UCL Institute of Health Informatics (IHI) Newsletter

July 2019

UCL_IHI

Dear All,

Congratulations to all of you – there are such a variety of activities included in this month's newsletter and once again it's great to read of all the Institute's successes.

I am delighted for Spiros who has been appointed Professor in Biomedical Informatics. I am particularly pleased as he is one of the few people in the UK to lead the developments underpinning methodologies related to data science at scale. His career path will serve as an important addition to the role models for early-career researchers This promotion is so well deserved and no small achievement.

I am excited to see the launch of a number of initiatives such as the Code Club and the Find A Study discovery platform, both of which act to increase the transparency of research taking place. These are of course very timely given Wellcome's recent announcement of their new programme on Data Science and Health.

I must also take this opportunity to express my deep sadness for Jackie Pallas' untimely death. Jackie was an absolute asset to IHI and the field more generally and will be greatly missed by many of us.

I hope you all enjoy reading this month's newsletter – please do continue to let the comms team (ihi.commsteam@ucl.ac.uk) know of all news and successes.

Harry Hemingway
Director of UCL Institute of Health Informatics

News and Successes

We are very proud that **Prof Harry Hemingway** was elected a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences alongside 49 other eminent scientists (in total eight UCL researchers were elected this year). New Fellows are selected each year for their outstanding contributions to advancing medical science, cutting edge research discoveries, and translating developments into benefits for patients and wider society. Harry's election is therefore a huge achievement not only personally but also for the Institute as it would not have been possible without the multiple collaborations with researchers within IHI and wider.

We are really delighted to announce that **Dr Spiros Denaxas** has been appointed Professor in Biomedical Informatics. Spiros studied Computer Science, Information Systems and Engineering and obtained a PhD in Informatics from the University of Manchester in 2008. He is a biomedical informatics researcher working at the intersection of clinical research and computer science. His research focuses on building methods for using large-scale electronic health records from for translational research. Spiros joined UCL in 2009 where he was part of the team that established the CALIBER EHR research resource. Since 2015 he leads the Denaxas Lab (http://denaxaslab.org/) at the IHI which uses emerging resources such as EHR, genomics data and machine learning/artificial intelligence methods to improve human health and healthcare. Since 2018, he is Programme Director for the MSc in Health Data Science and in 2019 he became Deputy Director for Research of the Institute.

Many congratulations to **Dr Wing-Chau** who was shortlisted, and alongside two other people, went on to win a Personal Excellence Award at the UCL Professional Services Awards 2019! Wing-Chau was nominated by several colleagues at IHI for the positive changes she made to the Institute and her award is testimony to her hard work, and kind and thoughtful attitude towards staff in the Institute. We know Wing-Chau will flourish in her new role as Institute Manager at the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology and wish her every success.

Congratulations also to **Dr Laura Shallcross** who has been appointed to the APRHAI - the government's Advisory Committee on Antimicrobial Prescribing, Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection which provides practical and scientific advice to the government on minimising the risk of healthcare associated infections.
https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/advisory-committee-on-antimicrobial-prescribing-resistance-and-healthcare-associated-infections

We're really excited to announce that Waty Lilaonitkul will be participating in the CRUK-EPSRC Early Detection Innovation Sandpit and Award on Robotics and Robotic Technologies at Oxford University this month. She was successfully selected to take part in this intensive three-day residential event alongside 24 other multidisciplinary researchers from academia and industry. The aim of the residential is to drive innovations and inject seed funding for research diagnostic delivery and early cancer detection. Best of luck Waty!

IHI Grants and Awards

Dr Spiros Denaxas (PI) and colleagues across HDR UK have been awarded £1.087M to develop a national phenomics resource "Defining and redefining disease using multimodal data on a national scale: the HDR UK Phenomics Resource". The project will start on 1 October 2019 for 4 years.

Dr Ami Banerjee has been awarded a TP Gunton award from the BMA Foundation for Medical Research (£65,000) for "Using large-scale routine data to monitor and improve ethnic inequalities in cancer and cardiovascular disease."

Dr Rui Providencia and the Cochrane Heart Group have been successful in their renewal of funding for the period 2020-23 and been awarded £600,000 in the first instance. This demonstrates NIHR's interest in developing systematic reviews groups to aid decisions for individual patients and for public health policies to be informed by the best available research evidence.

Other News

Step challenge

Well done to everyone who participated in the UCL FPHS step challenge which ran over 4 weeks in May. Collectively the teams walked an incredible 84.8 million steps (that's about 64.6 thousand km or 40.1 thousand miles!) IHI staff did rather well with the four teams representing the Institute clocking an impressive 8,066,149 between them. Competition runners up (of 49 teams) were **Arturo Gonzalez-Izquierdo, Julie Taylor, Dennis Valentine, Ruth Agbakoba and Bilal Yassine** who managed an amazing 2,750,250 steps in 4 weeks. **Ruth** came 4th in the individual category (of 245) with the most steps of all participants (666,210 steps) Two other IHI teams came in the top ten with 2,314,620 steps (overall 6th place) and 2,122,839 steps (10th place).

'Find A Study'

The Clinical Research Informatics Unit (CRIU) have developed a new and innovative trials discovery database for research at UCLH and UCL known as 'Find A Study'. The aim of 'Find A Study' is to improve trial recruitment and the visibility of the research landscape across UCL and UCLH. The BRC have published a 60 second quick fire interview with Dr Wai Keong Wong (Chief Research Information Officer at UCLH) who is leading the project which you can view here: https://www.uclhospitals.brc.nihr.ac.uk/investigators/news/60-seconds-withdr-wai-keong-wong

New Wellcome Programme on Data for Science and Health

Wellcome has announced that it will be investing £75 million in a 5-year programme on data for science and health, to ensure that everyone can benefit from health data innovation. The focus will be to support the underpinning enablers that are crucial to unblock data innovation.

Currently, datasets are often unrepresentative, trust in the use of data is fragile and data scientists are deterred by the significant difficulties working with health data. The 'enablers' needed to overcome this – the tools, governance, skills and engagement – are often undervalued and neglected. This is where Wellcome can have most impact. For example, to tackle fragile public trust in the use of data, by prioritising the importance of engaging society. Wellcome want to make it easier to work with health data, by funding the development of open source tools and equipping data scientists to innovate with health data for public benefit.

The scope of this investment is closely aligned with the [vision and aims](#) of the Institute and so we will be supporting the highest quality applications through an internal peer review mechanism.

Read more about proposals here:
https://wellcome.ac.uk/news/new-programme-explore-how-innovation-health-data-can-benefit-everyone

Teaching and Education

Personal Tutor Pilot

IHI has been selected as one of six departments in UCL's development of a system to support personal tutors. The next stage is to design a good way to allocate personal tutors and tutees, and to have an online system where we can easily monitor and support our student progress. If you have ideas and thoughts, please contact **Pippa Bark** (p.bark@ucl.ac.uk).

Effective Teaching in FPHS

Colleagues from across the Faculty will be joined by UCL Arena Centre Teaching Fellows to lead this session on 18 September 2019 which is open to all FPHS staff who want to develop their teaching. In the morning you will try out different ways of making teaching effective and consider if/how you would like to use these approaches in your teaching and you will sketch a mini-design for learning in your discipline. In the afternoon you will get a chance to put into practice what has been discussed and experiment with the methods and approaches explored. You will deliver a short teaching session to a small group of your peers and give and receive formative feedback on your practice.
After attending this session you will:
• 	develop confidence in teaching
• 	be able to plan, design and deliver lectures and other teaching
• 	know how to encourage students to be active participants in their learning
• 	be aware of ways in which digital technologies can enhance teaching
• 	understand how to evaluate your own effectiveness as an educator
• 	understand how to give, receive and act on feedback.
Please register here: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/effective-teaching-in-fphs-tickets-63468804904

Teaching Qualifications and Training

IHI are committed to helping all staff have a professional development pathway and we are delighted that many of our staff are taking the opportunity to get qualified. Arena offer a scheme of awards accredited by the Higher Education Academy giving staff involved in any aspect of teaching (including staff support, post docs, researchers, lecturers etc) nationally

recognised fellowships. Learn more at the Arena link https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/professional-development/ucl-arena
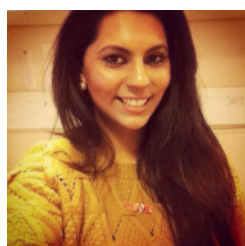
New Staff

We are delighted to welcome four new members of staff to the Institute.

Alvina Lai (alvina.lai@ucl.ac.uk) has been appointed Lecturer and will spearhead an integrated study uniting large-scale EHR and multi-omics data that will enable us to detect cancer more accurately in the early stages or even before it starts. Alvina's previous research at the University of Oxford was supported by two international peer-reviewed fellowships; EMBO and Human Frontier Science Program. Using experimental and computational approaches, Alvina studied genetic changes underpinning cancer initiation and progression, allowing the identification of molecular targets that can be prioritised in therapeutic regimens to ultimately win the war against cancer. Beyond research, Alvina was a Lecturer at Christ Church Oxford where she taught biological sciences.

Emma White (emma.jayne.white@ucl.ac.uk) is on secondment to IHI as Teaching Administrator (covering Tanya Harbinson's role) until the end of February 2020. Emma previously worked in Undergraduate Admissions (Engineering Faculty) for two years before that lived in South Korea teaching English and Science.

Giovanna Ceroni (g.ceroni@ucl.ac.uk) commenced a secondment on 1 July 2019 as the CRIU Coordinator, working closely with Prof Folkert Asselbergs. The CRIU team will benefit from her local knowledge and expertise after having worked at Institute level in a number of roles.

Farha Ahmad (farhat.ahmad@ucl.ac.uk) is on secondment to IHI as Institute Administrator (covering Giovanna Ceroni's role) until the end of June 2020. Farha previously worked at The Institute of Child Health for five years as Programme Administrator in the Genetics & Genomic Medicine programme and has worked at UCL since 2011.

Mohammad Qummer (m.arfeen@ucl.ac.uk) has joined the Institute as a Data Manager for CALIBER. He has previously worked as a Data Analyst and Software Quality Assurance Engineer in Islamabad.

Darren Thomas (darren.thomas.12@ucl.ac.uk) will be working with Paul Taylor as Data Scientist for Ophthalmic Disease Darren completed an MRC-funded PhD in Molecular Epidemiology at the UCL EGA Institute of Women's Health.

Welcome all to the Institute!

IHI Research in the News

Henry Potts holds the IHI record for the most papers published in 2019!

Henry Potts holds the IHI record for the most published papers in 2019 with 13 papers. This is a fantastic achievement and it has been brilliant to be able to feature these both on the IHI website and via Twitter. When asked, Henry said that his favourite of the 13 publications was Roberts, Potts, Koutoukidis et al. "Breast, prostate, and colorectal cancer survivors' experiences of using publicly available physical activity mobile apps: Qualitative study." *JMIR mHealth & uHealth.* DOI: 10.2196/10918

Genetic studies of abdominal MRI data published by Journal of Hepatology

A new paper authored by **Costas Parasinos** (IHI) and **Henry Wilman** (University of Westminster) which aims to identify genetic variants influencing liver iron content and use genetics to understand links to other traits and diseases was published by the Journal of Hepatology last month. Wilman H, Parisinos A, Atabaki-Pasdar N, Kelly M, Thomas L,Neubauer S. Genetic studies of abdominal MRI data identify genes regulating hepcidin as major determinants of liver iron concentration. *Journal of Hepatology* 2019 doi.org/10.1016/j.jhep.2019.05.032. Read the full paper here: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0168827819303538?via%3Dihub#f0020

Increasing healthy life expectancy equitably in England by 5 years by 2035: could it be achieved?

In 2018, the UK Government's Secretary of State for Health and Social Care articulated an ambition to increase healthy life expectancy by at least 5 years by 2035 for England, while also reducing the gap in life expectancy between the richest and the poorest groups within the population. In a commentary in The Lancet, **Rob Aldridge** and colleagues describe a set of policies with the potential to make a major contribution to such a target as part of an expected new prevention strategy for England. Read the paper here: https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)31510-7/fulltext

It is always a pleasure to hear of IHI research and publications - you can read about many of them on our website. Thank you so much for everyone for letting the comms team know about the 30 papers so far in 2019. If you have anything in the pipeline please do let us know by email (ihi.commsteam@ucl.ac.uk).

Recent Events

Launch of the Collaborative Centre for Inclusion Health

Inclusion Health is about understanding the forces that cause and perpetuate social exclusion so we can prevent it and bring vulnerable and under-served people in our society 'out of the cold'. The UCL Collaborative Centre for Inclusion Health (CCIH) (Directors Andrew Hayward and Al Story) was set up by a multidisciplinary team of researchers, experts with lived experience and frontline professionals who are dedicated to reducing health inequity. On 3 June 2019, the Centre held a launch event to bring together a wide range of experts to shape the agenda and co-produce research and advocacy priorities for the next five years. Over 100 representatives from the voluntary sector, policy, academia, healthcare and a wide range of experts by experience worked together to tackle three key areas – preventing exclusion, improving services for those who are excluded and escaping exclusion. Through a series of presentations, workshops, democratic voting and 'dream-boarding' we collected and collated information on where we need to start. Consultation and analysis is on-going but emerging priorities include:

- Tackling the upstream determinants of exclusion – political determinants, poverty and traumatic childhoods
- Addressing societal and professional ignorance, indifference and stigma that can further deepen and perpetuate exclusion
- Making services more accessible and integrated to stop people falling through the cracks
- Ensuring that experts by experience are at the heart of health research, service development and decision making
- Creating better routes out for people to escape exclusion

If you are interested in becoming involved in Inclusion Health research please contact us at **ccihcore@live.ucl.ac.uk** outlining your area of interest.

Robert O'Shea presented his project "Link Inference in the Biological Interactome" at the "Computational Sciences for the 21st Century" conference on 20/6/19. The conference showcased several UCL projects using novel computational approaches to a wide array of tasks. There was a great deal of interest in the network analysis approach to the biological link inference, and potential applications of the method to other fields were discussed.

Upcoming Events for Your Diary

IHI Summer party, the Canal Museum, Monday 29 July from 1pm

You and your families are invited to the IHI Summer Party on Monday July 29! Join us for a second year at the London Canal Museum (20 min walk from IHI) to celebrate summer! Drinks and food will be provided. DJ Costas will be on the decks, and if you remember from last year, there is a sizable dance floor for everyone to showcase their best moves. Arthur the Juggler will be present - offering the best entertainment for the little ones. Come on down

from 1pm to 6pm. Please register using the Eventbrite at:
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-institute-of-health-informatics-summer-party-tickets-63561675683

Code Club and IHI Github – Please move this to events

The IHI *Code Club* is a volunteer-led group open to anyone who engages in coding. Our main goal is to introduce and encourage good coding practice to all our members by coming together, solving (your) problems, and sharing experiences. Sessions include hands-on tutorials, discussions on a specific topic, or talks by our members or invited speakers. Code Club is open to everyone including non-IHI staff and students. For more details, please visit our page: https://ucl-ihi.github.io/CodeClub/ to find out more. Details of the launch event on 10th July featuring guest speaker Dr Kirstie Whitaker from The Alan Turing Institute can be found in 'Upcoming Events for your Diaries' below.

We have also created a *GitHub organisation* for IHI researchers to allow the sharing of code and to encourage collaboration at an institute level. To join Code Club and IHI GitHub, go to https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=_oivH5ipW0yTySEKEdmlwmTLVShUkb9Nh40TgmRp95lUQjdSM0JDQzNPMURSRDZWTzFLRjY0WU1QMi4u

For more information, email **Albert Henry** (albert.henry.16@ucl.ac.uk), **Rini Veeravalli** (rini.veeravalli.18@ucl.ac.uk) or **Kenan Direk** (k.direk@ucl.ac.uk).

Where Do you Draw the Line session, July 11th 13:00 to 15:00

- At the UCL Institute of Epidemiology & Health Care, Galton LT 115, 1-19 Torrington Place
- Last few places available – Training recommended to all staff and PhD students
- Book now

Cochrane Heart Group Systematic Reviewing Drop-In Sessions, 25th July

The Cochrane Heart Group has started a monthly Systematic Reviewing Drop-In Session to help people with questions about systematic reviewing methodology. The Heart Group's technical team (consisting of an Information Specialist, Systematic Reviewers, and a Managing Editor) will be in attendance to answer questions regarding topics such as developing search strategies, assessing risk of bias, performing a meta-analysis, etc. The next drop-in session will be **Thursday 25th July from 10am-12 noon in IHI Room G07.** People can get in touch by emailing cochrane.heart@ucl.ac.uk.

Vacancies at IHI

Use of Evidence Module Manager (Vacancy ref: 1809716)

- Closing date: Sunday 7 July 2019, 23:59

Research Fellow: Medical Statistician (Vacancy ref: 1811288)

- Closing date: Friday 19 July 2019 (noon)

Lecturer in Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare (Vacancy ref: 1804218)

- Closing date: Wednesday 24 July 2019, 23:59

Championing Equality in Science: Athena SWAN

Join our Self-Assessment Team (SAT)! We are a friendly team who welcome ideas and new members. If there is a problem that you think we should be tackling and/or you want to get involved in Athena Swan activities please come and tell us! Please contact **Laura Shallcross**, Chair of the SAT (l.shallcross@ucl.ac.uk) or the **SAT team** (ihi.athenaswan.sat@ucl.ac.uk).

Join our Comms Team! The Comms team meets monthly and is responsible for the IHI website, newsletter and Bog Sheet. If you would like to be a part of these activities, contact **Pablo Fernandez Medina** (p.medina@ucl.ac.uk)

Join our Social Committee! The Social Committee plans Institute social events including the Summer and Christmas parties. To join the social committee, email ihi.athenaswan.sat@ucl.ac.uk

Join our Space Mission! We are committed to maintaining positive changes to the physical environment at IHI. To work with us to design and implement changes, contact **Neha Pathak** (neha.pathak.09@ucl.ac.uk) or **Rachel Burns** (r.burns@ucl.ac.uk).

Our Athena SWAN Action Plan addresses 5 key priority areas:

· **Career development for staff and students**
· **Supporting promotions**
· **IHI Culture & Values**
· **Improving processes around recruitment, induction & appraisal**
· **Supporting flexible working**

Health & Wellbeing @IHI

All welcome to join our weekly **Runtastic!** sessions *every Wednesday at 12pm* to help improve your mind and body and feel well at work. Beginners and advanced runners welcome!
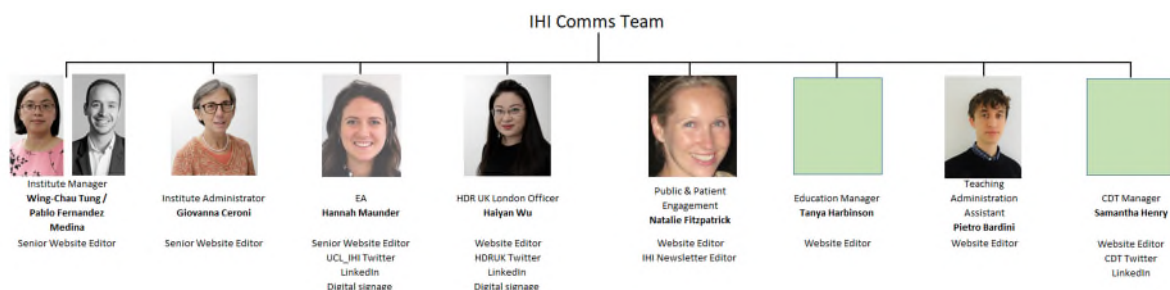

eQuality in Health Data Research

Please send details of news and other items you would like to include in the next newsletter to the IHI Comms Team at ihi.commsteam@ucl.ac.uk

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The IHI Communications Team

The Comms Team's main aim is to disseminate all of your successes, via the appropriate channels, as widely as possible. We need your help - please tell us about your successes! Thank you to all of you who are currently doing so this, it is such a pleasure to be able to feature your work on the IHI website (www.ucl.ac.uk/health-informatics/), the IHI and HDR UK twitter (@UCL_IHI @HDRUK) as well as via more centralised UCL channels. For those of you who haven't begun sharing with us yet, you can see in this diagram who is responsible for the various channels so please don't hesitate to get in touch with us (ihi.commsteam@ucl.ac.uk) if you have any news at all.

<mark>Is there an up to date fig (below) wiuth photos of all the team?</mark> Please don't include the below until we update it.

Examples of news worthy achievements include (but are not limited to):
- Publications

- Awards
- Talks
- Media Releases
- Patient and public engagement activities
- Collaborations
- Grants

Please let us know about any of these or other things you are involved with. Many thanks for all your help!

Administration Inboxes at IHI

We have created a number of shared mailboxes to ensure all requests are looked into, even when staff are on leave. When contacting the administration team, rather than e-mailing a single individual, please also CC:

- For any **IHI finance** queries, please email ihi.finance@ucl.ac.uk.

- For any **IHI HR** queries, please email ihi.hr@ucl.ac.uk.

- For any **IHI education** queries, please email ihi.education@ucl.ac.uk

- For any **IHI communications** queries, please email ihi.commsteam@ucl.ac.uk

- For any **room booking** queries, please email ihi.roombookings@ucl.ac.uk