

# ODDESSI NEWS

Newsletter with updates from the ODDESSI Research Programme

## News in Brief

-Congratulations to the Open Dialogue team in Devon, who won our ODDESSI Network Meeting recording challenge!

-The ODDESSI website has had a makeover. Check it out [here](#).

- In April we held researcher and site Principal Investigator Refresher afternoons. These focused on how far we have come, and the work still to do.

- In memory of David Cousins, the KMPT Research & Innovation, Open Dialogue, and ODDESSI teams are going to be taking part in **The Pepsi Max Challenge- #DitchIt4David** all throughout May. See [here](#) for more information, and to donate.

## ODDESSI Shout-Outs

-Huge congratulations to Claire Melia for passing her PhD viva with minor corrections!

-Those who took part in the *Miles for Marcus* challenge managed to track over 325 miles and raise £1500 in his memory: an amazing achievement.

-Best of luck to Jess Clarke, who has now finished working on the ODDESSI Process Evaluation. Thank you for all your hard work.

-Welcome to new Research Assistant Sarah Noordally who has joined the team in Kent.



## A letter to David

David, it's Wednesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2021. As I work out what to say I am walking around Canterbury Town Centre with tears in my eyes. It's absolutely hammering it down, feels like pathetic fallacy.

To update you: Yasmin is leaving, Imogen is pregnant, Megan is still addicted to Pepsi Max and we are in another lockdown.

No board games or Dungeons and Dragons, no throwing weights around in the gym and no drinking tea on a Friday night in a rammed Weatherspoon's. You're not missing much but we are missing you.

Who's going to tell me my 4s look like 9s (they don't), checking all the tiny details so we pass the monitoring visit? Who am I going to agree to disagree with more, and then stubbornly come round to your way of working because it does make the most logical sense?

As I cast my mind back to the call from Imogen breaking the news. I was so matter of fact hearing it – very you I may add, then I went on the team Life-size call and instantly broke down. David, I have sworn at Sarah Dickens and snotty cried uncontrollably in front of the whole team! You are completely to blame for this; I take no responsibility for my actions.

Joking aside David you are and always will be incredible. It's a nice picture that you continue to support life in death as your body is now well and truly part of the Amazon rainforest. Fingers crossed you're part of a Passion fruit flower. It seems the most fitting considering how many people have talked about your passion and those flowers are so detailed just like your work.

I hope you are at peace now David. But if I'm completely honest I'd tell you I wish things were different. I'd wish it was all less definite. But I know that's selfish. So, all I can say is we all hope you are no longer hurting David. And that we miss you so much and we will never forget you. It has been a real privilege and honour to have known you and one day we will meet again. Goodbye David x

*Macey Cabbage, KMPT Research Assistant*

## Spotlight on Kiara Wickremasinghe



Kiara (above) is part of the APOD team, which is a project running alongside ODESSI.

### Relapse and Recovery in ODESSI

The primary outcome being assessed in ODESSI is 'time to relapse'. Simply put, we want to know if Open Dialogue is more effective than treatment-as-usual in reducing time to relapse following initial recovery.

Relapse and recovery in ODESSI will be measured by an independent panel of experts who will be rating the notes of every participant over a 2-year period. The data is painstakingly extracted from the notes of each person by the trial researchers and recorded on a month-by-month basis. The panel who are blind to the participant's allocation then rate whether there is evidence of recovery or relapse.

The exciting news is that all our panel members have now completed their training and have rated their first 10 participants out of the projected 600! Panel meetings are planned every 6 weeks, which is great progress for the trial.

Shaeda Nourmand, UCL Research Assistant

The 'spotlight on' feature includes an interview with someone involved in the ODESSI trial. We checked in with Kiara Wickremasinghe to see how things are going since she started working on the Anthropological Study of Open Dialogue (APOD).

*Hi, I'm Kiara, a PhD candidate in Social Anthropology at SOAS and part of the APOD team.*

*My research trajectory has been diverse, but my interests turned to mental health during my Music Masters when I conducted research on the impact of collaborative music workshops for service users recovering from psychosis. As a peer, I had been following Open Dialogue's journey into the NHS and when I came across the opportunity to be involved in APOD, I applied for the post and now here we are.*

*Led by Professor David Mosse, our APOD team consists of anthropologists and clinicians including those with lived experience. While ODESSI will tell us whether on average those receiving Open Dialogue do better than those receiving treatment-as-usual, APOD explores how and why Open Dialogue works as a therapeutic intervention, organisationally, and in the community. To accomplish this, the anthropologists are trained in Open Dialogue and embedded in a community mental health team serving a local community characterised by urban deprivation and cultural diversity.*

*After enjoying an amazing first residential week of Open Dialogue practitioner training before Covid struck, we then had to shift online, although a surprising level of connection has been forged during virtual roleplays for instance. In conjunction with this, gaining practice of actual network meetings has been valuable in entrenching training principles. I enjoy working in different pairings as you can learn something different from each co-practitioner's style but mostly, it's very rewarding to see clients benefit from this humanising model of care.*

*Juggling three identities as researcher, Open Dialogue practitioner, and peer is a task I am still navigating. I veer most towards my peer identity which can be challenging due to the contested position inhabited by peers organisationally, but I love meeting clients and being able to draw on my lived experience to connect.*

*Outside of work, I have been engrossed in my church choir's virtual music projects and it is incredible to witness the development of new and creative 'musicking' platforms. Fulfilling the lockdown stereotype, I have also learned how to bake for the first time so you will find me snacking on cupcakes while figuratively trying to save the world through a game of Pandemic with my loved ones!*



**Would you like more updates on the ODESSI trial, or to get in touch? Search for ODESSI at [www.ucl.ac.uk](http://www.ucl.ac.uk), email us at [odessi@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:odessi@ucl.ac.uk) or find us on Twitter at @ODESSI\_UCL.**