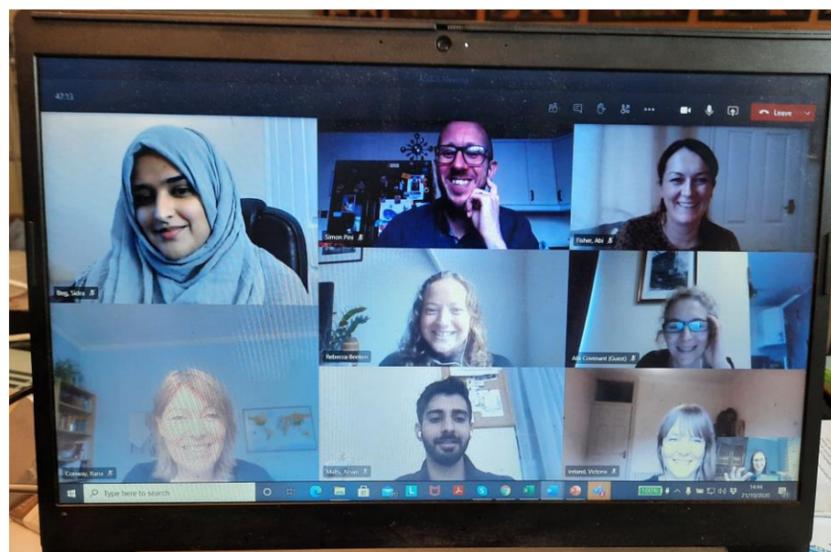
Hi I'm Dr Simon Pini, a research fellow based at the Leeds Institute of Health Sciences. I have been working as a health researcher since 2009 in areas including adult cancer, dementia, teenage and young adult cancer, palliative care and chronic paediatric conditions. During this time I have mainly focussed on interview based research into experiences of health. My PhD looked at the school lives of teenagers following a diagnosis of cancer and used photo-elicitation interviews to explore their experiences. I teach and supervise students in the School of Medicine and run a group for researchers interested in qualitative methods.



Hi I'm Caroline and I am a mature student who decided on a change of career a couple of years ago after a career as a qualitative researcher in the advertising sector. In 2016 I embarked on a Psychology MSc conversion course, which made me realise how much I wanted to study psychology formally, and then I embarked on an MSc in Health Psychology at UCL which I have recently completed. I am now studying a doctorate in Health Psychology and as part of the course am doing a placement with the ASCOT team for one year, where I will be working on a number of qualitative projects.

If you have consented to participate in an interview about your experiences during the COVID pandemic then you may be hearing from Simon or Caroline in the next few months.

ASCOT from home



Since March we have been working from our homes. Kitchens, bedrooms and living rooms have all become our offices. It's been a strange time but we have been using videoconferencing software to stay in touch and have our regular team meetings. Luckily we had reached a point in the study when we weren't collecting pedometer or paper questionnaire data, which made this transition easier. We can now go into the office for limited periods of time and some of the team are doing this. We hope to be back in the office more often in the new year ready to start the next stage of pedometer data collection in April.

More information

If you are interested in how we process your personal information please read our **Privacy Notice** on our website.

We have lots of really valuable information from ASCOT that will advance the field of cancer research, so we'd like to say a huge thank you for your involvement. We will update our website with results as we analyse the data and publish the findings.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ascot-trial>



**Best wishes for
Christmas and the
New Year,
from the
ASCOT Team!**