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NIHR

Policy Research Unit
Dementia and neurodegeneration
Queen Mary University of London

Dear <First Name>,

Welcome to the first newsletter from DeNPRU-QM, the NIHR Policy Research Unit in Dementia and Neurodegeneration based at Queen Mary University of London.

Since launching in January, we have been setting up our research projects and expanding our team. We have celebrated the publication of several papers that we will build on in our research unit, including results of the [NIDUS-Family trial](#), a programme aimed at helping family carers to support people living with dementia to keep living independently at home. NIDUS-Family comes in a handbook that can be used by a wide range of health and care sta , so it is a potentially important tool for delivering on personalised dementia care for all.

We have enjoyed contributing to events run by the Alzheimer's Society and the Academy of Medical Sciences to support new research in dementia and neurodegenerative diseases. Several of our project leads also spoke at the launch symposium for the Centre for Preventive Neurology at Queen Mary, developing from the Preventive Neurology Unit, which conducts leading research into multiple sclerosis (MS), Parkinson's disease and dementia. You can read more about these events below.

At the end of the newsletter, you will find a couple of events and opportunities that might be of interest to you or someone in your network. If you would like to find out more about our work, you can also follow us on Twitter (@DeNPRU_QM) or get in touch via e-mail (denpru@qmul.ac.uk).

[Professor Claudia Cooper](#) and [Professor Sube Banerjee](#)

Co-Directors, DeNPRU-QM



Supporting a research development event for Early Career Researchers

[Professor Claudia Cooper](#) and [Dr Karen Harrison-Dening](#), who co-lead the workforce research projects at DeNPRU-QM, supported a three day event for Early Career Researchers held at the end of February. The event was run by the Alzheimer's Society in collaboration with the Department for Health and Social Care and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration Wessex.

The event was a 'sandpit' event where small groups of researchers worked together to develop new project ideas and pitch for funding. The attendees were all Fellows on the [DemComm programme](#), funded by the NIHR and the Alzheimer's Society. The programme aims to support a new generation of leaders in dementia research from a wide range of backgrounds. The DemComm Fellows were mentored and supported as they developed their research proposals.



Celebrating the launch of the Centre for Preventive Neurology at Queen Mary

On Monday 4 March, the new Centre for Preventive Neurology at Queen Mary University of London celebrated its recent launch with a conference. Two of DeNPRU-QM's senior researchers are involved in leading the Centre: [Professor Ruth Dobson](#) (overall lead and MS theme lead) and [Professor Charles Marshall](#) (dementia theme lead). Several members of the wider DeNPRU-QM team attended the event.

The final session of the day was a panel discussion on the future of research in neurological conditions chaired by Professor Marshall. The panellists spoke about the importance of early detection for dementia, Parkinson's and MS to ensure that patients receive the right support. They also highlighted the need to consider health more holistically and start with what the patient wants from their treatment.

To find out more about the Centre, please visit the website by clicking on the button below.

[Visit the Centre website](#)

Introducing the lived experience leads

As part of the DeNPRU-QM team, we have three people with lived experience of dementia and neurodegenerative conditions who oversee the involvement of patients and the public in our



Mohammed Akhlak Rauf

Hi, I'm Mohammed Akhlak Rauf and I have worked with people affected by dementia for the last 18 years. I run a community interest company called 'Meri Yaadain CiC' (meaning My Memories), which supports South Asian people affected by dementia. I have a particular interest in inequalities and diversity (in a wider sense) as well as how we can involve and engage people living with dementia and family carers. I have a PhD in understanding coping strategies as well as an MBE from the late Queen to recognise my work in the dementia field. Within DeNPRU-QM, my role is to have an overview of Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE). I look forward to working with people from the steering group through to our PPIE champions to ensure that we have a good range of diversity of voice and of experience.

Rosemary Phillips

Hi, I'm Rosemary Phillips and I'll be co-chairing the monthly Patient and Public Engagement Group (PPEG) meetings with Rachel Horne. I cared for my parents, both with mild dementia – one Alzheimer's, one vascular dementia – for some years. During that time, I retired from being a teacher. I also became a volunteer with the Alzheimer's Society, which led to me becoming drawn towards dementia research with a focus on lifestyle changes to reduce one's risk of dementia. Through my involvement as a volunteer I got to know Professor Claudia Cooper, who is one of the two lead academics in DeNPRU-QM.

**Rachel Horne**

Hi, I'm Rachel Horne. Along with Rosemary, I'll be co-chairing our monthly PPEG - something I am really looking forward to. I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2009 when I was 43. Since then I have used my background as a journalist to write about living with a chronic disease - from diagnosis, treatment through to care services - and what it's like to be a 'forever patient'. I am also an Honorary Research Fellow at Queen Mary, which is how I first heard about DeNPRU-QM.

Upcoming events and opportunities



World Delirium Awareness Day free webinar (13 March)

Wednesday, 13 March is World Delirium Awareness Day and the European Delirium Association (EDA) is running a free webinar. To find out more or to register, please visit the EDA website.

[Go to the EDA website](#)

Opportunities for Early- and Mid-Career Researchers

- Early and mid-career researchers (ECRs and MCRs) can apply to work on DeNPRU-QM themes and projects in a co-leadership role and will be allocated a mentor
- These are paid opportunities that will be available from Spring 2024
- Our extensive programme of support will include training on how best to engage with policymakers and influence change

We have set up a short form where you can find out more about our research themes and express your interest in the ECR and MCR roles. To access the form, please click on the link below.

[Find out more](#)

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