

## Patient Needs Driving Health Research

### An interview with PenCLAHRC Director Stuart Logan

By Sarah Hoyle, Media Relations, University of Exeter \*

The Peninsula Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (PenCLAHRC) is a partnership between the Peninsula College of Medicine & Dentistry, NHS South West, the NHS throughout Devon and Cornwall and the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth. Directly funded by the National Institute for Health Research, PenCLAHRC focuses on delivering high-quality applied health research in major conditions including heart disease, diabetes, mental illness, childhood disability and age-related conditions, and putting the results into practice.

Director of PenCLAHRC, Professor Stuart Logan, has personal and professional reasons for seeking to break down barriers between academic research and practical healthcare. As a junior paediatrician in the 1980s Stuart and his fellow doctors encouraged mothers to put their babies to sleep on their front. Later it became clear that this practice hugely increased the risk of sudden infant death syndrome. Professor Logan reflects on this: "The advice we were giving was based on misinterpreted post-mortem data. Sadly it took a long time for us to find out that we were wrong."



"At PenCLAHRC a large part of what we're doing is accelerating the process of getting research evidence. We know that there can be an enormous lag between research outputs and changes in clinical practice."

PenCLAHRC gives the collaboration an opportunity to bridge that gap and ensure research activity focuses on answering the questions that are important to clinicians and patients.



Professor Stuart Logan admits that the group faces "a huge challenge" in getting academics, clinicians and patients to work together to achieve practical benefits. However, collaborating within the healthcare profession is not new. The NHS and the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth already have a close working relationship through the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry and many other projects. Professor Logan says: "We've got a long history of patient involvement and have been doing this stuff for a long time. But PenCLAHRC allows us to really develop this work."

While Professor Logan is aware of the complexity of PenCLAHRC's remit, he sums up the philosophy very simply: "Researchers don't always address the questions that make a difference. We have to make sure that the questions we are asking as academics answer the information needs of clinicians and patients."

\* You can read full article at:  
<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/researchnews/>

## PenCLAHRC Events Diary

17  
June

**Joint Health Research Conference**  
NHS South West – NIHR 9.30 – 4pm  
Bristol Marriott Hotel  
<http://www.profbriefings.co.uk/registration/southwest/>

23  
June

**National Falls Awareness Day**  
Torbay Care Trust, in conjunction with Torbay Council and South Devon Healthcare Trust in Torbay, will be holding events to mark National Falls Awareness Day

29  
June

**Question Generation Workshops**  
1 - 2pm AND 5- 6pm Seminar Room 4, PMS Building, Wonford Site, Exeter RDE, contact [Kate.boddy@pms.ac.uk](mailto:Kate.boddy@pms.ac.uk)

3  
July

**PenCLAHRC Welcome Lunch**  
12-2pm PMS Building, St Lukes, Contact: [Pamela.frost@pms.ac.uk](mailto:Pamela.frost@pms.ac.uk)

23  
Sept

**CLAHRC National Directors' meeting**  
Cambridge  
[Pamlea.frost@pms.ac.uk](mailto:Pamlea.frost@pms.ac.uk)

## What does PenCLAHRC mean for the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust? Research and Development Directorate Manager Chris Gardner explains



As Directorate Manager for R&D at the RD&E I'm excited about PenCLAHRC for three reasons: it enables the RD&E to participate in organisational research in a major way, secondly, it underlines the role of the Trust as a leading NHS organisation and thirdly, the results from PenCLAHRC will have potential to improve existing practice by increasing the effectiveness of healthcare interventions.

The attractive aspect of PenCLAHRC is that the process starts with problems and questions of front-line staff. The questions are then reviewed by academic partners to find out whether the answer already exists or whether new research is needed. For an issue important to the Trust PenCLAHRC can synthesise the existing evidence and advise the Trust accordingly. PenCLAHRC will also publicise findings so that the rest of the NHS can benefit from the review. In addition, PenCLAHRC will look at the barriers to implementation and so assist the Trust to implement known best practice.

It's great that in the Peninsula the NHS is seizing the opportunities afforded by the NIHR to improve patient care through R&D activity. We have a Clinical Trial Unit (in Plymouth), a Clinical Research Facility (in Exeter) and now the PenCLAHRC. Next on the horizon will be Health Innovation and Education Clusters.

*Question generation workshops are being held at the RD&E on 29th June  
Contact [Kate.boddy@pms.ac.uk](mailto:Kate.boddy@pms.ac.uk) for further details*

## Getting the Right Question - new PenCLAHRC tool launched!

PenCLAHRC is delighted to announce the launch of a new "question generation tool". We hope this will be useful for clinicians and managers who are thinking about problems and challenges which the PenCLAHRC collaboration might help with.

The first stage of the PenCLAHRC process is to identify key health care concerns in the NHS and turn these into structured research questions that can be submitted to PenCLAHRC for prioritisation. Key concerns can be about whether some intervention or diagnostic test is worthwhile, or can be about how to get worthwhile things done more extensively and consistently within local Trusts. The question tool will help you think through your concerns and specify questions that will be more amenable to research.

PenCLAHRC's Locality Leads will be using the tool with local staff in a series of workshops and meetings which will be rolling out over the Peninsula in the next few months.

Get involved NOW! Use the tool to send your research questions to PenCLAHRC:

<http://question.penclahrc.com/>



## PenCLAHRC: Patient and Public Involvement

Nicky Britten is Professor of Applied Health Care Research at PCMD. She is a social scientist with a background in primary care research, patient-doctor communication about prescribing and prescription medicines, and qualitative research. Before coming to Peninsula, she worked in the Department of General Practice at King's College London. She has several roles within PenCLAHRC, principally leading the Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) strategy. She will be joined at the end of June by Dr Andrew Gibson, who comes to PenCLAHRC from the NHS Centre for Involvement at the University of

Warwick. Together, their main aim will be to embed meaningful patient and public involvement in all PenCLAHRC activities as set out in the 'Engagement by Design' model. This will involve the building of effective relationships with all partners and stakeholders, in order to achieve meaningful PPI; contribution to the production of research outputs which reflect the needs and priorities of patients and the public; and a formative evaluation leading to a robust and tested model of PPI that is replicable by others. Andrew's initial task will be to meet the people already doing PPI work in the Peninsula, and to contribute to the generation and structuring of research questions, initially in the areas of diabetes and mental health. We intend to maintain a close working relationship with Folk.us and to build on, rather than duplicate, the excellent PPI work already underway locally. Folk.us is an organisation based in Exeter, funded by the Department of Health, which brings the world of research and researching to people who use health or social care services across Devon. It runs training events, produces policies and guidance about research processes as well as a newsletter, holds regular meetings and works with research projects to support involvement. Nicky's work also addresses the 'third gap' in the translation of research evidence: this is the well known gap between the provision of evidence-based advice and treatments by professionals, and its uptake by the users of healthcare. Instead of adopting a more conventional 'patient deficit' model, the hypothesis to be tested is that closer engagement with users will lead to greater ownership of and commitment to treatment decisions, greater patient enablement and better health outcomes. Funding will be sought to test this hypothesis within existing PenCLAHRC projects and in new projects set up for this purpose. Nicky is supported in this work by Dr Charlotte Paterson whose expertise includes the development of patient-centred outcome measures.

### PenCLAHRC Publicity

#### A summary of PenCLAHRC's recent media highlights

##### Academic Events

29th April University of Plymouth Research and Enterprise Conference

Ken Stein and Rod Sneaff gave a presentation on needs-led research, supported by Julie Frier and Kate Boddy

##### Academic Events

9th June PCMD Annual Research Event. Stuart Logan and Nicky Britten discussed their PenCLAHRC posters with keynote speaker Sir John Savill, Chief Scientist for Scotland

##### Radio

Childhood Obesity Project. Katrina Wyatt was interviewed on 26th March by BBC Radio Devon with Margaret Somerville, Jane Reddaway (Torbay Care Trust) and Ann Homer (GP)

##### Falls project

featured on June 16th on BBC Radio Devon

##### Print Media

Falls Project featured in the Western Morning News



# PenCLAHRC Staff Interview



Name: Jaime Peters

Role: Decision Modeller

Jaime is currently working with the South West Peninsula Health Technology Commissioning Group to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of drugs and health technologies. The aim of this group is to ensure that there is a single and agreed approach across the four primary care trusts in the South West to the delivery of care, where no current NICE guidance exists.

## Who would you most like to have dinner with (past or present)?

The journalist John Simpson.

## Where do you like to go on holiday?

Places I've not been before.

## What's your perfect Friday night?

Spent down the pub.

## If you could do any job what would you be?

Anything where you get paid to travel!

## What is your greatest temptation?

Chocolate.

## What is your favourite meal?

Impossible to narrow it down – anything that doesn't contain marmite!

## How do you chill out?

Spending time with friends and family, being outdoors.

## What do you take when you have a cold?

Plenty of sympathy.

## Recent PenCLAHRC Appointments

Bob Freeman, Locality Lead, Plymouth

Mark Perry, Locality Lead, Plymouth

Bijay Vaidya, Locality Lead, Exeter

Andrew Gibson,  
Patient and Public Involvement Research Fellow

Mark Daly, Locality Lead, Exeter

Becky Whear, Health Service Research

## Appointments

Would you like to become more involved in applied health research, using your networking skills across Cornwall to help define the key questions in primary and secondary care then working with clinicians and academics to provide the research evidence which can affect genuine change in service and improve patient care?

PenCLAHRC, is seeking a Locality Lead in conjunction with NHS Cornwall to be the local champion for the initiative. Details of this vacancy can be found at <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/cgi-bin/vacdetails.cgi?selection=912269211>

Please note that the closing date is 8th July 2009. If you would like to speak to someone about this exciting opportunity, please contact the Director of PenCLAHRC, Stuart Logan on 01392 262963 or Felicity Owen, Director of Public Health, NHS Cornwall on 01726 627802.

## PenCLAHRC Key Contacts:

Director, Stuart Logan (stuart.logan@pms.ac.uk)

Operational Manager: Helen Papworth (helen.papworth@pms.ac.uk)

PenCLAHRC Post Editor: Kate Boddy (kate.boddy@pms.ac.uk)