

# RESEARCH CENTRE FOR HEALTH



## Welcome

**Welcome to your ReaCH Newsletter December 2024! This issue is packed once again with success stories from colleagues at all stages in their careers and topics spanning our main research themes, from Long Term Health Conditions to Public Health.**

Prestigious funding has been awarded to areas of research excellence, notably women's health (Professor Suzanne Hagen and Professor Carol Bugge and team), stroke rehabilitation (Professor Lorna Paul and team), and antimicrobial resistance Professor Gordon Ramage and Dr Ryan Kean).

Groundbreaking papers have been published on addiction treatment (Roselyn Fraser and Professor Andrew McAuley), and blood cancer (Dr Mark Williams and team).

Our colleagues have been engaging with policy makers in the areas of cardiac arrest (Dr Vicky Joshi), substance use (Professor Carol Emslie and team), and mental health (Professor Elizabeth Hughes). Prestigious awards have been made; the Global Peripheral Artery Disease Association Impact Award 'Walking Researcher of the Year' title went to Dr Chris Seenan, while the Scottish Converge Challenge Competition was awarded to Professor Sebastian Chastin and his team of Health CASCADE PhD researchers.

ReaCH colleagues have also contributed to community engagement events, including the Sporting Senior Games (hosted by Professor Dawn Skelton) and the World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week (hosted by Professor Gordon Ramage). Others were instrumental in organising conferences (e.g. the joint Scottish Stroke Allied Health Professions and Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum, co-chaired by Professor Lisa Kidd).



Meanwhile, the GCU Crucible Early Career Researcher development programme, led by Professor Carol Emslie across the three GCU Glasgow Schools, and the Yunus Centre for Social Business & Health, is nearing its conclusion, involving 13 of our rising stars.

It is wonderful to see a number of our committed PhD researchers, who had to undertake part of their programme of work during the pandemic, successfully passing their vivas: applause to Benedictine Kor, Emily Whyte and Elena Ierardi.

Special thanks go to Karen McDairmant and MarySarah Erickson for their amazing, ongoing contribution to ReaCH – notably for producing our newsletters; and to Janice Burns for capturing the good news you find within it. Please keep us informed via [reach@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:reach@gcu.ac.uk).

Congratulations to everyone for an amazingly productive 2024. We wish you and yours a joyful festive time, and a healthy, peaceful and inspiring 2025.

***Professor Frederike van Wijck and Professor Carol Emslie, Co-Directors of ReaCH***

## Women's health researchers awarded funding to boost treatment for pelvic organ prolapse

Health researchers at Glasgow Caledonian University are to investigate the effectiveness of pelvic floor exercises and vaginal pessaries together in treating women with pelvic organ prolapse.



Professors Suzanne Hagen, Carol Bugge and Helen Mason, and Dr Melanie Dembinsky were awarded £1.7 million funding from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to carry out the research project. The NIHR-funded project is entitled 'Health Technology Assessment (HTA) - Randomised controlled trial of the clinical and cost effectiveness of supervised pelvic floor muscle training plus vaginal pessary compared to supervised pelvic floor muscle training alone for management of pelvic organ prolapse'. The aim of this research is to find out if wearing a vaginal pessary while exercising pelvic floor muscles is better at improving symptoms than exercising pelvic floor muscles without a pessary, for women with prolapse. The findings of the study will be shared with those who took part in the research, with groups who support women with prolapse, and with healthcare staff and people who plan health services.

Professors Hagen and Bugge (pictured) have also been sharing their expertise and research with health professionals around the world at the International Continence Society (ICS) Conference in Madrid. Professor Hagen gave a 'State of the Art Lecture on Primary Prevention and Conservative Treatment of Organ Prolapse', while Professor Bugge gave two talks on recent research findings which have helped to significantly improve the lives of women with prolapse.

[Read more](#)

## GCU recognised for world-leading nursing and rehabilitation expertise by the World Health Organization

Glasgow Caledonian University's World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Nursing and Public Health Education and Research has been re-designated in recognition of its breadth of world-leading expertise in rehabilitation and nursing.

The collaborating centre will now be known as the WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing and Multidisciplinary Rehabilitation and the validation period runs from 2024-2028. The Department of Nursing and Community Health has been a WHO collaborating centre since 1993, and the re-designation represents the latest stage in the relationship between the WHO and Glasgow Caledonian.



The University is the only nursing collaborating centre in the UK and Centre Director, Dr Gordon Hill, said the University was "very proud to receive this prestigious accolade in recognition of our nursing and rehabilitation expertise".

[Read more](#)



## Policymakers urged to consider how alcohol policies impact men and women differently

**Policymakers worldwide must consider how their alcohol policies impact men and women differently to ensure they are effective, according to Glasgow Caledonian University expert Professor Carol Emslie.**

Professor Emslie, an internationally-renowned alcohol researcher led a team commissioned by the World Health Organization (WHO) to develop a policy report on what is known about gender-responsive approaches to reduce alcohol harm.

Men and women consume alcohol differently and are affected by its harm differently, but alcohol control policies and practice remain largely gender blind. The alcohol industry is increasingly using gendered approaches to appeal to consumers. To keep pace with these changing tactics, WHO said it was critical to take stock of what is known about gender-responsive approaches to tackle the acceptability, availability and affordability of alcohol.



Professor Carol Emslie led a team including Dr Elena Dimova and Annamae Burrows from the University's Substance Use Research Group within the Research Centre for Health. They also worked closely with Professor Antonia Lyons and Dr Kate Kersey from the Universities of Auckland and Victoria in New Zealand, and Dr Juan Tello who leads the Less Alcohol unit at WHO Headquarters. The team worked with Movendi International to find global case studies to illustrate how countries such as New Zealand, Tanzania, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Scotland have tackled this issue. The Scottish case study features the charity Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs (SFAD), which supports anyone affected by someone else's alcohol or drug use in Scotland.

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## Addiction treatment decreases suicide risk among people with opioid dependence

**Treating opioid use disorder significantly lowers the very high rate (eight times the general population) of suicide among people with opioid dependence, according to a study led by Glasgow Caledonian University.**

The study of more than 45,000 patients in Scotland receiving methadone or buprenorphine for opioid use disorder reported this important result in the scientific journal *Addiction*. Lead author Rosalyn Fraser, comments: "People with opioid dependence in Scotland are at much higher risk of suicide than the general population. But there is strong evidence that suicide rates are lower among people receiving methadone or buprenorphine. OAT helps people access other support services, stabilises drug use, and provides opportunities to build therapeutic relationships and reduce isolation. It's very important to get people with opioid dependence into drug treatment to reduce their suicide risk." Senior author and Professor in Public Health Andrew McAuley, added: "In Scotland, trends in suicide in people who are opioid dependent declined during a period where overdose deaths more than doubled. Importantly, retention in opioid agonist treatment is a critical intervention both for suicide and opioid overdose prevention strategies."

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## Rehabilitation experts receive funding for project aimed at boosting recovery for stroke survivors

**Glasgow Caledonian University has been awarded £267,168 from the Stroke Association to investigate how remote rehabilitation could reduce the chances of permanent disability in stroke survivors.**

Professor of Allied Health Science Lorna Paul, in the Department of Physiotherapy and Paramedicine in the School of Health and Life Sciences (SHLS), is leading the three-year study, which aims to recruit up to 60 people within two months of having their first stroke.

The research project, entitled 'PeRsonALised Community based Telerehabilitation post StrokE to increase rehabilitation time and improve motor recovery: a feasibility study (PRACTISE)', involves evaluating a 16-week community rehabilitation intervention to improve the amount of therapy a stroke survivor receives.

Professor Paul is supported by a top team from Glasgow Caledonian, including Professor in Neurological Rehabilitation Sciences Frederike van Wijck; Professors of Nursing Lisa Kidd and Carol Bugge; Stroke Association Clinical Lecturer Dr Lesley Scobbie; Physiotherapy Lecturer Dr Elaine Coulter; Professor of Health Economics Helen Mason; and Honorary Professor Mark Barber, from University partner health board, NHS Lanarkshire. Professor Paul also co-leads the SHLS Research Centre for Health (ReaCH) Stroke and Neurological Rehabilitation Research Group (SYNERGY) with Professor van Wijck.



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## Researchers urge UK governments to tackle serious mental health illness and substance use

**Researchers are urging UK governments to introduce expert clinicians across all health services to co-ordinate better treatment for people with serious mental health illness and substance use problems. On World Mental Health Day (Oct 10), a study led by Professor of Substance Use Research Elizabeth Hughes, from Glasgow Caledonian University, was published by the funders, the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR).**

The study revealed services across the UK remain ill-equipped to meet the needs of people with co-existing serious mental health and substance use conditions. It said change requires joined-up government policy and local integration of health and social care services, with clinical leads supporting the workforce to come together. However, the study also identified the contexts and components of good practice at a systems and practitioner level to improve the outcomes for people who use the services, and their carers, and job satisfaction for staff who work in mental health and substance use services. The research also involved experts from a range of mental health, alcohol and drug organisations, and the Universities of Leeds, King's College London and Liverpool John Moores and Northumbria, NHS Trusts and the Institute of Population Health.

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## Reducing Hepatitis C re-infection among people who inject drugs

**Glasgow Caledonian University researchers Dr David Whiteley and Professor Sharon Hutchinson will play key roles in a new project aimed at improving surveillance, diagnosis and treatment of Hepatitis C reinfection for people who use drugs.**



They are both co-investigators in the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)-funded research, led by Dr Hannah Family at the University of Bristol, in collaboration with the Hepatitis C Trust, Population Health Scotland and the UK Health Security Agency.

Long-term Hepatitis C infection can cause liver damage, cancer and early death if left untreated. There are treatments that can cure Hepatitis C infection quickly. The World Health Organisation (WHO) wants to combat Hepatitis C by 2030. In the UK, people who inject drugs are the main group who experience Hepatitis C infection and re-infection. Guidance recommends that people who have been treated for Hepatitis C are tested once a year to check for re-infection. However, previous research by this team found this follow-up rarely happens. To measure re-infections accurately, more people who have been infected need to go for follow-up tests. There also needs to be a better understanding of the support available to help people avoid getting re-infected. This project, known as 'Proactive (Hepatitis C reinfection: Optimising surveillance for detection and prevention)', aims to address these challenges.

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## Research begins to explore prevention of antimicrobial-resistant fungus in hospitals

**Scientists in the School of Health and Life Sciences have been awarded almost £200,000 to lead a project aimed at preventing and controlling an emerging fungus in Scotland.**



*Candida auris* (*C. auris*) has already spread across healthcare facilities in the US and it is endemic in parts of Spain. The World Health Organization (WHO) has categorised it as a critical priority pathogen that is considered an urgent antimicrobial resistance (AMR) threat. *C. auris* is a type of yeast that can cause severe illness and spreads easily among hospital patients. It can cause a range of infections from superficial skin infections to more severe bloodstream infections.

Professor of Infection Prevention Gordon Ramage, from the Department of Nursing and Community Health, and Dr Ryan Kean, Lecturer in Clinical Microbiology, from the Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, are leading the research project. They are working with Professor Gordie MacKay from the University of the West of Scotland, in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, to carry out patient screening, test and assess the most effective ways to manage *C. auris* in a hospital environment, and support existing infection control guidelines. The team have been awarded £198,558 by NHSScotland Assure Service, which is managed by Edinburgh Napier University, to undertake the 18-month epidemiological study.



## Health researcher plays key role in launch of new quality standards for cardiac arrest survivors

**Glasgow Caledonian University physiotherapy lecturer and researcher Dr Vicky Joshi joined the Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK) and Public Health Minister Jenni Minto at the Scottish Parliament to launch a new quality standard for cardiac arrest survivors.**



RCUK has teamed up with Ms Minto to help cardiac arrest survivors and their families make the best possible recovery.

RCUK hosted a Scottish Parliamentary event recently to present a new 'My Right to Cardiac Arrest Recovery – Survivors Quality Standard', and to ask MSPs to make it part of Scotland's Heart and Disease Action Plan.

A new collaboration between health, charity, and research organisations will support the delivery of the RCUK quality standard in Scotland. The Save A Life for Scotland - Recovery initiative will work alongside the successful Save A Life For Scotland campaign partnership, which has seen a 50% increase in the number of cardiac arrest survivors since 2015. Dr Joshi, who is a member of RCUK Cardiac Arrest Quality Standard group and a lecturer in the School of Health and Life Sciences (SHLS) gave a speech about her cardiac arrest recovery research and spoke to Ms Minto about the Save A Life For Scotland – Recovery initiative. She is leading an evaluation of the new Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland Bystander Support Service, funded by the Scottish Government, in collaboration with Save A Life For Scotland. The results will be used to improve the existing support service and inform bystander support services internationally. Dr Joshi is also co-ordinating a new collaboration called BASIC (Bystander Aftercare and Support International Collaboration) which brings together researchers, clinicians and third sector organisations to share information on how to set up and run bystander aftercare services.

[Read more](#)

## New report shows how veterans' lives are being transformed through employment, training and qualifications

**Approximately 15,000 veterans leave the Armed Forces each year Although most veterans successfully transition from military to civilian life, with over 80% of Service leavers finding employment, some require additional support.**



Following the conclusion of a three-year research project, led by Glasgow Caledonian University and funded by Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT), an evaluation report has been published on the effectiveness of Scotland's Bravest Manufacturing Company's (SBMC) training programme in helping veterans transition to employment in civilian life.

"An evaluation of impact within Scotland's Bravest Manufacturing Company report" was carried out by Shirley Morrison-Glancy and Dr Philippa Dall in Glasgow Caledonian's School of Health and Life Sciences, and Professor Artur Steiner and Dr Dani Hutcheon in the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health.

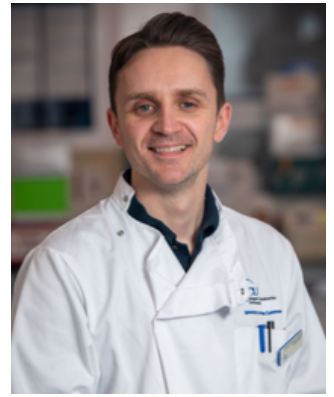
[Read more](#)



## Blood cancer researchers joined world leaders in new Multiple Myeloma study

**Blood cancer researchers in Glasgow Caledonian's School of Health and Life Sciences have made a significant contribution to a major new Multiple Myeloma (MM) focused study.**

Research, led by world-renowned Multiple Myeloma and Drug Delivery expert Professor Kareem Azab, of the UT Southwestern Medical Center in Texas, USA, has discovered a new pathway to block drug-resistance in MM patients that could improve survival rates.



Dr. Mark Williams and colleagues, who specialise in blood cancer research in the Research Centre for Health (ReaCH) and the Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, were delighted to be involved in such a high-profile research paper. Dr Mark Williams, who leads the blood cancer research group at the University, worked with 2nd year PhD student Stefan Corradini and former PhD student Dr Katerina Miari, on the paper. They were also delighted to work with another big name in global cancer research, Professor Shaomeng Wang, Director of the Michigan Center for Therapeutic Innovation at the University of Michigan, on the study.

The paper, entitled 'IL-10R inhibition reprograms tumor-associated macrophages and reverses drug resistance in multiple myeloma', has been published in the Haemato-Oncology journal Leukemia, which is part of the Nature Publishing Group.

[Read more](#)



## Grandmother tells how floor-rise training changed her life

**An 81-year-old grandmother told how new floor-rise training gave her the strength and confidence to pull herself up off the ground when she fell in her back garden.**

Widow Mary Findlay, from Paisley, attended a five-week falls prevention class, run by Glasgow Caledonian University researcher Shane Seeley and the Roar-Connections for Life charity, where she learned techniques on how to get up and down off the floor. A few months after the training, Mary put her new-found skills into practice when she fell in her garden. She was alone without any means of contact. She fell backwards into the mud from a box she uses while weeding, but managed to roll herself over to a sturdy plant pot and pull herself up off the ground to safety, using the techniques she learned from Shane. Mary was quite immobile and had suffered several bad falls before she attended the falls-prevention classes at Roar-Connections for Life in Paisley. It has changed her life and given her much more confidence. She praised Shane, who is studying a Doctorate in Physiotherapy, and the charity for their support, and is urging other older people to stay fit and practice the falls-prevention training.

Shane, who is a physiotherapy researcher in the School of Health and Life Sciences' Research Centre for Health (ReaCH) Ageing Well group, has been exploring the effectiveness of the floor-rise exercises for older people, in partnership with Roar, with the hope that it will be rolled out across Scotland.

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## Psychology lecturer and researcher examines rape myths on juror verdicts

**Glasgow Caledonian University Lecturer in Applied Psychology Dr Lee John Curley has been examining rape myths, which are false beliefs regarding rape and consent, on juror verdicts.**



Dr Curley, from the School of Health and Life Sciences' Department of Psychology, worked with researchers in The Open University and the University of Glasgow to test the effects of rape myths and different verdict systems (Guilty and Not Guilty vs. Guilty, Not Guilty and Not Proven vs. Proven and Not Proven) on juror decision-making.

During the study, the participants answered questions regarding their acceptance of rape myths using the Acceptance of Modern Myth and Sexual Aggression (AMMSA) scale. They then watched a staged rape trial filmed in a real courtroom and reached a verdict (this differed depending on the verdict system they were placed in). Participants were also given the opportunity to provide a rationale for their decision, this was also analysed. The Scottish verdict system includes three verdicts: 'guilty', 'not guilty' and 'not proven'. Politicians propose that the three-verdict system is partially to blame for the low conviction rate of rape, whereas, research suggests that rape myths may be having a larger impact, said Dr Curley. That is why the researchers decided to test the effects of varying verdict systems (mentioned above) and rape myths on juror verdicts. The research, entitled 'Rape Myths and Verdict Systems: What Is Influencing Conviction Rates in Rape Trials in Scotland', has been published in the MDPI Behavioural Sciences journal.

[Read more](#)

## Scottish minister hails Glasgow Caledonian University's pioneering ePrEP Clinic



**At a Scottish Parliament event commemorating World AIDS Day, the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health, Jenni Minto, hailed Glasgow Caledonian University's pioneering 'ePrEP Clinic', a digital service for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).**

The ePrEP Clinic feasibility study launched in November and is now welcoming its first patients. Dr Ross Kincaid, part of the research team that developed the ePrEP Clinic, said: "We are delighted that the ePrEP feasibility study was highlighted at the World AIDS Day event at the Parliament and that it was met with such interest and enthusiasm. The study is part of the Scottish Government-funded ePrEP research programme, based at Glasgow Caledonian University, and is an important step towards providing people with more choice and convenience in how they get PrEP, facilitating appropriate person-centred, self-managed care and more effective use of resources." A key part of HIV transmission elimination strategies is the upscaling of oral HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) provision. PrEP is a pill that people take to prevent HIV acquisition. In Scotland, sexual health services are the primary providers of PrEP-related care. The University's ePrEP Clinic, led by Professor Claudia Estcourt, will compliment in-clinic care, offering established PrEP users the choice to complete some of their routine PrEP check-ups without having to attend a sexual health clinic, making long-term PrEP care more convenient for users and reducing the pressure on sexual health clinics.





## Innovative SHLS project wins Converge Challenge

A health start-up project developed in the School of Health and Life Sciences (SHLS) has won an award at the Converge Challenge Competition, Scotland's springboard for university-born innovators.



Glasgow Caledonian University's Health CASCADE team, which is a Marie Skłodowska Curie Innovative Training Networks project funded by the European Union and led by Professor Sebastien Chastin, won the Venture Labs category with the MosalQ project. The team was among 100 semi-finalists, with the most advanced projects from 18 Scottish universities invited to attend in-depth business training and to pitch their ideas live to an audience of investors, entrepreneurs and business leaders in Edinburgh.

The aim of Health CASCADE is to foster the next generation of highly-trained research leaders to develop evidence-based guiding principles, novel tools and new technologies to make co-creation an effective tool to address complex public health problems through a European Joint Doctoral Programme. The Health CASCADE's MosalQ project is a pioneering cascade training and consultancy agency, specialising in harnessing collective-intelligence for co-creation solutions to complex challenges. It facilitates training and projects for communities, companies, and social innovators, empowering them to collaboratively address pressing issues.

Professor Chastin, who co-leads the SHLS Research Centre for Health (ReaCH) Data Science for the Common Good Research Group, and PhD researchers Danielle Agnello and Quentin Loisel were involved in the intense Converge training and pitching period.

## Rehabilitation expert is crowned 'Walking Researcher of the Year'

Dr Chris Seenan, a renowned figure in rehabilitation and therapeutic research at Glasgow Caledonian University, has been named 'Walking Researcher of the Year'.



The Senior Lecturer in the Department of Physiotherapy and Paramedicine in the School of Health and Life Sciences and researcher in the Research Centre for Health (ReaCH) was awarded the prestigious title at the Global Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) Association Impact Awards. The Global PAD Association is a patient-led, non-profit charity foundation that provides information and a support network for people living with PAD worldwide. The Association's CEO Kym McNicholas and Chairman Dean Irwin said: "The Global PAD Association acknowledges Dr Seenan for his dedication to advancing research on walking as a primary treatment for Peripheral Artery Disease. This Award also recognises Dr Seenan for adopting a patient-centric approach in his research, striving to enhance the quality of life for patients through innovative walking therapies." Dr Seenan was delighted that his research has been recognised and was humbled to receive the Global PAD Association 'Walking Researcher of the Year' Award. Watch an interview with Dr Seenan here - <https://www.youtube.com/live/lw8PsHD4RBs>



## Glasgow Caledonian University professor named in the top one per cent of the most influential researchers

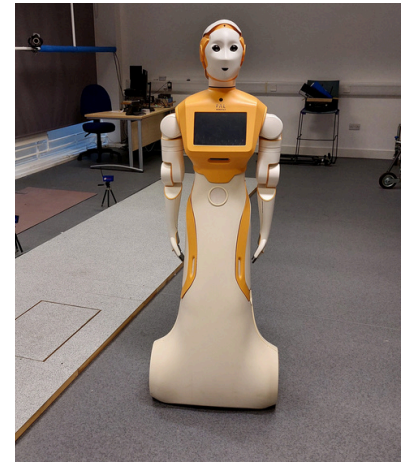


**For the fifth year running, Glasgow Caledonian University's Sebastien Chastin, Professor of Health Behaviour Dynamics, has been named in the top one per cent of the world's most influential researchers by Clarivate, a global leader in providing trusted insights and analytics.**

Since 2001, Clarivate has annually compiled a list of scientists who have the most cited publications within their field. To qualify as a 'highly cited researcher', scientists must have a high impact on their colleagues. Only one in 1,000 scientists succeed in achieving this status. Professor Chastin received the much sought-after award from Clarivate in the field of social and health sciences after another successful year of life-changing health research. For five years now, he has formed part of the 'who's who' of influential researchers for his significant contribution to science through the publication of highly cited papers.

## Exploring robotic rehabilitation

Dr David Hamilton (Musculoskeletal Health research group) and Professor Lorna Paul (Stroke and Neurological Rehabilitation research group) welcomed a team from the National Robotarium at Herriot Watt University to the GCU human performance lab over the summer in an early collaboration combining our rehabilitation expertise with their human-interaction robotics program. A number of our rehabilitation expert staff from SHLS engaged with the robot in a simulated robot-led rehabilitation session to feedback as to the potential use of this technology in practice to deliver routine exercise rehabilitation and discuss the substantial development needs around large language models, exercise/treatment banks and as to decision rules for progressive interventions.



## PhD viva success

**Congratulations to the following students on successfully defending their PhD theses:**

- Elena Ierardi, Upper limb motor impairment and activity limitation after stroke: standardising severity levels for research in rehabilitation.
- Benedictine Yen Chen Khor, Elastography and ultrasound of the plantar soft tissues and Achilles tendon in diabetes.
- Emily Whyte, Exploring the Influence of Physical Activity on the Mental Health and Well-being of Care-Experienced Children and Young People: A Voice-Led and Participatory Approach.



## Scottish Parliament hosts Crucible researchers

**Glasgow Caledonian University's future leaders in the Crucible career development programme met with politicians and stakeholders during a visit to the Scottish Parliament.**



Thirteen early career researchers from across the University shared their research interests and expertise with Graeme Dey, Minister for Higher and Further Education and Minister for Veterans; and Jenni Minto, Minister for Public Health and Women's Health. They were given a grand tour of the Parliament building and the opportunity to observe First Minister's Questions. This was followed by a meeting with representatives from the Clerk's Office and the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, where they received invaluable information on how to work effectively with policymakers and their teams.

Crucible Lead and Co-Director of ReaCH Professor Carol Emslie said: "Our Crucible early career researchers were fantastic at the Scottish Parliament. Their short pitches about their research were compelling and enabled them to provide ministers with useful insights into our world-leading applied research. I'm delighted that the ministers' teams have already contacted Crucible participants for more information on their research areas and ways to work together. We are extremely grateful to Bob Doris and his team for organising the visit to the Parliament, and for the generosity of ministers Graeme Dey and Jenni Minto for the time they spent to support our Crucible research leaders of the future."

This year's Crucible participants are Glasgow Caledonian University's Vicky Joshi, Elaine Duncan, Liam Butler, Anika Hoque, Kirsten Trayner, Martha Canfield, Elaine Coulter and Lucyna Gozdziewska from the School of Health and Life Sciences; Katy Proctor and Rosalind Parr, from the School of Business and Society; Sennan Mattar and Andrew Wilson, from the School of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment; and Nicola Irvine, from the Yunus Centre.

Dr Katy Proctor, a senior lecturer at Glasgow Caledonian University, said: "I did not anticipate how much I would get from taking part in the Crucible programme. I now feel like I can kickstart my professional aspirations with the focus and confidence that I need."

Dr Elaine Duncan, also a senior lecturer at Glasgow Caledonian University, said: "I was blown away by the whole experience and learned so much. I want to express my thanks to Carol and the whole team for organising the training and look forward to working with the Chief Scientist Office for the Scottish government as part of the Crucible programme."

The three-day Crucible Research Leaders of the Future programme is open to post-doctoral early career researchers across the University. On days one and two, the programme participants learned to effectively communicate their research and were able to put their knowledge into action by making connections and exploring future opportunities to work with policymakers.



**Crucible is our GCU leadership programme for ECRs, led by ReaCH. It features input from leading researchers across GCU as well as Communications and Impact experts and culminates in a meeting with Ministers and policymakers at the Scottish Parliament. Here is an introduction to the remaining 7 of our 13 rising stars from the 2024 cohort.**

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## Nicola Irvine

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I am an early career research fellow in Health Economics. I gained my master's in Economic Evaluation for Healthcare Technology Assessment from the University of York in 2019 and completed my PhD in Management Science in 2023 as a JARA scholar with partial funding from the Scottish Government. I am also an established consultant physician specialising in acute and internal medicine, with 25 years of experience delivering clinical care in the UK.

My PhD explored the effectiveness of remote senior decision-making in urgent care resource allocation. This was a mixed methods study that used ethnography to inform a hybrid computer simulation model (agent-based and discrete event simulation). The model was used to evaluate national policy on early decision-making.

I continue with my mixed methods research and the use of dynamic simulation modelling in the Yunus Centre with current research interest in healthcare service design and delivery, rural health, chronic health care, and the use of simulation modelling in evaluation.

Prior to working in the Yunus Centre, I contributed to NHS Scotland's Unscheduled Care Directorate as a working group participant, researcher, and co-author of National guidelines. I was part of an award-winning collaboration that developed real-time critical care resource need predictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, and have provided both unpaid and paid advisory services for public service bodies in the UK.

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## Vicky Joshi

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Vicky Joshi is a Lecturer in physiotherapy in the Department of Physiotherapy and Paramedicine. She qualified as a Physiotherapist in 2001 from the University of Southampton. Specialising in neurorehabilitation she worked in the NHS until 2016 when she moved to Denmark and worked at the University of Southern Denmark and Odense University Hospital. While there she undertook research in cardiac rehabilitation and complex intervention development and completed a PhD in rehabilitation after cardiac arrest.

Vicky's research continues to focus on post-cardiac arrest interventions for survivors and their families, working closely with Save A Life for Scotland to develop a pathway for cardiac aftercare. She is also currently evaluating a new bystander support service delivered by Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland aimed at reducing the mental burden suffered by those involved in delivering cardiopulmonary resuscitation. She has published widely in international journals and been invited to speak at national and international conferences on cardiac arrest aftercare. She is a member of the Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK) Cardiac research sub-committee and is an author on the upcoming RCUK Quality Standards for cardiac arrest recovery.

Vicky is Year 2 lead for the MSc Pre-reg Physiotherapy course, module lead for the MSc Pre-reg Neurorehabilitation module and provides supervision to students undertaking their pre- and post- registration MSc dissertations as well as Director of Studies for one PhD student.



## Sennan Mattar

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Dr Mattar is lecturer with the Mary Robinson Centre for Climate Justice and teaches on the MSc Climate Justice and MSc Environmental Management programmes. He began a PhD at the Centre in 2015 on climate-induced migration to slums in Zambia and submitted in 2020. His background is environmental science with subsequent training in social science. Dr Mattar's remit within the Centre is research on just transitions, namely decarbonisation of energy & transport, Arctic studies, and climate displacement & migration. In addition, Dr Mattar supervises five PhD projects on community-led just transition, community energy, aviation regulation, climate-induced migration, and climate action using AI. Dr Mattar is committed to research that informs equitable climate policy and implementation of climate action that achieves meaningful impact at the local level. As such, he regularly organises dissemination, networking, and consortium building events.





## Rosalind Parr

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I am a historian of twentieth century South Asia with a particular focus on gender and women. I graduated from the University of Edinburgh with PhD in History in 2018 and taught at the University of St Andrews before joining GCU in 2023. I am particularly interested in transnational women's movements and my work addresses several themes linked to international relations, public health, human rights and gender. My first book (2021) examined the international activities of anticolonial women during the struggle for Indian independence. Currently, my research is focussed on South Asian women's movement in the post-1947 period.

This is my second career. Prior to academia I worked as a producer/director in the broadcasting and the creative industries. I live in Edinburgh with my partner, two teenagers and a Labrador.



## Katy Proctor

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Dr. Katy Proctor is a Senior Lecturer in Gender, Violence, and Criminology (Zemiology) in the Department of Social Sciences at Glasgow Caledonian University and is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Her research interests include gender-based violence (in particular domestic abuse and stalking), zemiology, equalities and the criminal justice system. Having spent over ten years working within the third sector as a support worker for women and children experiencing gender-based violence in both voluntary and paid roles, her research is heavily influenced by victim-centred support principles. Her personal and professional priority is to disseminate her research findings to those who can utilise them for the benefit of victim/survivors and consequently, she has been proactive in designing and delivering her own research informed training to over 400 professionals in Scotland on 'Understanding the Dynamics of Stalking'. This includes how to support those who are victimised. She is currently researching domestic abuse and stalking in remote rural Scotland.





## Kirsten Trayner

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Kirsten Trayner is an Early Career Researcher, and currently holds a Research Fellow position at GCU in the Blood-borne Virus (BBV) research team and is a member of the Substance Use research team. Her principal research interests are the epidemiology of drug-related harms (HIV, Hepatitis C (HCV) and overdose) and harm reduction interventions that can be implemented to improve the health and wellbeing of people who use drugs. Since 2018, she has also held an Honorary Epidemiologist position at Public Health Scotland, where she contributes and leads on research and surveillance activities relating to the transmission of BBVs among people who inject drugs.

Kirsten completed her PhD at GCU from 2018 – 2021, which was focused on understanding the epidemiology of, and response to high levels of drug-related harm among people who inject drugs in Scotland. A large proportion of her PhD was dedicated to the largest outbreak of HIV among people who inject drugs in over 30 years in the U.K., concentrated in Glasgow. Her research has fed into local and national public health policy and practice, including informing public health responses to Glasgow's HIV outbreak, HIV and HCV elimination, proposals to establish safer drug consumption facilities (SDCF) in the UK, and national recovery plans from the COVID-19 pandemic. At present, she is working on the evaluation of the first SDCF in the UK, which is due to open in Glasgow in October 2024.



## Andrew Wilson

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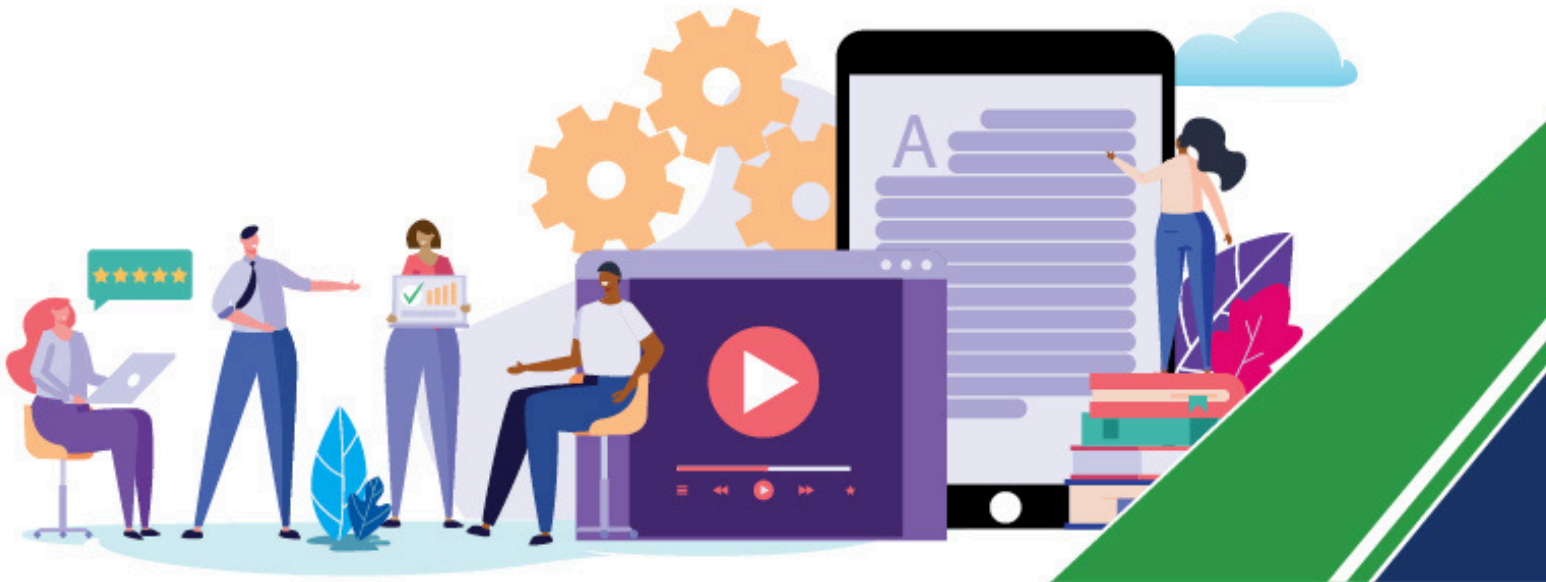
Research Online: <https://researchonline.gcu.ac.uk/en/persons/andrew-wilson>

Dr Andrew Ross Wilson is a Lecturer in Environmental Management at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU). He holds a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Management from GCU and a PhD in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering from the University of Strathclyde.

Andrew specialises in space sustainability, with a particular focus on life cycle assessment, carbon accounting and energy systems of engineering projects. However, Andrew's technical background is in environmental management, and his work is extremely interdisciplinary. In this regard, Andrew's services are often consulted by external parties with regard to the assessment, mitigation and communication of sustainability issues. This can often vary from being very specific and technical-facing, to being broad and societal-facing, and the range of risks, impacts and decision-making processes in between. Ultimately, his work aims to inform how society can transition towards a future that is truly sustainable, as envisaged through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Due to his contribution to science and technological development, Andrew was awarded the 2018 Young Scot Environment Award, designated one of Junior Chamber International's Ten Outstanding Young Persons of Scotland in 2019, won the ESA-EISC Space for Sustainability Award 2021, and was named GCU Alumni of the Year 2022.





## Conferences and events

A round-up of all the latest and forthcoming event news from the Research Centre for Health.

### Erskine veterans Charity and GCU celebrate the Sporting Senior Games 2024

**Professor Dawn Skelton hosted the Sporting Senior Games Awards 2024, bringing together Erskine Veterans Charity and GCU, to recognise the outstanding sporting achievements of care home residents from across Scotland.**



The awards ceremony was held at the Glynhill Hotel in Renfrew and saw over 100 competitors gather to discover who would take home the coveted medals and the prestigious John Bowman Trophy. The Sporting Senior Games was held at Glasgow Caledonian's ARC sport and exercise facility on August 24 with help from staff and students. Watch all the action here - [Summary](#)

The competition featured 23 teams from locations including Glasgow, East Ayrshire, West Lothian, Ayr, Coatbridge, Kirkintilloch, and Bishopton, competing in sports such as basketball, ten-pin bowling, curling, boccia bowls, and javelin. Teams, made up of residents from care homes, celebrated their participation in the games at the Glynhill as competitors of all ages and abilities came together to celebrate the spirit of friendly rivalry and camaraderie of the Games.

Special guests Paralympic gold medallist para bowler Pauline Wilson and Paralympic curler Aileen Neilson were on hand to present the medals. However, the highlight of the afternoon was the announcement of the winner of the John Bowman Trophy, named in honour of a former Erskine resident. Presented by Ian Bowman, son of the late John Bowman, to the winning team from the Erskine Reid Macewen activity Centre (ERMAC) the award recognises the best-performing team in the games. The presentation was a poignant moment, underscoring the deep sense of community and tradition that permeates the event.

[Read more](#)





## MSP hails stroke conference the highlight of her year ahead of World Stroke Day

**'Feel it, say it, improve it' was this year's theme of the joint Scottish Stroke Allied Health Professions Forum and the Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum conference, chaired and organised by researchers at Glasgow Caledonian.**



School of Health and Life Sciences (SHLS) Professor of Nursing Lisa Kidd chaired the conference together with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Stroke Consultant Gillian Capriotti, supported by a conference organising committee comprising of SHLS Professor Frederike van Wijck and partners from the NHS, Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland and the Stroke Association.

The conference was opened with a moving speech from Scottish Greens Spokesperson on Health and Social Care, MSP Gillian Mackay, who is also Convenor of the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Stroke, and a passionate advocate for improving stroke care. The varied conference programme highlighted the Scottish Government's Stroke Improvement Plan and the Clinical Guidelines for Stroke for the UK and Ireland, including post-stroke fatigue, return to work, and the importance of psychological care. Professor van Wijck said one of the high points of the conference was a panel discussion with people affected by stroke, who were invited to share their personal experiences of the impact of stroke on themselves and their loved ones, and – in line with the conference theme – express their views on how healthcare professionals could improve their care for those affected by stroke in future. The conference was attended by well over 100 delegates from health boards and universities across Scotland, covering a wide range of nursing and allied health professions,

## World AMR Awareness Week

**As World Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Awareness Week concludes, the University's SHIP Group has highlighted efforts to combat AMR, a critical global health threat.**

The theme for this year's World AMR Awareness Week is 'Educate. Advocate. Act now', which underscores the urgency of addressing AMR through education, advocacy, and immediate action across various sectors, including healthcare, agriculture, and the environment.



Professor Gordon Ramage co-leads the university's Safeguarding Health through Infection Prevention (SHIP) Group. Their aim is to safeguard against infection and enhance the quality of patient care and the health and wellbeing of the public. Professor Ramage said: "We're helping to fight AMR on multiple fronts by building AMR awareness and prevention. This includes researching biofilms, promoting rigorous hand hygiene practices, and advancing methods to limit the spread of resistant pathogens. We also run workshops, seminars, and campaigns to inform healthcare professionals and the public about the threats posed by AMR and prevention measures. Combining scientific research with community engagement allows us to promote AMR awareness on a broader scale. AMR is a complex challenge that requires a coordinated approach across research, healthcare, and public awareness. At SHIP, we're dedicated to advancing this through impactful research and proactive engagement. Together, we can make significant strides in the fight against AMR."



## Other events

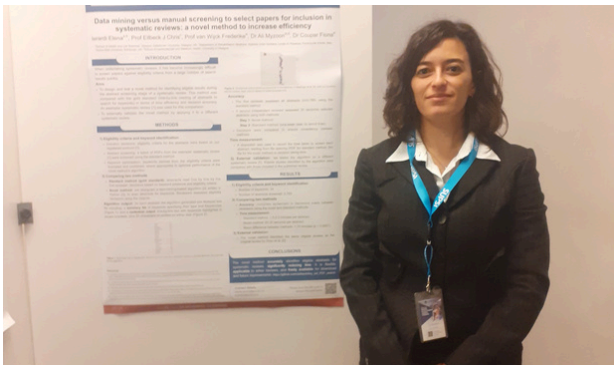
Highlights from conferences and events over the last few months.



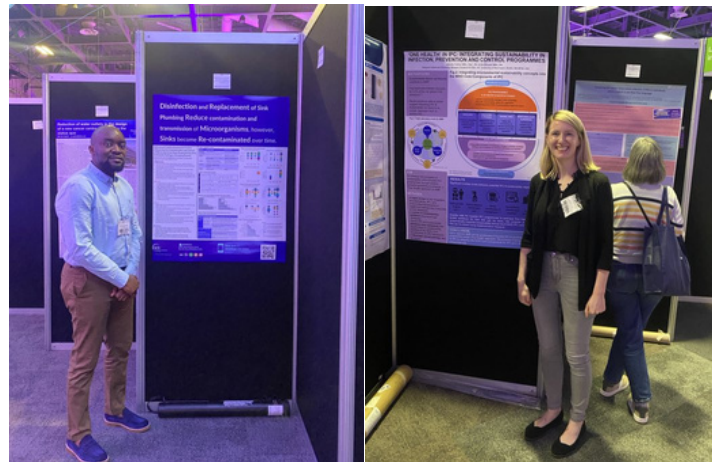
The Substance Use research group hosted the Scottish Alcohol Research Network at GCU. Jodie McGarry, Beth Meadows, Annamae Burrows and Elena Dimona presented, along with Professor Antonia Lyons (Director of the Centre for Addiction Research, University of Auckland) who discussed alcohol influencers.



Congratulations to Usman Sani Dankoly for winning best student contribution at the Scottish Physical Activity Research Conference.



Elena Ierardi presented a paper on 'Data mining versus manual screening to select papers for inclusion in systematic reviews: a novel method to increase efficiency', at the 4th International Scientific Congress of the Italian Association of Physiotherapy in Florence. [Read more](#)



SHIP PhD students Ntani SuhNsutebu and Jennifer Collins showcased their research posters at the Infection Prevention Conference in Birmingham.

## Clean sweep of conference prizes for MSK health team

The Musculoskeletal Health (MSK) research group continue to dominate the research awards at the Scottish Society for Rheumatology's annual meeting, taking home the best presentation prize for the 3rd consecutive year. This year, Kirsty Bell and Dr Gordon Hendry's work on physical activity and sedentary behaviour in inflammatory arthritis won best presentation, while Dr David Hamilton and Vicky Graham's work on variation in international clinical guidelines for managing knee osteoarthritis won best poster.





## Selected Publications

Some of the latest selected publications from GCU staff are listed below. To view an article, please click on the title.

- A National increase in the community supply of take-home naloxone associated with a mass media campaign in Scotland: a segmented time series analysis
- A trial to compare mixed-use (multi- and single-use) catheter management with single-use catheter management by intermittent catheter users over 12 months (The MultiCath Trial): Protocol for a non-inferiority randomised controlled trial
- About Falls Efficacy: A commentary on “World guidelines for falls prevention and management for older adults: a global initiative”
- Adult co-creators’ emotional and psychological experiences of the co-creation process: a Health CASCADE scoping review protocol
- Adults With Intellectual Disabilities and Incontinence: Assessment and Toileting Issues. Journal of Intellectual Disability Research
- Effect of Behavior-change Interventions on Daily Physical Activity in Patients with Intermittent Claudication: The OPTIMA Systematic Review with Meta-Analysis
- Effect of a home-based exercise program on subsequent falls among community-dwelling older adults with cognitive frailty: A sub-group analysis of a randomized controlled trial
- Evaluating the effect of direct-acting antiviral agent treatment scale-up on Hepatitis C virus prevalence among people who inject drugs in UK
- Factors associated with SARS-CoV-2 testing, diagnosis and COVID-19 disease among individuals prescribed opioid-agonist treatment: a nationwide retrospective cohort study
- Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on HIV Test Uptake Among People Who Inject Drugs in the Context of an HIV Outbreak
- In-person and online mixed method non-randomised studies exploring feasibility and acceptability of HEADS: UP, an adapted Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction programme for stroke survivors experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Methods Used in Co-Creation Within the Health CASCADE Co-Creation Database and Gray Literature: Systematic Methods Overview



- There's nothing wrong with you; you just need to lose weight." A qualitative exploration of pelvic floor dysfunction among women with multiple sclerosis and their interaction in seeking pelvic healthcare
- Rising mortality among people who inject drugs living with HIV in Scotland, UK: A 20-year retrospective cohort study
- Risk of drug-related death associated with co-prescribing of gabapentinoids and Z-drugs among people receiving opioid-agonist treatment: A national retrospective cohort study
- Suicide in people prescribed opioid-agonist therapy in Scotland, United Kingdom, 2011-2020: A national retrospective cohort study
- Urinary Tract Infections Amongst Adults With Intellectual Disabilities With Urinary Incontinence

## GCU expert researcher speaks to the BBC about the impact of alcohol and related policies on women

Professor Carol Emslie recently featured on major news outlets including in Panorama, Eorpa and BBC online. She drew on her research to speak about the impact of tactics used to market alcohol to women. She also highlighted the cost of alcohol abuse to the Scottish society and the policy interventions needed to tackle it. Professor Emslie leads the Substance Use Research Group at Glasgow Caledonian University. She is co-director for our Research Centre for Health (ReaCH) and Co-Chair of the Scottish Alcohol Research Network. She also recently led a team commissioned by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to develop a policy report on what is known about gender-responsive approaches to reduce alcohol harm.

[Watch now](#)



## Occupational Therapy Blog

[Read the latest blogs](#) from the Department of Occupational Therapy & Human Nutrition and Dietetics including:

- 'Y' is for children and young people
- Vocational Rehabilitation - reflections from practice

## SHIP Blog

[Catch-up on the latest blogs](#) from the Safeguarding Health through Infection Prevention (SHIP) research group including:

- Bridging Borders: My Experience Conducting a Qualitative Comparative Study on Infection Prevention and Control in Scotland and Nepal

## NESSIE Blog

[Read the latest blogs](#) from the NIHR Synthesis Scotland Initiative (NESSIE) including:

- Spotlight on researchers - Professor Alex Todhunter-Brown
- Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement with NESSIE