INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH

UCL Institute of Mental Health: Research Activity Audit

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Introduction

2019 saw the launch of both the UCL Mental Health Strategy and the Institute of Mental Health (IoMH), evidence of the university's commitment to mental health as a key strategic priority.

The strategy was produced by the Mental Health Strategy Working Group, chaired by Professor Essi Viding (co-chairs Professors David Osborn and Jon Roiser). It aimed to identify the core strengths in mental health across UCL and identify areas which would benefit from engagement with external partners (including local mental health NHS Trusts). In addition, recommendations were made on how to sustain and build on UCL's research standing, breadth and capacity; and on establishing internal and external communications to engage external stakeholders and promote our core strengths to the wider world.

Further information about the Mental Health Strategy, including the public facing synopsis: "Unified, Impactful, Progressive" can be found at: ucl.ac.uk/mental-health/about/ucl-mental-health-strategy

One of the key recommendations from the Mental Health Strategy was to undertake a **comprehensive audit of UCL mental health researchers and resources**. Following the appointment of the IoMH Director, Professor Anthony David, this work was undertaken by the IoMH.

"We knew that UCL was the most highly cited university in relation to work in mental health, according to the RAND review in 2015 but we wanted to dig a little deeper. Our audit began with publications from UCL and partners on any mental health topic and from that we identified a huge community of academics and UCL affiliated clinicians who have made contributions to the field. This showed the breadth and depth of our work and we used this to explore the themes we had been grappling with. The audit has provided us with a strong sense of where we are, but more importantly where we need to go to answer the big questions facing all those interested mental health and illness for the next decade." – Anthony David, Director, Institute of Mental Health

Audit

Method

We undertook a systematic search of scientific and clinical journals for publications within the field of mental health by UCL-affiliated authors since 2016. We used the results to generate a list of authors, and individual Divisions and Institutes within UCL then validated this list. Specific research interests were gathered by examining each author's IRIS profile and publication list. This process allowed us to create a comprehensive picture of UCL staff and affiliated clinicians who work in the area of mental health.

Results

Through this process, we found 981 publications produced between 2016 and 2020 by UCL authors on the topic of mental health. Many of these papers were in fields such as psychology, psychiatry, epidemiology and neuroscience. We also identified a significant proportion of more specialised fields, such as mental health in relation to computer science, basic biological science, general practice and the built environment among others.

From those papers and by contacting individual UCL departments, we identified 798 members of staff across UCL who are engaged in mental health research.

Importantly we also identified the wide breadth of Divisions and Institutes where this work is undertaken, thereby demonstrating the potential for interdisciplinary strength within UCL.

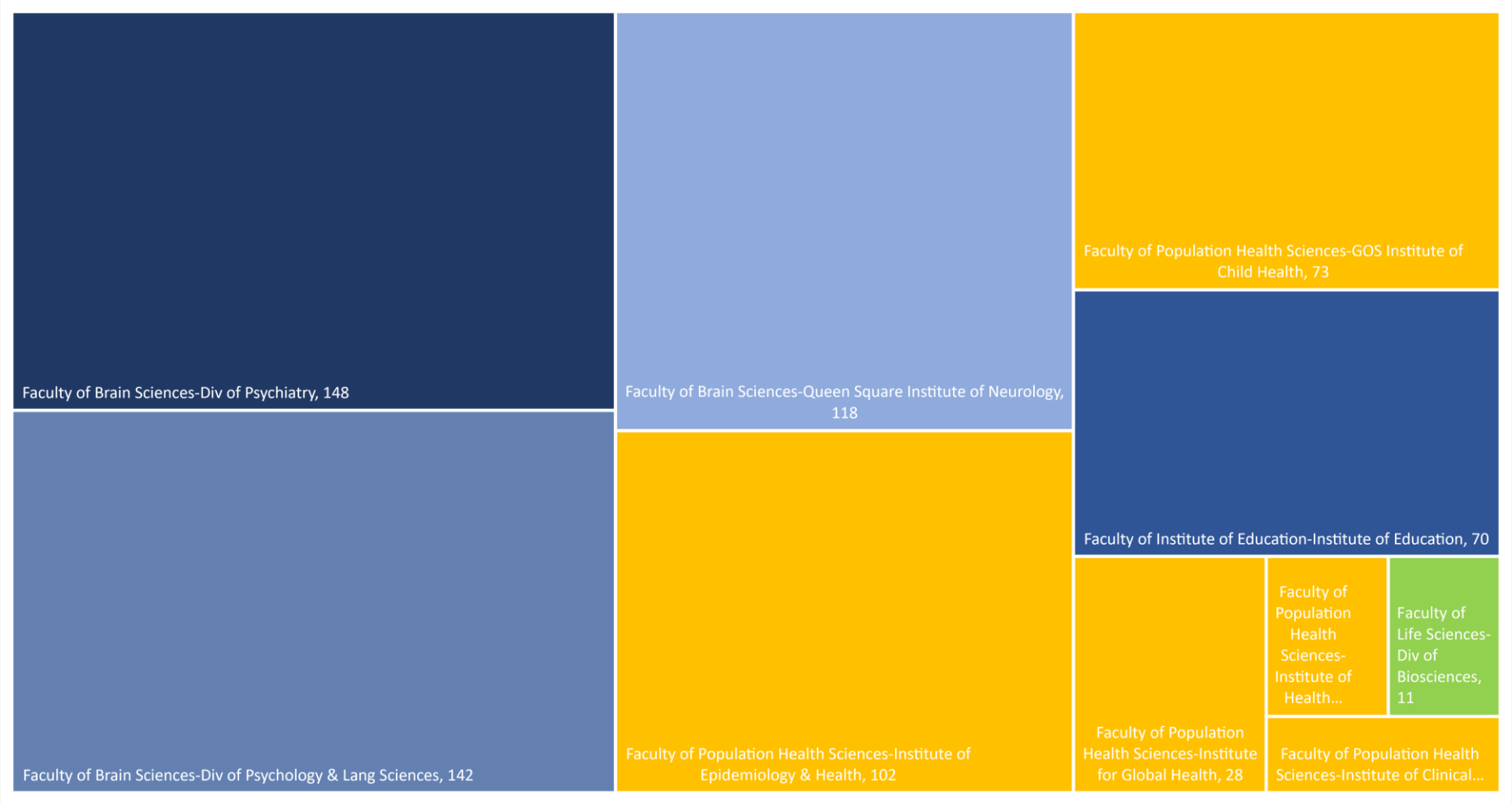
Conclusions

The audit shows how multidisciplinary and widely distributed are UCL's efforts in the field of mental health research. While the major bulk of this of activity is in the Faculty of Brain Sciences it extends far beyond that. Indeed, it is somewhat arbitrary to classify the topics in the way we have done in these graphics. Some are disorder specific, some refer to techniques or methodologies while others concern knowledge disciplines. Nevertheless, we believe this provides a useful summary and a sound foundation for the new Institute of Mental Health.

The following pages contain visualizations of the data found in the audit, showing the divisions and areas of interests identified.

Further information about the research activity audit and results are accessible on the website: ucl.ac.uk/mental-health/research-audit

Divisions and Institutes with more than ten Mental Health Researchers



Divisions and Institutes with less than ten Mental Health Researchers

Identified research themes

These are the different research interest categories identified during the audit. While every effort has been made to ensure that a wide and accurate range of subject areas are represented, in order for the data to be useable we have consolidated them into broader categories.