



# PLORAS Newsletter

Predicting Language Outcome and Recovery After Stroke  
 Issue 2 | September 2013

## Hello again!

We hope you had an **enjoyable summer**.

The **PLORAS Research Team** have had a **busy few months** - read on to find out more!

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### New website

In June, we launched our **PLORAS website**. The site has **two sections**; one aimed at **stroke survivors**, their **families** and **carers**, and the other is aimed at **health professionals** and **academics**. There is **information about the research** and **how to get involved**, **stories** from previous volunteers, **frequently asked questions**, **videos**, **events listings**, and much more!

Take a look here: [www.ucl.ac.uk/ploras](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ploras)



# Events

## UK Stroke Assembly

On 31st May-1st June, we exhibited at this Stroke Association event in **Nottingham**.

We had **lots of interest** from stroke survivors. We **look forward to welcoming volunteers** to our centre in the coming months.



## Action on Stroke Month



In May, we exhibited and presented at several events as part of the Stroke Association's **Action on Stroke Month**.

It was another great opportunity to **meet stroke survivors**, and find out about **latest developments and services** available for stroke survivors and their families.

## British Aphasiology Society Research Update Meeting

In April, we presented an **overview** of the project and **latest findings** to **health professionals and academics** at this event at **Exeter University**.

As always, it was great to meet with other people who are **passionate** about working to **improve the lives** of **people with aphasia**.



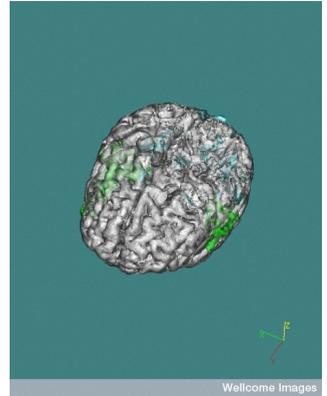
See our **website** for more events, including **upcoming events**.

# Research update

## Functional MRI scanning (fMRI)

We have started the new **fMRI** part of our project with **stroke survivors** who have **aphasia**.

In fMRI, patients do **tasks** (such as **naming pictures** and **repeating words**) in the scanner. We can see which **parts of the brain** are used for **different tasks**, by measuring blood flow to the brain (**more blood flow = more brain activity**).



We look for two things in the brains of **stroke survivors** who have made a **good recovery of language**: 1) Do they use **other (non-language) areas of the brain**? 2) Do they use the **remaining language areas but with more effort** (is there more blood flow?)

Both help to **explain** how and why some people **recover language after a stroke**.

## Focus groups

We have run three **focus groups**:

- One for **health professionals**, which included **stroke consultants** and **speech and language therapists**.
- Two for **people with aphasia** who are members of **Speakeasy** (an aphasia charity). The first group was for **feedback on the research** and the second group was for **website feedback**.



We had lots of **valuable feedback** from all the groups.

## Spotlight on...Suz Prejawa, Research Assistant

Suz is involved in:

- **Scanning patients and healthy people.**
- **Preparing the scans** so they can be used by the rest of the team.

She has spent a lot of time **developing the new fMRI experiment** and is now looking at **what the results mean** with her colleagues.



Suz **trained** as a **speech and language therapist** and then completed an **MSc in Neuroscience, Communication and Language**.

## Recruitment update

We now have over **600 stroke survivors** in the study!

We will soon be recruiting through the **Stroke Research Network** (a UK network with links in NHS hospitals), as well as giving our **regular presentations at stroke groups**.

## Contact details

### PLORAS Research Team

Wellcome Trust Centre for Neuroimaging  
Institute of Neurology  
University College London  
12 Queen Square  
LONDON, WC1N 3BG



 **Tel:** 020 7813 1538 / 07984 111 585

 **E-mail:** [ploras@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ploras@ucl.ac.uk)

 **NEW! Website:** [www.ucl.ac.uk/ploras](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ploras)

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 **Video:** <http://tinyurl.com/talkingheads-ploras>