Important determinants of traumatic brain injury outcomes

Using a community psychology approach in your research

The great debate: Teaching and/or research?

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Annual Conference
9–11 April 2013, Harrogate International Centre
WELCOME to the 86th edition of the PsyPAG Quarterly. This issue contains a wealth of high quality articles: with hints and tips, conference, workshop and book reviews, and featured pieces galore!

We begin the issue with Emma Jackson, Emma Davies and Laura Neale’s snapshot of the PsyPAG Annual Conference workshops. This article provides some of the key advice from each session and an insightful discussion of the benefits of running your own workshop. In another extremely interesting workshop review, Amy Green demonstrates the benefits of attending the Division of Health Psychology postgraduate workshop, for professional development and making contact with people in similar stages of their career.

Across the issue we have numerous fascinating conference reviews. The first, by Francesca Ainsworth, provides an overview of the 5th annual International Investigative Interviewing Research Group (iIIRG) conference, which brings together professionals from across the career spectrum. This article provides a real insight into the benefits of attending a multidisciplinary conference to discuss techniques, research, practice and developing your own programme of research. In an evocative review, Naomi Norton describes the experience of attending the British Psychological Society’s Annual Conference: from the venue, to the keynotes and the rewards for giving your own poster presentation. Simone Bijvoet-van den Berg takes us on a tour of the International Conference on Infant Studies, identifying the practicalities of attending and presenting at a large conference, to make sure you get the most out of your experiences. Following this, Laura Thomas explores the benefits of attending the 2012 International Conference on Motivation: a forum for the motivation community to discuss emerging themes in research. In a review of the First Nordic Conference on Childhood Anxiety Disorders held at the University of Copenhagen, Anna Alkozei highlights the benefits of such international conferences for meeting researchers in the same field from across the globe. Theodore D. Cosco’s article examines the 5th ESRC Research Methods Festival, as a cost effective opportunity to attend sessions on a wide range of social science topics, to allow early career researchers’ skills to flourish. In his article, Chris Street discusses the experience of attending the Cheltenham Science Festival 2012 and its role in public engagement, with a thoughtful reflection on lessons learned from what was done well and not so well.

Complementing these reviews we have a number of thought-provoking featured articles. The first of which, by Dr Clare Allely, provides a fascinating look at the role of gender and age as determinants of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) outcomes. Dr Allely discusses the possible reasons for the lack of consensus in the literature and its potential implications. In the second featured article, Glenn Williams and Sally Zlotowitz explore...
Laura Scurlock-Evans

what a community psychology approach is and how it can be adopted in research. The final featured article, by Professor John Radford, examines the age old debate: Teaching and/or research? This article provides a discussion of the changing face of higher education and the issues of which the academic community should be aware when trying to strike the right balance between teaching and research.

We close this issue with a book review by Laura di Bella: *Athena Unbound: The advancement of women in science and technology*. The review demonstrates how this book could be used to help postgraduates reflect on how best to approach their own career in the sciences.

Combined, these articles represent a range of contemporary issues in psychology and provide a unique look at the experiences and activities of postgraduates, which we hope you will find helpful.

Finally, I would like to close my column by welcoming the newest member to *The Quarterly* Editorial Team, Daniel Jolley, who I’m excited to say will be leading a special issue of *The Quarterly* on conspiracy theories in September 2013. Please get in touch with the editors on quarterly@psypag.co.uk if you’re interested in contributing to this, or any future issue of *The Quarterly*. *The Quarterly* has also recently joined twitter, so you can now follow us on @PsyPAGQuarterly for updates on all our activities.

We hope you enjoy this issue and, if you would like to contributed to *The Quarterly*, we look forward to hearing from you!

Laura Scurlock-Evans
On behalf of the *PsyPAG Quarterly* Editorial Team
Email: quarterly@psypag.co.uk
Chair's Column
Fleur-Michelle Coiffait

WELCOME to the first 2013 edition of The Quarterly. I do hope you all had a relaxing and enjoyable festive season and that the New Year has got off to a productive start for everyone. As I write this, we are busy planning and organising a number of exciting events for UK psychology postgraduates, including our annual postgraduate psychology conference.

This year the PsyPAG conference will be held at Lancaster University from the 17–19 July. I’d like to take this opportunity to really encourage postgraduates at any stage of your research to come along and consider presenting some of your work, either as a poster or an oral presentation. It is a really supportive environment to share ideas and plans with peers if you are at an early stage in your project, or to disseminate your results and discuss your findings amongst other postgraduates.

You can register to attend even if you aren’t submitting a presentation and the programme is always very varied, covering a wide cross-section of research across psychology and related fields, such as health and neuroscience. Every year I attend the PsyPAG conference, I come away with new ideas, inspiration and motivation for my own research and usually make a few friends and collaborations along the way!

We are continuing to invite submissions for symposia and workshops on areas that you would like to nominate. This has worked really well in previous years, giving postgraduates the opportunity to convene and chair sessions that they have put forward. We also want to make sure that we are offering sessions that you want and find useful, so do check out the conference website if you would like to organise something on your subject area. There will also be a number of informal and formal social events to network with other postgraduates in a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. You can find further information on the conference website (www.psych.lancs.ac.uk/psypag2013/) and you can also access regular updates regarding PsyPAG 2013 on Twitter and Facebook.

In addition to the conference, we are currently putting together a one-day workshop event about doing research in the NHS. This is aimed specifically at psychology postgraduates and applied psychology trainees doing research and will cover many of the issues you have said you come across when involved in research in NHS settings. So far, the programme includes sessions on the ethics procedure, working with key stakeholders, managing difficult situations, and there will also be time in the day devoted to sharing tips and troubleshooting common challenges. Further details will be advertised via our website, Facebook and Twitter feeds, as well as on the PsyPAG JISCmail list (www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/psych-postgrads.html). Do sign up to these to keep up-to-date with the latest news on this and other events for psychology postgraduates.

PsyPAG also offer a number of bursaries for UK psychology postgraduates that provide financial support to attend any of our events, or indeed any other conferences or workshops. More information about all of the events and bursaries we offer can be found at www.psypag.co.uk.

Do feel free to contact me at chair@psypag.co.uk if you have any suggestions, ideas or feedback on how PsyPAG can better support psychology postgraduates in the UK. The NHS research workshop is one example of how we have developed an event in response to a number of psychology postgraduates raising it as an area where they would benefit from further support and training.
I would like to thank the British Psychological Society’s Research Board for their continued commitment to psychology postgraduates studying in the UK and to the PsyPAG committee for their ongoing hard work on behalf of psychology postgraduates.

Fleur-Michelle Coiffait
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The 28th PsyPAG Annual Conference will take place at Lancaster University from the 17–19 July 2013.

The annual conference provides the ideal opportunity for postgraduate researchers to come together and present their research in a supportive and friendly environment. Our aim is to provide a wide range of symposia and workshops to provide interest across the topics in psychology and those from cross-disciplinary research.

For more information visit http://psypag2013.lancs.ac.uk

Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PsyPAGAnnualConference and Follow us on Twitter @PsyPAG2013
Snapshots of the PsyPAG 2012 Workshops: Tips, Advice and Benefits

Emma Jackson, Emma Davies & Laura Neale

At PsyPAG’s Annual Conference 2012 postgraduates were invited to submit workshop applications in any area of their choice. Following this call a number of excellent and helpful workshops were organised. The aim of this article is to disseminate the advice and tips given to the wider postgraduate community and discuss why you might want to organise your own workshop.

Ask the Experts: Teaching and career development workshop

Emma Jackson & Emma Davies

This popular workshop sponsored by the Division of Academics, Researchers and Teachers in Psychology (DART-P) provided delegates with teaching and career advice to cope with the demands of starting a career in academia. Each panel member presented their tips and advice before answering any questions from the audience. The panel members included: Dr Matt Coxon, a Lecturer at Leeds Metropolitan University and DART-P committee member; Dr Debbie Smith, a Lecturer at Manchester University, and ex-lead for Postgraduates who Teach (PGwT); Dr Greta Defeyter, a Lecturer at Northumbria University; and Dr Andrew Manley, a Lecturer at Leeds Metropolitan University. The main message from the panel was that beginning your academic career journey may be tough with ups and downs but remain proactive, learn from your experiences and follow these top tips to succeed in an academic career:

Tip 1: Always do your best with every opportunity, put a 100 per cent effort into everything you do as you never know where it may lead. But with that, remember you can say no and that nothing will ever be perfect.

Tip 2: In establishing a career in academia be prepared for rejection whether that be from a colleague, student, or for a publication. Do not see it as something negative but rather something to work on, to develop you as an academic.

Tip 3: In your working practice be flexible; that relates to your teaching methods, research ideas, and any other commitments. Be prepared to comprise.

Tip 4: At all times refrain from gossip! Stay professional: as you never know if the person sitting next to you might one day have a big impact on your career. Your professional image is of great importance in academia.

Tip 5: Experience is vital. Look out for opportunities to enhance your CV, such as joining a committee like PsyPAG and/or a subsystem of the British Psychological Society. Joining a committee not only provides valuable experience but a great networking opportunity and the chance to represent your views. If your university does not offer the chance to gain teaching experience think about guest lecturing, or an hourly paid lectureship. Then there is the pressure to publish or perish, but think outside the box; this does not only have to include research papers but this could be conference reviews, book reviews and/or discussion pieces.

The advice from the panel came across loud and clear. It might be a tough journey, with twists and turns along the way, but if you
remain proactive, professional and learn from your experiences, you can succeed in an academic career.

Career development for trainees workshop
Laura Neale, Nicola Toth & Kate Greenwell
This workshop was jointly run by Laura Neale (PhD student/Occupational Psychologist trainee), Nicola Toth (Occupational Psychologist Trainee) and Kate Greenwell (Trainee Health Psychologist). Training to be a psychologist can be a rewarding and challenging time. In response to this, the career development workshop aimed to provide trainees with career development advice for both during and after their training to be a practising psychologist. This workshop brought together a health psychologist, clinical psychologist, occupational psychologist, and a trainee sport and exercise psychologist to speak of their personal career journeys. Useful advice on how to avoid potential pitfalls faced by psychologists in training was given. It was interesting to hear how similar experiences were across disciplines, and how we all faced the same challenges when embarking on a psychology career. The workshop organisers would like to give a special thanks to all the speakers at the workshop and VitalWork at Northumbria University, who kindly sponsored the workshop and made it all possible.

Three main tips emerged from all speakers:
1. It is important to find a Chartership supervisor who you feel comfortable working with.
2. Seek out volunteer work – it’s worth asking!
3. Choose a topic or area you feel passionate about to maintain your interest and enthusiasm.

Putting social media into practice: Tips, contemporary issues and privacy
David Houghton, Kirsten Bartlett, Fleur-Michelle Coiffait, Jenna Condie & Emma Davies
This workshop aimed to explore both the pitfalls and the positives of working in an increasingly connected social media world. David Houghton began by considering ways in which the boundaries between public and private world have become blurred within our use of Facebook and Twitter. He argued that we should be cautious about what we post online as we may have different expectations about what constitutes acceptable sharing to those we are ‘friends’ with. Kirsten Bartlett and Fleur-Michelle Coiffait expanded on this theme by asking about ethical use of social media. They considered what an appropriate response to a friend request from a client or student might be, with case studies to illustrate potential problems.

Jenna Condie reflected on teaching with social media and warned attendees that it had been challenging to get students to accept that they should be aware of their own professional identities. She described how she had been on the receiving end of some negativity, but also had a wealth of positive experiences to share. In the final section Emma Davies argued that delegates should be using their social media presence as a platform for networking and research. Emma had made connections with a number of other researchers in her field and recruited participants using Twitter.

The overall messages from this workshop were:
1. The increasing connectedness of our social world means that previous implicit boundaries between friendship groups have been transformed.
2. It is essential to manage your online presence in line with your professional aspirations, and to consider how your online interactions might be interpreted offline.
3. Social media can be a fantastic resource for teaching and engaging with students, and it is important to consider how to
help them to manage their own online identities.

4. In an increasingly competitive job market, the growing academic community on Twitter offers a great opportunity to expand your professional network.

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**Organising a workshop**

Organising your own workshop is a great opportunity and has many benefits including:

- A good way to gain experience of collaborating with other postgraduates and/or trainees.
- Filling a gap in your training needs while benefiting other postgraduates at the same time.
- Gives you the confidence to be able to organise and chair workshops in the future.
- Opportunity to network and meet other postgraduates in your field (particularly of benefit if you feel isolated in your institution or organisation) and meet people you may be able to work with in the future.
- It will be fun!
- All these skills will be great for your CV and future career.

If you are running a workshop you also have the opportunity to apply for funding or sponsorship to help meet the costs. Applying for funding is valuable experience and shows employers that you are able to use your initiative, budget and plan. From our experiences we would strongly recommend you consider running your own workshop. We hope this article has got you thinking of ideas and what is brilliant is that PsyPAG offers workshop funding in four rounds each year. We offer a maximum of £1000 per workshop and full details can be found on the website www.psypag.co.uk. We look forward to receiving your innovative workshop applications!

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Conference review:

5th Annual International Investigative Interviewing Research Group (iIIRG) Conference

Francesca Ainsworth

Toronto, 24–26 May 2012

The International Investigative Interviewing Research Group (iIIRG) prides itself on bringing together academics and practitioners. This year marks the first meeting of the iIIRG in North America, in Toronto to be precise. The conference ran from the 24–26 May with a packed schedule bringing together keynote speakers, invited talks and presentations from practitioners, PhD students and professors from around the world. The conference covers topics ranging from interviewing techniques and policy, deception detection and forensic linguistics. I presented my own research to iIIRG for the second year and, despite being very nervous, things went well and I was able to get some good feedback.

What makes this conference stand out from the rest is the variety in the delegates’ backgrounds. You never know whether you’re going to be sat next to a student, lawyer, police officer, academic, judge, or, in my case one afternoon, an FBI agent. Because of this diversity, there is more of a feeling that everyone is approachable, as you’re not quite sure who does what or where they are from, and for the most part everyone is.

There was something in the conference programme for everyone and I could fill the whole of The Quarterly trying to summarise everything, but I’ll just pick one or two highlights. One of the most interesting sessions was first thing the morning after the conference dinner. Despite the number of obvious sore heads in the room, there wasn’t a spare seat. Joseph Buckley from Reid Associates gave the talk, ‘What is the Reid Technique’. In a nutshell this technique is considered highly controversial, and is sold throughout North America as an interviewing and interrogation technique to government and law enforcement agencies, corporate investigators and human resource departments.

I had heard nothing but negative reviews about the Reid technique, so this was a chance to see someone who wholeheartedly believes in an interviewing method that claims to get a true confession within the hour (see http://www.reid.com/ for their step-by-step interrogation guide). As expected, the speaker made the technique sound like the holy grail of interview methods. There was a polite applause at the end, but barely a second had passed before a tirade of questioning began. Thirty to 45 minutes later hands were still in the air throwing criticisms left right and centre which were either brushed off or argued away using some very suspicious statistics. He definitely made an impression, but for all the wrong reasons.

This couldn’t have been more different to the reception given to Sue Adams, an FBI agent from Washington. The presentation was met with great interest, and a positive discussion. She spoke about research into finding ‘gold’ in 911 emergency calls, demonstrating that the initial interview with
the dispatcher can give vital clues in homicide cases as to whether the caller should be the prime suspect. She played extracts from genuine 911 calls that were part of a transcript analysis of 50 innocent and 50 guilty callers. Innocent callers were significantly more likely to demand help for the victim, were urgent and impatient in their pleas for help and had fluctuating pitch and intonation patterns in their speech. Guilty callers, on the other hand, requested help for themselves rather than the victim, distanced themselves from the situation, spoke with a flat tone and calm voice, often insulting and demeaning the victim. They even occasionally gave their guilt away directly during the initial telephone call. The use of emergency calls in an investigation was something I wasn’t familiar with, so it was really interesting to see the data and even be played recordings of real calls. This is something that I won’t forget for a long time.

Being an FBI agent obviously gave Sue access to materials that the average academic would never be able to lay their hands on. This just highlights the benefits of multidisciplinary meetings such as the iIIRG. This was demonstrated time and time again throughout the conference in presentations involving interviews with police officers, analysis of real courtroom transcripts and police interviews, research using real victims and witnesses, as well as studies in the experimental setting. A lot of this research wouldn’t have been possible without a practitioner to gain access to the materials or an academic to do the analysis. These partnerships have often stemmed from conversations over coffee during previous conference refreshment breaks. The research I presented was born from a discussion with someone who came to my presentation at last year’s conference. This is now part of my thesis, so this is a conference well worth attending for anyone interested in eyewitnesses and the legal process.

Overall the iIIRG conference was a positive and rewarding experience. I was able to get feedback on my own presentation, and I was able to form networks with like-minded individuals. The conference ended with an invitation to the 6th Annual Conference, to be held in Maastricht, Netherlands, next year. I will definitely be one of the first to sign up!

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Gender and age as important determinants of traumatic brain injury outcomes

Dr Clare Allely

Brain injury accounts for the majority of accidental deaths which are the leading cause of death in adults (Tagliaferri et al., 2006). Yet, despite this high prevalence, there are factors which affect outcome after traumatic brain injury (TBI) which remain relatively unexplored. An overlooked genetic parameter with respect to outcome after TBI is the gender of the patient, with few epidemiological studies actually assessing sex as a potential risk factor for TBI severity.

Gender difference in response to TBI
Experimental studies on female and male laboratory animals have indicated a different physiological response of the two genders to TBI. Roof and Hall (2000) have shown that, compared to male animals, female animals consistently display less damage to the brain after controlled injuries. Evidence from animal studies consistently demonstrates this gender difference after TBI. However, evidence from human studies is very conflicting and fraught with limitations. The importance of carrying out a study which combines good methodology with a thorough investigation of whether there are potential gender differences after TBI is warranted. Supporting earlier findings from human studies (i.e. Grosswasser, Cohen & Keren, 1998), Gujral et al. (2006) carried out an epidemiological study to investigate the relationship between TBI mortality and sex to further determine the differences between the genders in response to TBI. Their findings revealed that there were gender differences in TBI mortality when the injury was blunt but not penetrating. Specifically, males experiencing blunt injuries are 20 per cent more likely to die than females after adjusting for all other risk factors. Mostafa et al. (2002) also found that males were twice as likely to die from a TBI compared to females after controlling for severity scores. Additionally, there has also been evidence of treatment differences between males and females. Indeed, Hulst et al. (1994) found evidence of differences in metabolism between the sexes also have potential effects on TBI brain sequelae and interactions with pharmacological treatment.

The studies so far emphasise that the sex of patients with TBI has long been neglected as a possible explanation for, or confounding factor in, outcomes after TBI (Farace, Wayne & Alves, 2000). However, studies have reported findings which run counter to those suggesting differences in TBI outcome between males and females. For instance, Coimbra et al. (2003) found no relationship between sex and post-traumatic mortality or acute complications. A criticism of their study was the fact that they excluded pre-hospital TBI fatalities and relied on outcomes which may not reflect any biological differences between males and females further demonstrating the importance of carrying out our proposed study which will explore this using appropriate measures. Moreover, Farace et al. (2000) carried out a meta-analysis of gender differences in outcome after TBI and failed to demonstrate that female gender is protective. Mushkudiani et al. (2007) found that age, race, education, but not gender, are associated with outcome after moderate and severe TBI. However, a limitation of the study by Mushkudiani et al. (2007) was the relatively few children included thus limiting the ability to draw strong conclusions on the relationship between age and outcome in the paediatric TBI population.
Despite these studies demonstrating no evidence to suggest a relationship between gender and outcome after TBI, other studies have shown evidence of gender differences. For instance, gender differences were found in children between the ages of 6 to 16 years after TBI. Donders and Woodward (2003) specifically investigated the possibility that gender has a moderating effect on memory after pediatric TBI. Seventy children with TBI, selected from a four-year series of consecutive referrals were compared with 70 demographically matched controls on a screening version of the Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning (WRAML-S) and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – Third Edition (WISC-III). Boys with TBI performed worse than girls with TBI, and worse than their counterparts in the control group, on the WRAML-S. It is important to point out here that there was no evidence of a gender effect in the control group (i.e. children with no TBI). Even more interestingly, Fujii and Ahmed (2001) pointed out that psychosis is a rare but devastating consequence of TBI. In their study, they investigated the risk factors for developing a psychosis secondary to TBI (PSTBI) in a sample of 25 inpatients with PSTBI which was compared to a control group of 21 patients with TBI without psychosis. Findings revealed that the PSTBI group was more likely to have had a previous congenital neurological disorder or to have sustained a head injury prior to adolescence. However, with respect to gender, they found that there were significantly more males than females who went on to develop a psychosis after traumatic brain injury.

Further, it is known that TBI frequently results in disruptions of executive or mental control functions of planning, initiation and control of cognition – mental processes which are believed to carried out in the frontal lobes. For example, damage to the frontal lobes is typically linked to a reduction in the ability to monitor and regulate one’s own behaviour (e.g. modulating disinhibited and impulsive responding). In order to explore whether there are any gender differences in the incidence of disruptions of these functions as a result of a TBI, Niemeier et al. (2007) administered the Wisconsin Card Sort Test (WCST) to a sample of 1331 individuals between the ages of 18 and 49 years. The WCST is a validated measure of executive function which involves strategic planning, organised searching, goal-oriented behaviour and the ability to modulate impulsive responding. Niemeier et al. (2007) found that men appear to be at greater risk than women for executive dysfunction following TBI, at least for analytical problem solving skills. These factors may increase the risk of social isolation, relationship breakdowns, etc., in males.

So far, we have seen findings which suggest that females have an advantage with respect to TBI outcome. Others, however, report no gender differences in outcome. Determining whether there are gender differences is further hindered by studies which have demonstrated that females are at a disadvantage. Rutherford, Merret and McDonald (1979) reported that a greater number of persistent symptoms were exhibited in females compared with males at one-year follow-up after a medically diagnosed mild brain injury. These findings are supported by more recent studies (i.e. Kraus, Peek-Asa & McArthur, 2000).

The effect of age on rate of survival after TBI

From all the studies mentioned so far, it is clear that there are inconsistencies in the findings regarding gender differences after TBI. This inconsistency in findings is also apparent with studies which have explored the relationship between age and TBI. Age is one of the most important and most documented predictors in TBI, with a large body of research demonstrating that outcome is poorer with increasing age (i.e. Mushkudiani et al. 2007). For instance, McMillan and Teasdale (2007) showed that this increased death rate after TBI remains greater than that of the general population.

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for at least seven years with a further increase in those under 55 years of age. There also exists a degree of uncertainty regarding the nature and shape of the relationship between age and TBI outcome. Kraus et al. (2000) have suggested that the effect of age may be multifaceted and such an interaction requires a larger sample size than their study used to investigate this properly. Signorini et al. (1999) argue for the importance of age in determining outcome. In their study, 365 patients (from the original 372 patients included in the study) were followed up for survival at one year which was used as their outcome measure. Those patients alive at discharge were followed up at six, 12, and 24 months from the time of injury. Follow-up sessions included an interview, a test battery from a neuro-psychologist, a postal questionnaire and contact with the general practitioner. The findings by Signorini et al. (1999) are intriguing. After a one-year follow-up, the results indicate that there is something fundamentally different between patients between the ages of 14 to about 50 years compared to those patients above the age of 50. So it appears then that there is no obvious effect of age on the probability of

Figure 1.
(Left) Virtual model of Phineas Gage’s skull. (Right) With this physical 3D model of Phineas Gage’s skull, it illustrates the approximate path of the tamping iron which was driven completely through his head, damaging much of his brain’s left frontal lobe. Gage’s case is one of the very first which provides evidence that the frontal cortex is involved in personality. After the injury his friends saw him as ‘no longer Gage’.

survival until the age of 50, but after this point there is a decline in the probability of survival. This conflicts with the findings of Mushkudiani et al. (2007) who found that the change point came at about 30 years of age. There has also been interest in the aging brain, specifically, the association between traumatic brain injury and early onset Alzheimer’s disease (AD). It has been suggested that genetic factors implicated in AD may also be important prognostic factors for survival after TBI (Teasdale, Nichol & Fiddes, 1997). It is hypothesised that the mechanism of brain repair is in some way deteriorated or changed in older patients, leading to poorer survival.

**Importance of the problem:**

**Clinical and research issues**

Baguley et al. (2000) found that patients with TBI had a higher mortality rate than the general population. Using a rehabilitation database of a major teaching hospital, the authors identified 476 patients, of whom 27 patients were deceased. When we compare this mortality rate (5.7 per cent) with the expected mortality rate for an equivalent population without TBI (1.5 per cent) using Australian Life Table data, it is clear that the mortality rate is higher amongst individuals who suffered a TBI. However, they highlight the limitation of their study and others with respect to the fact that females were relatively under-represented in their sample. Moreover, subjects with pre-morbid psychiatric histories were over-represented in the deceased sub-group. Another example of the under-representation of females in brain injury research, is the study discussed earlier by Fujii and Ahmed (2001). In this particular study the gender of the TBI sample was predominantly male (24:1). This is obviously grossly different from the 2:1 gender base rates expected in the TBI population.

Figure 2.

A CT of the head years after a traumatic brain injury showing an empty space marked by the arrow where the damage occurred. Image by James Heilman, MD.
Because either most TBI research has been performed only in men or the data have not been analysed or reported separately by sex, clinicians have limited data to guide the management of women who acquire a TBI. At the same time, as the number of women participating in sports and other TBI-risky behaviours increases, the incidence of TBI in women may be on the rise. Thus, there is potentially a public health dilemma developing in which practitioners may be faced with increasing numbers of women with TBI, but will have very limited data to guide treatment (Farace, Wayne & Alves, 2000). Furthermore, the relatively small amount of studies which have explored the relationship between gender and TBI outcome are fraught with methodological problems which may explain the conflicting findings. The limitation of many of the studies into the outcome after TBI is primarily attributable to the relatively short follow-up-period. For instance, Grosswasser et al. (1998) only assessed patients at time of discharge. Other studies, such as Mushkudhiani et al. (2007) and Kraus et al. (2000), followed TBI subjects after discharge for six months and 18 months, respectively.

In conclusion, the existing literature on whether there are gender differences in brain injury outcome is conflicting. A study focusing on human sex differences in response to TBI using biological markers and longer follow-up periods would improve the present gap in the basic understanding of TBI. In general, services pay no heed to potential male-female differences in outcome following TBI which may be due to the lack of consensus in the literature which needs to be addressed.

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THE British Psychological Society Annual Conference 2012 took place at the impressive Grand Connaught Rooms in London this year (2012). Arriving at the venue made up for the miserable weather and early start; the hotel and conference staff were attentive and courteous, a cloakroom service was provided to get rid of wet coats and the provision of tea, coffee and biscuits in the Great Hall provided a fantastic opportunity to ogle the incredible architecture.

This was my first British Psychological Society conference and I was both impressed and a little intimidated by the scope of what was on offer; the first task of the day was trying to plan how many presentations I could realistically attend without the aid of a body double or teleportation device. The five parallel conference sessions included sport and exercise psychology, researchers and teachers in psychology and qualitative methods in addition to the society’s general section and the student conference. Dr Carole Allan’s opening remarks in the Edinburgh Room set a high standard for the conference; having thanked all the right people she made me feel particularly welcome by emphasising the importance of the student conference and the future role that current students will play.

The first keynote speaker of the conference, Professor Chris Brewin (University College London), continued to uphold the standard that Dr Allan had set with a clear and interesting presentation about post-traumatic stress disorder and human memory. Despite the breadth of experience and fields of audience members I felt that his presentation held something of interest for all with just the right balance of introductory information, simple explanations and in-depth slides for those who knew the subject area. Dr Julie Hulme effected an effortless segue into her talk about the Higher Education Academy (HEA), an organisation I previously knew nothing about, followed by a great outline of the activities that the HEA is involved in and how they related to audience members.

After a trip down the rabbit-hole exploring the bowels of the hotel with countless other lost rabbits (a.k.a. conference delegates) I eventually stumbled into the beautiful Crown Room where the Sport and Exercise Psychology Conference was just getting underway. As a musician and researcher of musician’s health this strand of the conference exhibited some highly transferable presentations and it was a great privilege to be granted insight into the inner workings of another performance discipline. The presenters in these sessions were primarily PhD students and it was fantastic to see such a high level of professionalism both in content and presenting skills from fellow postgraduate students.

Enticed by the wonderful smells emanating from the Grand Hall I made my way to lunch. The food was plentiful and enjoyable and the opportunity to socialise and look at other people’s posters prepared me for my own poster presentation which took place on the Thursday. It was also inter-
esting to look around the sponsors’ stalls and dream about all the books I could buy if I were a rich (wo)man. I made my way back to the Crown Room for the afternoon just as Ross Lorimer (University of Abertay Dundee) gave his introduction to the symposium on the influence of coaches on the well-being and psychological needs of athletes; the various presenters gave interesting alternative perspectives on the common theme. The intimate nature of the room created an environment conducive to discussion and it was useful to have an opportunity to ask questions of the board of presenters.

After another cup of tea my supervisor and I headed to the Amphill Room where we discovered people lining the aisles and spilling out into the corridor for a Student Conference Keynote from Julian Boon (University of Leicester) on myth and reality in the psychological profiling of offenders. This was a particularly engaging talk, although not for the faint-hearted; Julian Boon’s years of practical experience in this field lent him a no-nonsense approach to describing and explaining what is involved in the process. I’m not sure if he was trying to encourage students to go into the field or put off those who were not completely serious about it but a disclaimer at the beginning regarding political-correctness (or lack thereof) alongside humorous interjections made it a fascinating example of an engaging presentation.

Along the corridor in the Cambria Room, Peter Reddy (Aston University) presented on the transition from study to employment for psychology graduates; his case studies granted interesting insight into the difficulties facing graduates and his evident experience as both a lecturer and researcher made it a very thought-provoking and enjoyable presentation. Having made it back down to the Great Hall we found the wine reception under way and enthusiastically joined in with the socialising. The Mind Ball game provided ample entertainment, although a few glasses of wine were necessary to slow down the brain activity that had been fired up by the day’s presentations!

Arriving on the Thursday I proudly velcroed my poster up on its board, straightened its edges then tore myself away to attend Diane Halpern’s (Claremont McKenna College) incredible keynote presentation on sex differences in cognitive abilities. Her introduction included a brief explanation of her background which was encouraging to hear as a young researcher; when standing at the bottom of the hill it is hard to imagine how you’ll ever reach to top so hearing about others’ experiences is always interesting. Similarly to Julian Boon, Diane adopted a no-nonsense style approach to what can be a controversial topic by presenting both sides of arguments and providing supporting evidence where relevant. Although I attended other presentations on the Thursday the highlight for me was having the opportunity to present my own research poster at such a prestigious event. It has inspired me to want to continue researching and I hope to have the opportunity to disseminate the results of my research at future British Psychological Society conferences. I look forward to attending next year’s conference, especially as it is set a little closer to home in the picturesque surroundings of north Yorkshire.

Acknowledgements
Many thanks to Ruth Raven and the conference team for organising such a fantastic event.

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Conference review:

Reinforcing the importance of motivation in all spheres of life: Emerging research trends from the 2012 International Conference on Motivation

Laura Thomas

Goethe University, Frankfurt, 28–30 August

The biennial International Conference on Motivation (ICM) was hosted in 2012 at the Westend Campus of Goethe University (Frankfurt, Germany). The ICM, founded in 1985, is a forum for researchers from across the world to discuss theory, methods, and practical implications within the field of motivation. As such, a wide range of researchers and postgraduate students with interests ranging from education, sport, and occupational motivation attend the conference. This resulted in the largest attendance at the ICM to date; with 69 poster, 84 individual presentations and 19 symposium sessions, suggesting continued expansion of this field of study.

The ICM was jointly organised by DIPF and EARLI: two organisations that aim to promote the field of motivation and are committed to developing young researchers. In the 2006 conference at Landau, Germany, a tradition of hosting a preceding summer school was initiated. The aim of the summer school was to provide PhD students the opportunity to discuss their work with senior scholars and to meet with others working in the same area. This provided a wonderful opportunity for the development of presentation skills, to discuss and critique new areas of research prior to publication, establish new relationships with other emerging psychologists and gain a fresh perspective on their research.

The conference boasted three keynote speakers; Professor Judith M. Harackiewicz (University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA) whose lecture was entitled ‘Promoting Interest and Performance in Math and Science Courses: the Importance of Utility Value’. The second keynote lecture ‘Planning Improves Goal Striving’ was presented by Professor Peter Gollwitzer (New York University, USA). Finally, Professor Mimi Bong (Korea University) closed the keynote presentations on the final day, with her breathtaking presentation ‘Toward a Conceptual Clarity, Empirical Distinctiveness, and Substantive Significance of Motivational Constructs’. Professor Bong also had the pleasure of introducing and presenting the lifelong achievement award to Professor Einar M. Skaalvik (Norwegian University of Science and Technology), for his work in the domain of educational psychology.

Attending the keynote speakers’ presentations provided an excellent learning opportunity, not only to hear about the latest research from the motivation field but also to observe more accomplished and expert speakers. Challenging concepts were handled with ease due to their clear and simple slides, and relaxed and engaging presentation style, which inevitably transferred to the audience.
In particular I found the charismatic style of Professor Harackiewicz to be especially engaging. Professor Harackiewicz opened the keynote presentation by discussing the importance of utility value (how useful and relevant the task is for other aspects of life). The lecture discussed the importance of students understanding the utility value of the subjects they cover during their education, especially in regard to mathematics and science. The presentation briefly discussed recent experimental research indicating that it is possible to promote perceived utility value and interest with simple interventions that provide students with information about the utility value of a topic (Durik & Harackiewicz, 2007). For example, asking students to write about the relevance of course topics to their own life (Hulleman & Harackiewicz, 2009). I believe this is something that students have difficulty in recognising, especially concerning degrees that are more multidisciplinary in nature, such as sport and exercise science.

Conference sessions ran in parallel during the three days, allowing delegates to focus on sessions aligned with their area of interest. My research interests focus on motivation, personality and inherent growth tendencies, grounded in self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) and reversal theory (Apter, 1982). Currently, the two established theories have only been considered in isolation, and so my research aims to extend the literature through identifying how these might be complimentary. For example, reversal theory discusses meta-motivational states which are characterised by a certain way of interpreting some aspect of one’s own motivation (e.g. serious whilst in the telic state vs. playful in the paratelic state: Apter, 2001). The process of reversing between meta-motivational states may enable a balanced satisfaction of one’s needs (Sheldon & Niemiec, 2006), contributing to well being. Secondly, satisfaction and thwarting of SDT needs may induce, and therefore explain, the reversal process. I was able to target sessions that discussed need satisfaction, need thwarting and individual differences. From this I gained valuable information regarding need strength, need satisfaction and the implications they may have for need thwarting; helping to inform some of the arguments made within my research.

The ICM provides a much-needed opportunity for the motivation community to present research to a diverse and enthusiastic audience, which I found highly valuable given the emergent stage of my research. I believe presenting work, at conferences such as the ICM, to be an important aspect of the research process: to discuss and learn about the ever-progressing field of motivation. Nowhere was this more evident than during a symposium exploring the relationship between need strength and need satisfaction: an area of research previously thought to be less fruitful (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This symposium sparked insightful discussion, based on preliminary research findings, which suggest this area has perhaps more to offer than previously believed.

In summary, the three key messages I have taken from this conference are; first, the field of motivation is ever progressing and attending conferences such as the ICM, provides an important means of remaining up-to-date with current developments. Second, educational based research should focus on context specific as opposed to domain specific regulation of motivation and learning, as this offers greater implications for theory development and practice. Finally, re-visiting the relationship between individual differences, need strength and need satisfaction may prove a fruitful area of research, contrary to initial theorisation.

Attending the conference was a fantastic opportunity, it has allowed me to develop my research and disseminate results; it is an experience I would recommend to all PhD students, regardless of year of study. I am looking forward to my next conference!

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References


**What is community psychology?**

COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY has a primary focus on understanding, and working with, people in their wider social context, as opposed to understanding them purely as individuals. A community psychology stance on psychological issues generally acknowledges the role of systems that exist around people relating to place, history, and culture. All of these factors affect people’s well-being and behaviour. In this way, it distinguishes itself from dominant psychological approaches that are more individualistic in orientation. It initially borrowed from understandings of the ecology of human development (e.g. Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and later drew from a number of models and theories including those relating to empowerment (e.g. Rapaport, 1987), and liberation psychology (e.g. Montero, 1998). It uses a multi-layered focus (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010) with analysis of **micro-systems** (e.g. a family or social network), **meso-systems** (i.e. links between micro-systems such as between home and school or relationships between work and home) and **macro-systems** (e.g. social norms, economic systems and policies). This multi-level approach can thus differentiate between various influences that could be exerted on people in specific social settings at different stages of their lives.

Community psychologists regard social exclusion, marginalisation, powerlessness and oppression as having a fundamental impact on people’s well-being. Oppression on the basis of demographic factors, such as social class, gender, sexual orientation and race, can create states of learned helplessness, conformity, self-blame and worthlessness. When combined with other factors, this contributes to downward spirals in well-being and health (Prilleltensky, 2003). Community psychology research and interventions attempt to change these wider influences and systems. The moral imperative to pursue social justice, liberation, and to act as advocates for marginalised and oppressed groups is a distinct aim within community psychology theory, action and research (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

**What do community psychologists research?**

The range of issues that community psychologists research is far-reaching and ranges from issues of helping people to cope with debt (e.g. Walker, 2012) and supporting climate change initiatives (e.g. Burton, 2009) to helping those who are struggling with chronic physical and mental health problems (e.g. Lovell and developing partners, 2011). Another instance of community psychology work is Orford’s (2012) approach to enabling family members who have been touched by addiction to piece their lives together through a combination of individual and collective actions. Community psychologists operate in a variety of settings and roles. They work in universities, local government, charities, and non-governmental organisations (e.g. Case Study 1 below). Some of them may have trained, or be employed as, clinical psychologists, whereas others may be working in counselling, education, sports, and occupational psychologist roles. Although there is not a clearly marked professional role of ‘community psychologist’ in the same way as there is a Chartered Clinical Psychologist role, there are many psychologists and non-psychologists who use community psychology principles and practices in their everyday work.
Case Study 1: MAC-UK and the ‘Integrate’ Model

MAC-UK is a charity that aims to make mental health accessible to the UK’s most excluded young people, who are often offending or at risk of offending. This goal is achieved by taking mental health out of the clinic and into the community with young people, by young people, and for young people. This charity’s work analyses problems and intervenes in collaboration with excluded young people at the personal, relational and collective levels of well-being (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). This work is influenced by the troubling statistic that one in three young offenders had an unmet mental health need during the time of their offence (Youth Justice Board, 2005), with many of them already from a background of social and economic disadvantage (Duckett & Schinkel, 2008). Dr Charlie Alcock, a clinical psychologist, founded MAC-UK along with several young people involved or affected by gangs in the community. The MAC-UK approach grew from the bottom-up, and young people co-created the model ‘Integrate’ which is now being piloted in other communities. The model is tailored to small groups of young people, in the context of their peer groups. Such individuals have complex, multi-level needs. More specifically the model is used to:

1. Work alongside young people in their own environment by giving them a strong stake in the development and implementation of project activities and then offering ‘street therapy’ to facilitate change if and when young people so choose;
2. Provide training to other service providers and the local community to help them to respond to the genuine needs and aspirations of this group;
3. Move young people into roles of responsibility when ready, for example, with employment and/or to bridge them into new social worlds; and
4. Evaluate its work to a high academic level in partnership with the Centre for Mental Health, University College London and the Mental Health Foundation.

The approach advocates for the fact that young people are more able to seek help once they have established trusting relationships and a sense of self-worth, and traditional services are often structurally unable to sufficiently recognise this. The model centres on being youth-led and tackling the root causes of emotional distress before it is too late. Therefore, it is able to provide a pioneering, long-term solution to the complex area of youth crime.

In MAC-UK’s everyday work with young people there are numerous opportunities for creating systemic change. For example, during housing assessments, a young person often requires a clinical diagnosis of mental illness in order to be allocated supported housing on mental health grounds. MAC-UK staff worked alongside young people and local authority housing staff to question the need for a label. This is especially important because the young person might not receive this diagnostic label because they did not access traditional services. Consequently, the system shifted to consider mental health needs beyond diagnosis. The pilot project has enjoyed considerable success, with over 75 per cent of the participants being currently employed or in work experience (Cosh, 2011). MAC-UK aims to radically transform the way in which mental health services and support are delivered to excluded young people at a national level. At a collective level, the charity works to change national policy to prevent the exclusion of young people, ensuring their voices are heard within government, and that youth offending is considered a public health issue as much as a criminal justice issue.
What brings many community psychologists together is their common aim. Many of them will strive to:

- Effect empowerment and make issues of power and subjugation more salient (Joseph, 2007), where previously they may have been disregarded or not challenged;
- Foster inclusive practices and principles and to challenge marginalisation;
- Adopt a facilitative approach to individual and social change, which involves recognising that many people have invaluable expertise through their lived experiences;
- Help people to build up networks of support (e.g. to develop social capital – see Putnam, 2000) so that they can act more effectively as a collective to effect social change;
- Identify people’s needs and strengths while enabling them to capitalise on these strengths and to be activists for social change as a means of meeting such needs;
- Acknowledge people’s distress, and situate this distress within a person’s material and social world. Therefore, community psychologists aim to improve quality of life and inequalities that could impact people’s life chances (The Midlands Psychology Group, 2007);
- Address inequalities in well-being by using ameliorative methodologies to lessen the pain or discomfort caused by a social ill, or by using transformative methodologies to equip people with skills to rise above social inequalities, or to work against these inequalities; and
- Focus on prevention and target root causes to social ills by using a critical approach that moves away from individualised analyses of psychological problems.

Despite some similarities among many community psychologists, it should be noted that they may operate according to one of three dominant paradigms – the post-positivist, the constructivist, and the critical (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

A post-positivist stance would aim to uncover unchanging, objective ‘truth’ about the status of communities. This aim would be achieved primarily through quantitative data collection, and the removal of potential biases. The approach aims to make valid and reliable assessments of social conditions, such as poverty (e.g. Tomlinson et al., 2008), and to identify a range of causal factors to test out hypotheses. By contrast, community psychologists using the constructivist perspective acknowledge that social issues are defined by multiple, sometimes competing, ‘truths’ that are continually being re-shaped and negotiated. In-depth representations of these realities would be sought through deployment of qualitative methods, which may take the form of interviews, participant observation, and documentary analysis. The most challenging of the three paradigms is the critical, transformative one. By using this paradigm, critical community psychologists’ goals are to address oppression, encourage respect for diversity, and to use critical knowledge to challenge the status quo and promote social change. The critical community psychologist would adopt a range of methods that would be reminiscent of an action research methodology that:

> `seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.’

(Reason & Bradbury, 2007, p.1)

This enterprise may encompass a collection of qualitative and/or quantitative data to conduct research in a highly participative way through involving different stakeholders at various stages of the research process. This is achieved via the setting of research agendas at the beginning of the project. The primary analysis of the critical paradigm is in targeting disempowering and divisive norms, values, and power structures and by replacing them with more all-embracing and inclusive policies and practices.
Strengths and limitations of using a community psychology approach

There are a number of ways in which community psychology can be beneficial to your research, but there is also a need for caution. In drawing from our experience of carrying out community psychology-related work and from looking at the literature, we would argue that the following strengths and limitations in using a community psychology approach need to be borne in mind (see Table 1).

Table 1: The potentials of using community psychology in your research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Your research can be action-driven and can be engineered to guide practices, policies and procedures to have a beneficial impact on people’s lives.</td>
<td>1. Community psychology is still relatively new in the United Kingdom as an organised discipline so it may be difficult to get interest from some psychologists who are not familiar with community psychology work. However, given that it is still relatively new, there is a lot of enthusiasm among fellow community psychologists so you should be able to find a supportive cohort of co-researchers in the field.</td>
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<td>2. You can display a wide variety of research skills and methodologies to get a better understanding of the entire phenomenon. Many PhD projects are orientated towards obtaining holistic, original insights through the use of mixed methods – community psychology encourages this orientation too.</td>
<td>2. Community psychology, at present, does not offer a single career track in a similar way to the more established Chartered Psychologist routes. However this issue could also be a strength, as it provides you with a chance to develop a flexible and versatile set of skills to do research in a wide range of psychology-related areas.</td>
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<td>3. By adopting multi-level perspectives on a psychological issue, you will be able to develop an understanding of the indirect, as well as direct, influences that situations, cultures and contexts can exert on a person’s well-being and behaviour.</td>
<td>3. Some community psychology interventions and research can take more time and effort to create because of the need for authentic partnership-working with, and in, communities. These relationships need time to build.</td>
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<td>4. The research skills you develop through using a community psychology approach can then be transposed into a range of settings such as in schools, sporting environments, counselling, health and social care.</td>
<td>4. Community psychology could be seen as too generic and akin to being ‘all-things-to-all-people’. It is, therefore, important to be clear about your theoretical and epistemological position that you will be taking in your work in line with the three paradigms mentioned earlier (i.e. the post-positivist, constructivist and critical stances).</td>
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<td>5. If you adopt more critical modes of community psychology, it is possible to give a voice to the marginalised and the oppressed and you may be able to make real changes to the status quo.</td>
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Taking a community psychology approach forward in your work

If you decide to use community psychology principles and practices in your research, consider some of the following techniques as ‘tools in your research toolbox’. Try to:

● Adopt multi-level methods of analysis. Particularly, develop an understanding that the person is nested within a range of social environments – some of which may be disempowering, whereas others may be very liberating.

● Search for opportunities to collaboratively work with stakeholders to create transformational change to systems and environments which are disempowering (for example, see Fryer & Laing’s (2008) commentary on what community psychologists do in relation to their ‘Disabling Places’ project).

● Encourage stakeholders in the research to reflect on the research process and products – to do so, enable them to co-create the research aims and objectives with you; engage them in the development of methods for collecting data; and let them be involved with the analysis, interpretation and dissemination of the findings. In this way, you will be carrying out research with people rather than on people.

Overall, there is much to be gained by considering adoption of a community psychology perspective and approach in your research. To get more involved with community psychology and to share experiences with like-minded people, we would encourage you to join the British Psychological Society’s Community Psychology Section. For information about this Section, and about community psychology in general, have a look at the following websites:

● British Psychological Society Community Psychology Section website: http://cps.bps.org.uk/

● Community Psychology (from Manchester) UK website: http://www.compsy.org.uk/

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Conference review:

International Conference on Infant Studies 2012

Simone Bijvoet-van den Berg

Minneapolis, Minnesota, 7–9 June

At the early start of your PhD, the best way of showing other people your work and getting feedback from them is by going to conferences. The number of possible conferences you could attend is enormous, but normally your supervisor has good ideas about which might be worthwhile to go to. In my case, my supervisor recommended I go to the International Conference on Infant Studies (ICIS). ICIS is known for being a large conference (around 2000 people attending) and is focused on infancy research (0 to 2-years-old). When it comes to big conferences, you know from the start that you cannot attend all the seminars you would like to. Therefore, my first job when getting my conference programme was to highlight all the things I did not want to miss out on. I immediately noticed that some of the sessions I wanted to attend were overlapping, so choices had to be made as to which of the seminars I thought were more valuable to my research.

The ICIS is a biennial conference which is held in a different city each time. This year, the Hilton Hotel in Minneapolis was chosen to host the event. Minneapolis is an interesting city with a downtown skyscraper area filled with shopping malls, but also with some beautiful parks and nature walks. The Mississippi runs through the city with an impressive hydroelectric station, and the many lakes that can be found south of the city definitely make Minneapolis worthwhile to visit. All this outside beauty was a nice change after a long conference day spent sitting indoors.

The conference this year was run over a three-day period, compared to four days in the past. Every day seminars started at 8.00 a.m. and finished at 8.00 p.m. Therefore, I found it important to schedule in some free-time as well, to make sure I would still be awake for interesting seminars at the end of the day. I noticed that the conference seemed to be split up into several themes, and they had made an effort that seminars with similar topics would not be overlapping. With my interest in pretend play and creativity, I focused on seminars about representation and imitation, ran amongst others by Jeffrey Lockman. It was funny to notice how within a big conference like this, people seem to be getting split up into groups according to their field of interest. For example, I started to recognise people at seminars for having given a talk before or having asked questions in earlier seminars. This gave me a better idea of which people it might be beneficial to talk with, or exchange contact details with. It was also nice to recognise familiar faces when it was my turn to present my poster; it made it easier to talk to these people as I knew they had similar interests.

My poster was titled 'The Unusual Box Test: A non-verbal measure of divergent thinking for 2-year-olds'. In this poster, I presented the first results on a creativity test that I developed throughout the first year of my PhD. In this test children explore novel toys through free play and are assessed on how many novel things they do with these toys. I didn’t really know what to expect when presenting a poster, but I believe the
idea that oral presentations give you better valued feedback is wrong. Our poster session lasted 90 minutes and I had been talking to people from start to finish. I received some great feedback and good questions on my poster. The aspect I liked the most was that you could actually have a conversation with people and exchange ideas rather than just talking at them. It turned out that people from a lot of different research areas were interested in my project, which gave me an extra boost to go on and take the development of my test to the next level.

Overall I really enjoyed my time at ICIS and I loved exploring Minneapolis on the days before and after the conference as well. It gave me the opportunity to get to know my supervisor a lot better, discuss future plans, and get feedback on my ideas. It was great to notice that many other people were also interested in my project.

I definitely recommend going to conferences, and please don’t wait until you are in your final year. There are so many things you can benefit from during your PhD and new ideas you will get from talking to other people. At least for me, the experience of going to ICIS has helped in getting even more excited about my own project and sharing my ideas with other people.

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Conference review:

First Nordic Conference on Childhood Anxiety Disorders

Anna Alkozei

University of Copenhagen, Denmark, 1 June 2012

The First Nordic Conference on Childhood Anxiety Disorders, held at the University of Copenhagen, was organised by the Copenhagen Child Anxiety Project (CCAP) who conduct theoretical and treatment research within the area of childhood anxiety. As I am investigating actual and perceived physiological arousal in childhood anxiety disorders for my PhD, this conference was ideal to present my findings and to connect with other experts in the field. The conference lasted one day and the programme comprised three keynote addresses on the assessment and treatment of childhood anxiety disorders. Interestingly, the keynote speakers worked in the US, the UK and Norway which gave fascinating insights into how similar research questions were investigated in different countries. Working with children suffering from anxiety problems within the Berkshire Child Anxiety Clinic at the University of Reading, I found it inspiring and stimulating to see how much research is being conducted in order to improve treatment methods for these children.

There were four open paper sessions of which two ran parallel. This meant that there was some opportunity to choose which themes in childhood anxiety research would be of most interest to certain researchers. During one of these open paper sessions, I presented my first two oral presentations at a conference. I was lucky that my session consisted of talks by other PhD students from my research group, which meant that it felt like we had a safe environment for our first presentations. Although we prepared for the conference very well and had presented our talks in front of each other and our supervisor, we were nervous. However, as we all knew the quality of each other’s presentations, we were able to encourage and reassure each other. One of our concerns was that other attendees would choose the open paper session running parallel to ours. However, our concerns were unnecessary; the lecture theatre was full of people by the time we started the session. As I presented findings that were unexpected when reviewing previous literature, I was unsure how my findings would be received. Luckily, I did not get asked any difficult questions, but rather engaged in an interesting discussion with a researcher from Norway who had similar findings to mine. This was very reassuring and made me feel more confident in my results.

It was a very friendly conference, possibly due to the fact that it was very small and interaction with other researchers was easy. In addition, Copenhagen was a great place to visit and I used the opportunity to spend a few days longer in order to explore the city. This is one of the great privileges in academic life: being able to travel not only to meet other researchers, but also to explore other countries and cultures and I can only encourage other young researchers to attend international conferences in order to make use of this privilege.
I enjoyed the First Nordic Conference on Childhood Anxiety Disorders and hope that there will be many more to follow. It was an ideal opportunity to present my work for the first time in front of an audience of experts in the field, provided me with unique insights into my PhD and my work with children suffering from anxiety problems.

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Conference review:

The 5th ESRC Research Methods Festival

Theodore D. Cosco

Oxford, 2–5 July 2012

The 5th ESRC Research Methods Festival was conducted under the premise of gathering early career social scientists for several days of workshops, seminars and lectures. The festival was organised by the National Centre for Research Methods and hosted by St. Catherine’s College, Oxford, over 2–5 July 2012. Across the four days of parallel sessions one was able to attend any number of talks spanning a broad range of social science topics, methods and intrigue. This vast breadth, ranging from quite technical methodology, for example, multilevel modelling, to very accessible aspects of broad-based social research, for example, academic writing, enabled participants to tailor the festival to areas of interest best suiting their needs. I was fortunate enough to attend the festival and in this review will touch on some of the aspects of the event that particularly stood out for me (cognizant of the fact I was only able to attend a fraction of the many parallel sessions).

The seminars I chose to attend ranged from fairly broad in nature, focusing on more overarching aspects of social research than specific methodologies or theoretical frameworks, to specific aspects of social science research. I found the broad ranging sessions to be helpful as they often covered fairly unusual material for conference-type parallel sessions. The methodology sessions were also very well put together, with a well selected group of speakers providing a range of perspectives. However, as is usually the case in multi-day academic events, the nuggets of useful information are usually hidden amongst not-so-useful information. Given the range of backgrounds of the attendants, it appeared as though the organisers leaned more towards content with greater breadth than depth. Fortunately, my research interests were well attended to.

I found many sessions of use, but two in particular stood out, partly due to their content, but more due to the fact that they covered important, but rarely covered, topics for early career researchers. These sessions were ‘Turning your thesis into a book’ and ‘How to secure grant money’. I was not alone in my interest in these sessions, as they were very well attended. The former had two representatives from Sage (a publisher specialising in research methods) discuss the ways in which one can reframe and target one’s dissertation for a particular publisher. Providing an industry-based perspective on the topic afforded a fresh, that is, non-academic, perspective on taking the culmination of one’s PhD and metamorphosing it into something beyond a monograph. ‘How to secure grant money’, was a charming, entertaining, and often very frank discussion on how grant funds are divvyed up and how to get your hands on these elusive funds. I found these talks to be a breath of fresh air in that they strayed from rote research methods talks.

The value for money afforded by the venue and accommodation was second to none. Held at St. Catherine’s College, the accommodation was a stone’s throw from the lecture theatres and the dining hall. The lunch buffets provided both hot and cold offerings and participants were treated to fabulous three-course dinners. In my experience college meals can be hit or miss,
but St. Catherine’s was a hit every night. Furthermore, my accommodation, meals and registration fees totalled a mere £165, which was absolutely brilliant. This was a huge positive in my books, making this an accessible opportunity for those with short arms and deep pockets and/or your typical PhD student.

There were, however, a few areas that I felt could have been improved. The abstracts and titles of the session were often misleading, which led to several hours of being frustratingly confined to sessions covering topics a far cry from what I had expected. As such, I think it would be prudent to ensure future abstracts are much clearer regarding the actual content of their sessions, to avoid unnecessary confusion. Another area that I found somewhat disconcerting was the way in which the event seemed to be very much qualitatively focused. Although there were many quantitative sessions, they still seemed to be greatly outnumbered. Encapsulating both of these gripes was the session on ‘Early career research networking’. This session ended up having nothing to do with networking, but rather comprised an hour of various speakers extolling the virtues of including quantitative methods into one’s PhD. As one astute participant pointed out, for the vast majority of the PhD students in attendance, their chosen methods had already been employed. Therefore, the session was either pushing on an open door for quantitative researchers or instilling regret in those who had conducted qualitative methods. (This session was, however, revived when the Master of Green-Templeton College gave a rousing talk on the trials and tribulations of starting one’s career.)

I felt that the festival broadly met my expectations, with the many highlights outweighing the low points. The venue and the hosts were phenomenal, which was complemented by the content of the workshop. I would, however, suggest that the organisers take into account the methodological backgrounds of the individuals participating in the workshop before they design the programme. It would be great if the programme itself could be tailored to students in specific areas of research using different methods. However, on the whole I would definitely recommend the Oxford Research Methods Festival; it provided great value for money and a good opportunity to expand one’s research methods skill set.

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PSYCHOLOGY is a widely misunderstood science. Often it is misperceived as unscientific, generating untestable claims and philosophies. This is in no small part perpetuated by authors of ‘self-help’ books, which all too often can even be found under the psychology section of bookshops. Psychology is not the only field with public relations problems. With high profile instances of data fraud and measurement errors in the natural sciences, coupled with the lack of open access to a great number of journals across the board, many of the sciences are struggling to make themselves accessible to the wider public audience. Research investors’ face an ever-increasing demand for societal impact, and direct application of their research. Therefore, engaging the public in our science becomes a necessity.

The Times Cheltenham Science Festival is a yearly public engagement event aims to promote communication between various areas of science ranging from mathematics to engineering, and from physics to psychology. If you are looking to interact with a wider audience, it is well worth attending. Comedian, actor and writer Robin Ince (of The Bad Book Club notoriety) encapsulated the mood of the festival through the words of the eminent physicist Richard Feynman: by discovering the underlying science of life, we do not destroy the magic of experience, the beauty of a flower. There is no subtraction of elegance by understanding: learning a flower’s splendour of colours attracts bees for pollination, the cycle of plant life and the intricate links between interdependent species can only add to the wonder of our world.

The majority of events discussed the natural sciences. On the opening day, astronomer Andrew Pontzen, and particle physicist Tom Whynnie, shed light (excuse the pun) on the concept of dark matter, through a comical sketch. They alluded to the difficulty of achieving funding without the buzzwords ‘dark matter’ in the application and the approach of proposing the existence of a material that cannot be seen in order to account for yet-unexplained effects. In fact, during the question session there was a fleeting analogy made with ether winds, which were originally considered to be the matter through which light travelled.

Returning to psychology, Professor Richard Wiseman in the public understanding of psychology alongside Evan Davis, Derek Jones and Mark Lythgoe, discussed the application of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to lie detection. Traditional methods of lie detection include the polygraph, which takes physiological measures of blood pressure, skin conductance, pulse and respiration, in order to determine guilty knowledge. The polygraph is often considered by the general public to be a reliable and highly accurate form of lie detection (cf. Alder, 2002). The unfortunate reality is that lie detectors are not an accurate means of determining deception (e.g. Barland & Raskin, 1975; Lykken, 1979), with some researchers going so far as to call it pseudo-science (see Beardsley, 1999). Whilst
 polygraphs do a good job of measuring physiological responses to anxiety, there is no established relationship between being anxious and deceiving (National Research Council, 2003). Even if anxiety and deception were related, polygraph readouts are by no means easy to interpret: two professional polygraph readers can reach, and in the past have reached, wildly different interpretations of the same data (Barbour, March 2002).

With the polygraph under heavy scrutiny, professionals are turning towards other means of screening for deception. Two companies in the US, Cephos and No Lie MRI, have commercialised fMRI hailing it as the new-and-improved lie detector. No Lie MRI (2006) claim on their website that ‘current accuracy is over 90 per cent and is estimated to be 99 per cent once product development is complete’. However, like the polygraph, fMRI lie detection is not without fault. Accuracy rates are quoted despite the lack of replication, even within the same laboratory (Spence, 2008). Furthermore, accuracy drops when simple countermeasures are employed such as imperceptibly wiggling their toes during the scan (Ganis et al., 2011).

Despite these problems, some law commentators claim that ‘because law’s goals and norms differ from those of science, there is no more reason to impose the standards of science on law’, claiming that fMRI is suitable for the purposes of litigating even if it doesn’t meet the standards of science (Schauer, 2010). Of course, such claims fail to account for jurors’ tendencies to take scientific evidence as virtual fact (known as the CSI effect, Schweitzer & Saks, 2007 – or the tech effect, Shelton, Kim & Barak, 2007), or even that images of brains make accompanying information appear more cogent and credible (even when that accompanying information is actually nonsense: McCabe & Castel, 2008).

An audience member posed a question that did not receive an answer. In my short experience as a doctoral student researching lie detection, this question is the most pressing question asked by those outside the field. This was exemplified by the fact that it was the first question asked by the audience. The question was simply whether when people lie do their eyes go up and to the right, and up and to the left when telling the truth? This is a claim made by Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP: Bandler & Grinder, 1979). However, research has found no support for this contention (Mann et al., 2012). This is probably not too surprising – the claims made by NLP have received little to no empirical support (e.g. Sharpley, 1987; von Bergen et al., 1997; Witkowski, 2011).

Another event discussed whether robots can think (or at least pretend to). Curiously, the first speaker, a cognitive roboticist, considered how inventors and engineers have typically emulated nature rather than directly replicating it. For example, human flight does not require the flapping wings that flying animals have evolved. Instead airplanes use fixed wings. Can we learn anything about bird flight from an airplane? I can only comment as a lay observer in this respect, but the theory behind engineered flight was a prerequisite to creating our emulation, and so it seems unlikely we discovered anything about bird flight after the invention of the airplane. Similarly, can we learn anything about cognition from artificial intelligence that emulates (not replicates) human cognition? The question was posed, but not answered.

Whilst there were many exciting events, the festival had a few issues. I was particularly disappointed in the lack of clarity and detail in the catalogue entries. This went so far as to make it unclear whether a particular event was geared towards children or adults, whether it would be a debate or a sketch show, whether a panel or an exhibition. Another disappointment was in the surprising lack of science in some of the events. For example, I attended a talk on the strategy of board games. The event was presented by two mathematicians, one of whom was a famous board game designer.
The talk had virtually no discussion of mathematics. There was the briefest passing comment made about game theory and John Nash (although not even a mention of Nash equilibrium). The event entitled ‘Annoying Noises’ was another example of the lack of science. This referred to the notion that loud running water can pollute the air with an annoying sound, more so than a quiet jackhammer. A brief reference was made to something called broadband sound, but there was no explanation of what it was or how it worked, other than to say that the sound dissipates quickly so that it can be heard clearly at short distances, and does not ricochet off walls.

The over-ambitious demo challenge, on the other hand, was truly amazing! Four contestants demonstrated science facts through quirky (and usually messy) demonstrations. This year’s winner, Ian Simmons, showed how a popular brand of snack sausage, which are in essence compacted fat and protein, contain enough energy to burn through a steel plate. Having set the sausages alight, with flowing oxygen to help sustain the flame, three sausages cut through the steel tray. He has even managed to cut through a safe with them! This event also included an impressive psychological demonstration by TV science presenter Simon Watt. Psychology is so often neglected amongst discussion of the sciences, but I’m glad to say it was very well represented here. There was an explosive demonstration of change blindness (the tendency to miss large objects or events in the environment as the result of the limited visual attention), employing a breakdancing Mr Watt as misdirection, and a demonstration that feelings of love can be artificially induced by forcing audience members to stare into each others’ eyes; incredibly awkward, but hilarious! It was fantastic to be able to concretely experience such a strong psychological effect in practice, as more often than not they are merely described by the speaker and the audience is left simply to imagine how it might be.

I would say the festival was a mixed bag of the exciting and the unorganised. But as a PhD student wanting to engage more with the public, it was a real eye-opener. The first lesson to take away from this year’s festival was that speakers should always prepare events well in advance, rehearse them and get feedback. Often unprepared presentations received a deservedly dry response from the audience (that is, if they chose not to leave, or sit there in silence). The second lesson was that you should never talk down to an audience. If you give a talk on science, your audience are invariably attending because they, too, have an interest in science (with the exception of those poor souls dragged along by partners). Removing jargon is, of course, a necessity, but there is a fine line between simplifying and condensation. If the audience failed to grasp a particularly difficult concept, they will likely ask when the floor is opened to questions. This is preferable to alienating an entire audience by treating them like children.

These were my lessons to be learnt, but the festival left me wondering what contribution I make towards public engagement. Presently, not much. But I am making some attempts to communicate my research to the wider public. My PhD research focuses on how people attempt to detect deceit, and with this in mind I keep a twitter blog on the science behind deception and lie detection (@SpottingLies). I am also in the process of designing and preparing live demonstrations that bridge psychology, anatomy and other scientific disciplines. Stay tuned for more, or follow my progress on Twitter.

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Workshop review:
The Division of Health Psychology Postgraduate Workshop
Amy Green

University of Bedfordshire, 28–29 June 2012

The Division of Health Psychology (DHP) Postgraduate Workshop brings together postgraduates studying and working in the field of health psychology, whether they are MSc (Stage 1), independent Stage 2 or PhD students. This year’s workshop took place at the University of Bedfordshire, with over 40 delegates attending.

The workshop provided a brilliant opportunity to learn more about the various training routes in health psychology and glean first-hand advice from those speakers who had completed their training. This workshop really gave a great indication of the wide range of ways to gain chartership in health psychology. I found the experience made me eager to begin my Stage 2 training in the near future.

Tea and coffee (plus biscuits!) provided by the University were readily available for the 9.00 a.m. registration and welcome on the first morning. Brian McMillan began the workshop with an interesting hour-long presentation on health psychology in the NHS, from perspective of a medical doctor. Brian argued that there was a lack of knowledge and publicity of health psychology within the NHS and the medical degree. He suggested there was a gap in the market and that health psychologists should perhaps be included in roles teaching communication skills and behaviour change techniques on medical degrees and to other health practitioners. Brian also suggested that health psychologists have expert skills that are valuable and marketable to the NHS, such as skills in cognitive behavioural therapy. This talk inspired me and made me think about how I can make the most of the unique and expert skills I possess as a trainee health psychologist.

After a quick break for refreshments there were two presentations on interventions, one by Katie Newby that focused on intervention mapping, and the other by Jude Hancock that looked at online interventions. Katie showed the steps of intervention mapping within her own research, an online intervention aimed at school children for teachers to use in their sex education lessons. Jude Hancock then gave an extremely useful talk on online interventions made using the software ‘LifeGuard’. I found the presentation by Jude particularly helpful in terms of developing the intervention from my MSc research project.

Next was lunch, and I had the opportunity to talk with peers and discuss the presentations. During lunch the first session of poster presentations took place and these included a wide range of topics within health psychology, from work that discussed the impact of disfigurement following treatment for head and neck cancer, to the psychological impact of weight management interventions on children.

Following lunch two presentations on achieving competencies, one via the university taught route and one via the independent route, were given. The speakers, Liz Jenkinson and Eric Baratt, gave invaluable insight and advice with honest, frank and comical accounts of their training at Stage 2.
The first day ended with Beverley Ayers speaking about her experience of the university taught route and her experience afterwards as a senior research associate. During these talks I thought about the best route for me to take to undertake Stage 2 training and this was a source of reflection for the rest of the workshop.

For those who wished to attend, the social event took place at a local restaurant. It provided the opportunity to enjoy some food and football! I found it also gave me the chance to get to know my fellow delegates better and discuss concerns and questions about health psychology training as well as our research ideas and plans.

The following morning again began with tea, coffee and biscuits. The first presentation of the day stood out for me as being the most enjoyable, interactive and useful; James Byron-Daniels as the Chief Supervisor for the Stage 2 training gave brilliant advice on achieving the competencies by engineering a question and answer session. He then went on to give a talk on conducting systematic reviews, part of one of the competencies of health psychology Stage 2 training.

After refreshments Matthew Hankins gave a fascinating presentation to delegates at the workshop on measurement issues in health psychology. Matthew suggested the reliability and validity of scales should be revisited and the creation of scales should be approached from a different perspective. He argued that a non-parametric Item Response Theory (IRT) methodology should be used. IRT takes into account the difficulty of each item and incorporates this into the scale that is being considered.

A buffet lunch was again provided and the break supplied the second session of poster presentations by delegates. One poster that I found particularly interesting investigated issues such as raising breast cancer awareness in older women. Next, Jonathan Catlin presented a talk on improving small group teaching. He shook up the afternoon by giving us our own small group activities and gave us ideas about ways to reflect on our individual teaching methods.

Daryl O’Connor then talked about a very important and prevalent topic, publication and dissemination. He gave very useful advice on preparing a paper for journal publication and what to do to make sure it has the best chance of being accepted. Overall, Daryl gave the advice of not giving up, as even the best can face despair when it comes to being published, but scarily the title of the presentation was ‘Publish or Perish’!

The last speaker of the conference was Ben Gardner who took us through his experience of an academic career, post-PhD, as a researcher and a lecturer. The talk also very interestingly proposed that Stage 2 training is not always needed to work in academia in the field of health psychology and Ben gave us tips and advice on creating an academic CV.

Overall, the workshop provided a brilliant opportunity to reflect and discuss issues in health psychology and training routes. I found the delegate pack supplied during the welcome session to be extremely useful. It gave details of the presentations but also contact details of all those involved, from speakers to delegates. This made it easy to speak with those who attended after the workshop and to create new networks.

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Teaching and/or research?

Professor John Radford

This ONE will run and run. A continual dilemma for both universities and academics is the allocation of resources to teaching and research, particularly as time and money are increasingly hard to come by. Underlying the dilemma are two basic questions. One is how valuable, in various ways, teaching and research are, to the individual and the institution. The other concerns the interaction of the two; specifically regarding the extent to which they help or hinder one another.

It is clear that the job of the professional academic is becoming harder (Stromquist, 2007). He or she is likely to have to undertake, in varying proportions, at least 20 different kinds of activities (Radford, in press), the most vexatious of which is often felt to be administration of various sorts (Tight, 2009). But what has drawn them into this game is almost certainly an interest in a discipline, which they wish to pursue both by seeking knowledge and by passing it, and their enthusiasm, on to others (Gemme & Gingras, 2012). Certainly if they are looking for an easy or lucrative occupation they will usually be disappointed. However, the academic profession is heavily weighted towards research rather than teaching. First of all, the main preparation, after a first degree, is the research-based PhD. Three years or so are spent exhaustively exploring an often very specialised topic, which may well not feature in the syllabuses academics are later called on to teach, and which has certainly not given the sort of broad overview of the discipline and its methods that a teacher should (in my view) ideally possess. There have been numerous criticisms of the PhD (e.g. Gibney, 2012; Nerad, 2004; Radford, 2001) which I will not explore here. But having obtained it, and an academic post, it becomes apparent that promotion depends largely on publications in research journals (Parker, 2008). This is especially the case at professorial level. Below that, the ‘post-1992’ universities are more likely to value teaching and research equally. However, they themselves are generally less prestigious than the pre-1992 institutions (ironically, many of the post-1992s are actually much older as institutions, having begun life as colleges and polytechnics in the 19th century). So for the ambitious young academic it is still largely ‘publish or perish’. Backes-Gellner and Schlinghoff (2010), in a study of American and German universities, found that publications generally increased before a possible promotion, and declined after it. However, Carpenter (2003) reviewing promotion criteria at Emory University, found that most excellent researchers were also considered excellent teachers.

Most universities themselves are weighted towards research, despite the fact that usually most of their income comes from students. Again, it is a matter of prestige. As Carpenter (2003) puts it, no university ever became world class through excellence in teaching. What count are published research and the presence of distinguished academics. Prestige in the UK is currently semi-formalised in the various groups such as the Russell group, and by the league tables of universities, which are strongly biased towards research. For example, in May 2012, the Times Higher Education published a ranking of 100 universities under 50 years old, in 30 countries. Sixty-two per cent of these weightings were based upon research standard, compared to only 10 per cent based upon teaching. (The Deputy Editor of the Times Higher Education told me that it is easier to obtain quantitative data for research than for teaching. No doubt, but...
that does not resolve the issue.) These league tables have long been criticised as both unrepresentative and statistically invalid (Berry, 1999; Stolz, Hendel & Horn, 2010), and numerous suggestions have been made for possible improvements (Kay, 2011; Tofallis, 2012; West, 2009). However, as things stand, league tables remain influential; to the chagrin of those institutions that feel they do an excellent job of teaching students, but can never hope to match the research output of those at the top of the lists.

It has been an article of faith with some (e.g. Warnock, 1989) that it is research that distinguishes university teaching from lower forms. In fact the relationship is difficult to pin down. In 1996 Hattie and Marsh put the cat among the pigeons with a meta-analysis of 58 studies, concluding that there was zero relationship between quality of teaching and quality of research. Twenty years before that, the UK had introduced polytechnics, intended to concentrate on teaching, not research, for which there was no funding and which was initially forbidden. This was despite the fact that many of the colleges that formed these institutions were already involved in research, often of an applied nature in conjunction with local industry. This policy was politically driven, and was designed to be cheaper and more controllable than the universities. Yet, like most such policies, it did not work: research went on.

A host of later studies has shown that the relationship between teaching and research is not a simple one. Jenkins, Breen and Lindsay (2003), reviewing the evidence, found (unsurprisingly) that many academics feel strongly that there is a functional link between teaching and research. Whether this works in practice depends on a range of factors, including the balance of time and interest (which varies between both individuals and disciplines), the relative involvement of students, and so on. Coate, Barnett and Williams (2001) decry the compartmentalising of teaching and research resulting from separate funding mechanisms, competition for resources, and management strategies that treat the two separately. Smith and Smith (2012) describe the way in which (Australian) academics, who still value face-to-face teaching, buy time for research by finding funds to pay for routine teaching activities such as marking. Elsen et al. (2009) advocate strengthening the link by involving students more in research. Weimer (2010) reported, in a school of engineering, that it was both rare and ineffective for academics to use their own research in teaching. She advocates, rather, inquiry-based and problem-based learning that mirrors the research process (this is perhaps more common in psychology). There was some evidence that undergraduate research correlated positively with student retention and desire for graduate study (this might not be causal; it might simply be that keener students like research and want to pursue it). Several writers, for example, Norris et al. (2003), advocate some kind of reconciliation between research and teaching, which they think may be forced by financial constraints. Prince, Felder and Brent (2007, cited by Weimer, 2010) make the same kind of suggestions as Elsen and Weimer, and add that it is necessary to accept a broader definition of scholarship, a point to which I shall return.

The first Western-style universities in the late 13th century were teaching institutions, giving students a practical basis of what we would now call transferable skills, and preparing those who wished and could afford it, for the then three professions of law, medicine or theology. The word ‘research’ in its modern sense dates from the 17th century, when science began to emerge as a distinct enterprise. However by the 19th century the (still only two) English universities aimed at producing a non-specialised elite suitable to govern. Research began to replace this as the ideal only towards the end of the century as, though not because, more universities were created. In the 20th century, there was a huge increase in higher education worldwide (the acceptance of...
women by itself doubled the demand). Many people (e.g. Trow, 1987) have pointed out that a mass system could not be research-based: there could never be sufficient funds. Many countries have adopted two- or multi-tier systems, a plan which in continental Europe goes back to Napoleon in France and von Helmholz in Germany shortly after. Kerr (1990) describes the complex American pattern. The British attempt at a binary system mentioned above was destroyed, apparently in the interests of central control, in 1992. We currently have a theoretically uniform system which everyone knows, and as the league tables manifest, is no such thing, but in which every institution is striving to attract students and attain the same standards of excellence based largely on research.

However, change might also be underway. There is some increase in recognition of teaching. The Higher Education Academy awards National Teaching Fellowships worth £10,000 which aim to support continued professional development. The British Psychological Society has initiated (2011) a Lifetime Achievement Award in Education in Psychology (no cash attached). Several factors may cause students to be more insistent on value for money in their courses. One is the current increase in fees. Another is a proliferation of institutions with powers to award degrees. And most advanced countries have private universities (as Oxford and Cambridge were well into the 20th century), which are just developing in the UK, some for profit, some not. To adapt Dr Johnson, when an institution finds its survival depends on students, it concentrates the mind wonderfully. There will probably always be a role for universities that are mainly concerned with research, even perhaps offering only higher degrees, but they cannot be the norm in a mass system, and should not be seen as an (unattainable) ideal for all.

The answer to whether research and teaching help or hinder each other is, ‘it all depends’. My own view is based both on the published literature, and on experience as Head of a large department and as Chair of the Psychology Board of the Council for National Academic Awards, over-seeing the so-called ‘public’ sector of higher education. It is, as Prince et al. (2007) say, that ‘scholarship’ (or ‘research’ as I would say) is too narrowly defined. I think that an institution offering first degrees should have a significant number of staff who are active at a high level in their discipline or profession. ‘Significant’ means sufficient to have an effect on students. ‘High level’ could mean research in a narrow sense; it could also mean professional practice, consultancy, publishing other than one’s own research, activity in professional bodies, scholarship in the sense of wider and deeper knowledge, promoting the discipline outside the university, and so on. There should be no sharp divisions between teaching, research and practice (see Walton, 2011). Consequently, all of these should be possible grounds for promotion. The important thing for students, I think, is to feel that their teachers are at least of equal standing with those in other universities. At the same time, those teachers must not be an aloof elite; students need to be equally engaged by and with their teachers in the pursuit of knowledge. Whether all this can be achieved in present circumstances is problematical. Perhaps fundamentally new thinking is needed. I have elsewhere offered a fanciful suggestion as to how higher education might be radically changed, simply to show that there is more than one possible way (Radford, 2012). In any case, the future lies, dear reader, with today’s postgraduates.

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Women in science: Why so few?

‘Science is a wonderful example of how men just have their own little world – just men, and men’s ways, and men’s concerns, and men’s thinking’ (p.54). A female student, commenting on the scientific education system.

The issue of under-representation of women in the sciences is now becoming a mainstream theme in the media, which shows how this is currently a widely recognised social issue. I came across Athena unbound: The advancement of women in science and technology while working on my PhD dissertation, and I decided to write a review about this book, as I consider it to be the best analysis available of the status of women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) domains.

Etzkowitz, Kemelgor and Uzzi aim to provide a comprehensive explanation of the issue of under-representation of women in STEM domains. The book offers a life course analysis of women in science, from childhood to adulthood. The authors provide a popular review of the literature on gender differences in science environments and on related stereotypes, but they also complement their story with some impressive field work. The book is based on knowledge developed from different studies: 50 in-depth interviews with female graduate students and faculty members from science departments; 400 in-depth interviews and focus groups with female and male graduate students and faculty members; follow-up interviews, and; interviews with young children. The research is also supported by quantitative data; indeed, the authors report statistical analyses of demographic and survey data.

The book is composed of 16 chapters that can be summarised as follows: after an introduction on the issue of the under-representation of women in sciences (Chapter 1) and a first exploration of the personal vs. professional life dilemma (Chapter 2), the authors offer a lifelong analysis of gender issues in the sciences, starting from childhood (Chapter 3), into the Higher Education years, both before and after starting science related PhDs (Chapters 4 to 6), and in the academic workplace (Chapters 7 to 14). Ultimately, there is a chapter dedicated to international comparisons (Chapter 15), and a discussion of different type of strategies that can be implemented in universities and departments in trying to increase the number of women in graduate schools, along with a critical analysis of their characteristics and effectiveness (Chapter 16).
The most appealing concept introduced in the book is the ‘kula ring’ of science. The kula ring is a pattern of social behaviour that can be observed in Melanesia. In the kula ring high-status male participants meet regularly to exchange the most valuable objects in their possession. The more an individual gives away, the higher their status and the stability of their position within the group.

The authors draw a parallel between the Melanesian men and the scientific community: in the academic social network there is substantial exchange of ideas, information, and resources. However, women have a differential access to the kula ring of science. Indeed, women scientists often face the problem of isolation, finding themselves excluded from the informal channels of communication. As they do not bring resources nor goods into the kula ring, they are unable to reach higher status within the network. The authors evidence this representation of science with historical examples (see the story of Rosalind Franklin and Barbara McClintock), with personal experiences uncovered during interviews, and also with a quantitative analysis of the academic networks that female and male scientists develop. Results from these surveys are particularly interesting, as they unveil gender differences in social capital and network relationships. The results highlight a clear difference between women and men when it comes to the quality of department relationships. Indeed, women tend to receive less social support, their professional identity is less reinforced, they experience imbalanced exchange of resources (for example, some women reported having to shoulder tasks that their male peers did not have to), and they also experienced more power imbalances. Other differences emerge when looking at the quality of the wider networks that academics develop during their careers. First, a distinction needs to be made between strong and bridging ties. Strong ties are department contacts that are characterised by high social support, good reinforcement of professional identity, balanced power and balanced exchange of resources. A network composed by only a few strong ties does not offer sufficient social and professional resources to be effective as an academic, whereas a network composed by too many strong ties requires a large investment of energy and time to be maintained, therefore taking away resources that should be employed in other professional activities. Bridging ties, on the other way, are relationships with academics based in other departments and universities. In this case, having a large network of interdepartmental ties is a benefit, as maintaining these ties does not require excessive energy, and in return it allows access to a variety of knowledge and resources that are necessary for the scientific process. The data from this study revealed that women tend to have unbalanced amount of strong ties (either too few or too many), and they also tend to have fewer bridging ties. Altogether, the differential social capitals and network relationships begin to explain why women have only limited access to the kula ring of science: their relationships within the academia do not allow them to fully participate in the exchange of resources and information that is necessary to gain status and to advance in the ring. Personally, I found something about myself in some considerations on the social networks within the scientific community, and it helped me in analysing the strong and weak elements of my ties with other academics in my field (and other fields, obviously).

The book is mainly focused on the US Higher Education system, but it offers frequent comparisons with the UK and, as mentioned previously, also with other European and international countries. Despite being US-focused, I believe that many of the analyses and concepts introduced in this book are applicable to the UK as well. To offer an example, to my genuine surprise I found out that in the UK the first female professor in biology was only appointed in 1991. In conclusion, I think that this book offers challenging food for thought, and
I would like to recommend it to any woman in the academia, and also to men, as the issue of the under-representation of women in the sciences concerns both genders.

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E-mail: ldd6@kent.ac.uk

PsypAG Bursaries

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<th>Bursary</th>
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<tr>
<td>Up to £300 for an international conference bursary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Up to £100 for a domestic conference bursary</td>
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<td>Up to £50 for a travel bursary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Up to £100 for other events (e.g. training events, workshops, etc.)</td>
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For more information about any of the financial support PsypAG offers, please visit our website: http://www.psypag.co.uk/bursaries-funding-and-awards/
Dates for your Diary

13 March 2013: British Psychological Society London Office
BPS event: Using Single-Case Research Methods in Sport and Exercise Psychology
http://www.bps.org.uk/events/using-single-case-research-methods-sport-and-exercise-psychology

15 March 2013: British Psychological Society London Office
BPS event: An introduction to mindful awareness and presence in the therapeutic encounter

25–27 March 2013: University of Surrey, Guildford
History & Philosophy of Psychology Section Annual Conference 2013
http://www.bps.org.uk/history/events/events_home.cfm

5 April 2013: British Psychological Society London Office
BPS event: Understanding Qualitative Methods and Analysis
http://www.bps.org.uk/events/understanding-qualitative-methods-and-analysis

22 April 2013: Cardiff School of Education, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cyncoed Campus, Cyncoed Road, Cardiff, Wales, CF23 6XD
HEA STEM (Psychology): Student Well-being: Integrated Approaches Workshop
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events

25–28 April 2013: Manor House Hotel, Killadeas, Co. Fermanagh
Northern Ireland British Psychology Society Conference
http://ni.bps.org.uk/

Postgraduates who Teach (PGwT) workshops:
8 May 2013: University of Manchester
29 May 2013: Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
12 June 2013: Oxford Brookes University
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events

14–15 May 2013: Novotel Cardiff Centre, Schooner Way, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff, CF10 4RT.
HEA ‘New to teaching Psychology’ event
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events
21 May 2013: British Psychological Society London Office
BPS event: Preventing Sexual Violence
http://www.bps.org.uk/events/preventing-sexual-violence

22–23 May 2013: National Science Learning Centre, University of York, Heslington, York, North Yorkshire, YO10 5DD
HEA ‘New to teaching Psychology’ event
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events

14 June 2013: British Psychological Society London Office
BPS event: Understanding quantitative analysis
http://www.bps.org.uk/events/understanding-quantitative-analysis

10–12 July 2013: Cumberland Lodge, Windsor
Psychology of Women Section Annual Conference
http://www.bps.org.uk/events/conferences/psychology-women-section-annual-conference-2013

12–13 July 2013: Angel Hotel, Cardiff
Division of Counselling Psychology Annual Conference
http://www.bps.org.uk/dcop2013

17 July 2013: British Psychological Society London Office
BPS event: Qualitative Research Methods, Quantitative Research Methods and How to Read a Journal Paper (Qualitative & Quantitative)
http://www.bps.org.uk/events/qualitative-research-methods-quantitative-research-methods-and-how-read-journal-paper-qualita

17–19 July 2013: Lancaster University
28th Annual PsyPAG Postgraduate Student Conference
http://psypag2013.lancs.ac.uk
Twitter: @PsyPAG2013
## PsyPAG Committee 2011/2012

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Currently held by</th>
<th>Due for re-election</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Core Committee Members</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Fleur-Michelle Coiffait</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:chair@psypag.co.uk">chair@psypag.co.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:k.r.rix@greenwich.ac.uk">k.r.rix@greenwich.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:vicechair@psypag.co.uk">vicechair@psypag.co.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laura Scurlock-Evans</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Division of Clinical Psychology</td>
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<td>Scottish Division of Educational Psychology</td>
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<td>Emma Davies</td>
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<td>Ross Bartels</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Division of Occupational Psychology</td>
<td>Laura Neale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology</td>
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<td><strong>Section Representatives</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Greg.elder@northumbria.ac.uk">Greg.elder@northumbria.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section</td>
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*PsyPAG Committee 2010–2013*
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<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Branch Representatives</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Board Representatives</strong></td>
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<td>Membership and Professional Training Board</td>
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<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Committees</strong></td>
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<td>Conference Standing Committee</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
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<td>National Postgraduate Committee</td>
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About PsyPAG

PsyPAG is a national organisation for all psychology postgraduates based at UK Institutions. Funded by the Research Board of the British Psychological Society, PsyPAG is run on a voluntary basis by postgraduates for postgraduates. Its aims are to provide support for postgraduate students in the UK, to act as a vehicle for communication between postgraduates, and represent postgraduates within the British Psychological Society. It also fulfills the vital role of bringing together postgraduates from around the country.

- PsyPAG has no official membership scheme; anyone involved in postgraduate study in psychology at a UK Institution is automatically a member.
- PsyPAG runs an annual workshop and conference and also produces a quarterly publication, which is delivered free of charge to all postgraduate psychology departments in the UK.
- PsyPAG is run by an elected committee, which any postgraduate student can be voted on to. Elections are held at the PsyPAG Annual Conference each year.
- The committee includes representatives for each Sub-Division within the British Psychological Society, their role being to represent postgraduate interests and problems within that Division or the British Psychological Society generally. We also liaise with the Student Group of the British Psychological Society to raise awareness of postgraduate issues in the undergraduate community.
- Committee members also include Practitioners-in-Training who are represented by PsyPAG.

Mailing list

PsyPAG maintains a JISCmail list open to ALL psychology postgraduate students. To join, visit www.psypag.co.uk and scroll down on the main page to find the link, or go to http://tinyurl.comPsyPAGjiscmail. This list is a fantastic resource for support and advice regarding your research, statistical advice or postgraduate issues.

Social networking

You can also follow PsyPAG on Twitter (http://twitter.com/PsyPAG and add us on Facebook: http://tinyurl.comPsyPAGfacebook. Again, this information is also provided at www.psypag.co.uk.
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