

PSYPAG

Psychology Postgraduate Affairs Group

Quarterly

Issue 113 December 2019

The worrying decline in children's playtime: The need for intervention on a nation-wide level

Developing a guided imagery intervention in consultation with service users

**The European Federation of Psychology Students' Associations Junior Researcher Programme:
A review from two research project supervisors**



Also in this issue:

StatsCloud: The online statistics package for psychologists

**The constellation of psychopathy: All in the brain?
A critical review of the neuroscientific literature**



the british
psychological society
promoting excellence in psychology

PSYPAG

PsyPAG Quarterly goes electronic

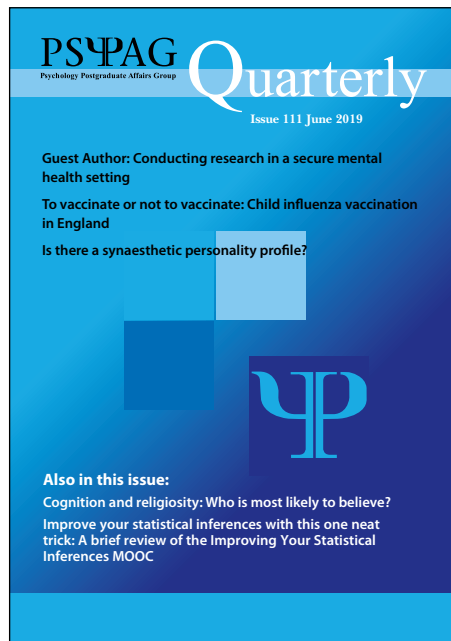
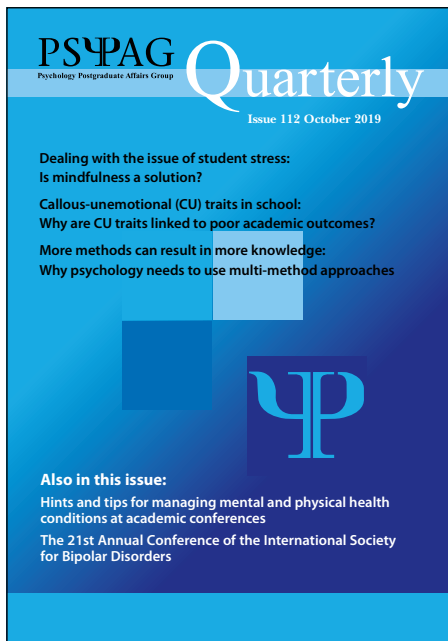
From January 2020 *PsyPag Quarterly* will only be available as a free-to-download PDF. To access issues of *PsyPAG Quarterly* go to www.psympag.co.uk/the-quarterly/quarterly-back-issues/

Mailing list

To keep up to date with PsyPAG news and information about the *Quarterly* join the JISCmail list open to *all* psychology postgraduate students.

To join, visit www.psympag.co.uk and scroll down on the main page to find the link, or go to tinyurl.com/PsyPAGjiscmail.

This list is a fantastic resource for support and advice regarding your research, statistical advice or postgraduate issues.



www.psympag.co.uk

Editorial

Josie Urquhart

I AM SO HAPPY to present the December 2019 issue of the *PsyPAG Quarterly*! I can't believe 2019 is nearly over. We hope you have enjoyed reading the excellent articles submitted to the *Quarterly* over the past year. As always, our team are working hard to bring more innovation and excitement to each new issue. We are ending 2019 on a high note with a fantastic range of your work, including discussion papers, reflective accounts, advice articles and software/conference reviews. I am sure you will find lots to satisfy your curiosity amongst the selection. Remember, if you have any feedback you can contact us at, quarterly@psypag.co.uk, we would love to hear from you.

Spoiler alert – our issue begins with three thought-provoking discussion pieces. In the first, Nihan Albayrak-Aydemir contemplates her personal experience of collecting sensitive psychological data from refugees. Reflecting on this research, Nihan suggests the need for us to augment our current ethical training and protocols. Crucially, throughout this thoughtful and insightful article Nihan emphasises the importance of protecting the physical and mental safety of the researcher as well as the participant. The piece highlights a significant issue within psychological research, which merits further conversation and consideration. In a second discussion piece, Menna Rose examines the use of Hare's 2003 Psychopathy Checklist – Revised. This measure is often employed as a predictive tool when assessing risk of re-offending amongst prisoners, as well as their likely response to treatment. Menna challenges the assumption that psychopathy is the single most important component to measure when assessing risk of re-offending and likely response to treatment. Instead, in a considered

and thoughtful article Menna suggests the need to incorporate multiple factors (e.g. criminogenic needs) when making such assessments. Selecting targeted measures according to circumstance/offence typology. In a third article, Holly Stokes discusses the worrying decline in children's playtime in UK schools and homes. In this high impact piece, Holly reinforces the need for targeted intervention, exemplifying the importance of play to childhood development and mental wellbeing.

In this issue, we also have a research in brief article submitted by Kelsey Smith. In this piece, Kelsey describes an initial study in which a mental imagery intervention was developed to improve future-orientated thinking in people experiencing first-episode psychosis. Kelsey's work provides excellent instruction and guidance, which I am sure will be invaluable to anyone looking to cultivate, administer and evaluate a guided imagery intervention. Following this edifying piece, the issue includes a literature review written by Louise Bowen. Louise considers the neuroscientific literature related to psychopathy. The article provides a comprehensive overview of existing research, highlighting both the promise and pitfalls of work in this domain. Importantly, Louise also suggests directions for future study, discussing the need to overcome issues in methodology and apply cross-discipline knowledge (e.g. legal ethics & neurogenetics) to the psychological understanding of psychopathology. Next, the issue features an article written by Katie Place and Katie Veale. This piece provides excellent reflective insight into the incorporation of the 'Plan-Do-Study-Act' quality improvement model to develop, test, implement and evaluate an acceptance and commitment therapy

group within an NHS adult community mental health team.

This issue also features some practical guidance, with two hints and tips articles. The first, from Clare Howie, provides advice on conducting a systematic review (a type of literature review conducted through comprehensive, systematic searching and defined by premeditated eligibility criteria, according to guidelines). Approaching such a review can be a daunting task! However, Clare gives some clear and calming tips on planning, search strategy and search process which will no doubt benefit anyone looking to conduct a systematic review. Our second hints and tips article has been written by PsyPAG chair Maddi Pownall. Maddi reflects on her recent experience at an international conference. Crucially, the article provides some very sage advice for early career researchers attending similar events (from considering collaborations to remembering cultural differences). Although I sometimes feel like a (tired) old hand when it comes to conference-going, I absolutely loved reading this piece. Maddi's tips will definitely help to fuel confidence and enthusiasm prior to conference attendance.

The issue is rounded off by three interesting reviews. The first is a software review submitted by Daniel Gurney. The article describes StatsCloud, a new web application designed to make statistics more open and accessible to psychologists. I recommend you try it out, especially those of you who are involved in teaching statistics among undergraduates. It is simple and streamlined, can be run from an internet browser and uses straightforward language/workflow. Furthermore, the export to R function is a great time saver when coding analysis. Next, we present a training programme review submitted by Rose Turner and Edward John Noon. This piece details their experience as project supervisors for the European Federation of Psychology Students' Associations Junior Researcher Programme (JRP). Rose and Edward detail the start of their exciting journey as supervi-

sors at the JRP annual summer school. This year the JRP theme is 'Communication and Learning in the Digital Age'. Accordingly, Rose and Edward detail the development of their research projects, as well as providing helpful insight into the triumphs and challenges they faced. I recommend you check out their article, especially if you are interested in applying to next year's JRP. Finally, we have a piece written by Darel Cookson, reviewing the PsyPAG Annual Conference 2019. Darel captures the warm and friendly spirit of the conference in her writing superbly. Preparations for PsyPAG's 35th Annual Conference (University of Leeds, 28–31 July 2020) are now underway, and we do hope you will consider joining us! If you want to know more about what to expect Darel's article provides a fantastic account of a PsyPAG conference.

As you can see, we try to present a wide range of articles, hoping to engage with postgraduate psychology students from all areas and stages of study. I would like to extend a huge thank you to all of the authors who have contributed such fascinating and high-quality submissions to this issue of the *Quarterly*. I also hope all of our readers have had a positive and productive year. I also hope you are all able to have a well-deserved break over the winter holiday. A Happy New Year to everyone!

Josie Urquhart

On behalf of the
PsyPAG Quarterly Editorial Team

PsyPAG Quarterly

Editorial Team 2018–2019:

Charlotte Scott

Brad Kennedy

Josie Urquhart

Alex Lloyd

E-mail: quarterly@psypag.co.uk

Twitter: @PsyPAGQuarterly

Chair's Column

Maddi Pownall

WELCOME postgraduates! I hope you are settling into the new academic year well. This year has been highly productive and exciting for PsyPAG. Our online outreach has grown rapidly, both on Twitter and on our PsyPAG blog. We welcomed postgraduates from all over the country to our brilliant Annual Conference in Sheffield in July. We also published a new edition of our ever-popular PsyPAG Guide: *Surviving Postgraduate Study* (www.psyag.co.uk/psyag-guide). I'd like to extend a huge thanks to all the PsyPAG representatives and volunteers who have made this work possible. It's been a great year, team.

I'm pleased to report that preparation is well underway for the 2020 PsyPAG Annual Conference. I'm especially pleased to tell you that our annual conference will be held in my academic home, the University of Leeds. We will welcome you in Leeds on 28–31 July 2020. Keep a lookout for conference updates on our Twitter page @PsyPAG2020. We'll be sharing details about abstract submissions, keynote speakers and social events in the forthcoming months. We also have exciting plans to add a new presentation format into this year's conference – a 'blitz session'. These will be shorter, snappier sessions, ideal for giving a whistle-stop tour of your research or letting us know about a specific method or approach in your work. We hope that this will give as many postgraduates as possible the chance to present, no matter what stage of your PhD, master's or doctoral training you're at.

More exciting news: PsyPAG, as you know, is an organisation for postgraduates in psychology from all walks of life, covering all areas. To reflect this, we would like to focus our efforts on recognising and celebrating the successes of doctoral trainees, as well as PhD and master's students. Therefore, I am really pleased to announce our new PsyPAG award – the Trainee Award. Again, details will be shared through our Twitter page @PsyPAG and on our website, so please keep a lookout and get nominating. Thank you to Claire Melia (outgoing Awards Chair) and Michelle Newman (incoming Awards Chair) for their hard work on the creation of this important award.

Just a friendly reminder that we offer funding to support the hosting of workshops as well as bursaries (www.psyag.co.uk/workshops and www.psyag.co.uk/bursaries-2) to fund conference attendance (both international and domestic), workshops and training events, study visits and travel bursaries. The next deadline for the workshops and bursary applications is in February. I would encourage you lookout for PsyPAG funded workshops as these are free to attend for all postgraduates.

I hope your 2019 was equally full and productive. On behalf of the whole PsyPAG team, I'd like to wish you a very happy new year.

Maddi Pownall

PsyPAG Chair

Twitter: @PsyPAG; @maddi_pow

Email: chair@psyag.co.uk

Meet the Readers

WE HAVE already had a great response to our call for the new 'Meet the Readers' section. This feature is all about you, the reader. Each issue, we give our readers from across the country the chance to tell us a little bit about themselves and their research to help promote collaboration between postgraduate psychologists. If you would like to be featured in an upcoming issue of the *Quarterly*, please email quarterly@psypag.co.uk for a short form to fill out. Here are some of our latest submissions from readers.

Ashleigh Johnstone

What is your current research project?

My PhD involves investigating the cognitive changes associated with martial arts training. There has been a lot of research noting positive effects in wellbeing in people who train in martial arts – such as better stress management, higher levels of resilience, stronger coping resources – so we were interested in whether there are also cognitive benefits. During my research we have already found that martial artists possess a higher level of alertness or vigilance that increases with the amount of years they have been training for.

What do you find most exciting about your research?

I love talking to martial artists about my research. Our expert participants have all come in with such eagerness to find out more about how their training could be improving their brain function. After some of my research was discussed in the media, I had so many emails from people who take part in martial arts, who wanted to share their story about how martial arts has helped them – to many of them, it's not simply a 'sport' but a way of life. The conversations with these people have been my favourite part of my project.

Wildcard: Who is your psychology hero?

No doubt about it – Dr Julie Davies. She's sadly no longer with us, but she taught me how fun psychological research can be, and built up my statistics knowledge to a point where I no longer feared SPSS or big spreadsheets of numbers. She helped me develop an interest in research and good science, and now I can't imagine doing anything else – this is why she'll always be my psychology hero.

Correspondence details:

Name: Ashleigh Johnstone
Department: School of Psychology
University: Bangor University
Email: a.johnstone@bangor.ac.uk
Twitter: @_ajohnstone

Megan Hardie

What is your current research project?

As a way of investigating the possible inclusion of Internet gaming as a mental disorder in the DSM-5, my research project focuses on problematic gaming behaviours in the context of social anxiety. To understand this in more detail I used gaming motivations as a way of gaining further insight into participants' reasons for engaging in what is traditionally considered problematic or excessive gaming. The main motivation behind this research was to see the potential clinical implication of games, particularly for those with social anxiety.

What do you find most exciting about your research?

The idea of engaging in and producing cutting-edge research which aims to help groups of people is what excites me most about my research. Gaming is an area of research which is frequently talked about in a negative light, particularly in terms of increasing violent and aggressive tendencies. However, since doing my research I have found a lot of participants use games

to fulfil a part of their life that cannot be achieved in their real lives. In this way, my research potentially helping people and making a difference to their lives is an exciting prospect.

Wildcard question: How did you become interested in your particular area of research?

The #GamerGate phenomenon on Twitter in 2014 is what initially caught my attention in the gaming research area. I was interested in the way women were portrayed in gaming culture, whether as characters or female gamers. This then led to my interest

in gaming in general, with a move towards the psychological impact of games. There is growing potential for games to positively influence psychosocial wellbeing and contribute to mental health therapy. This is where I hope to extend my research to in future years.

Correspondence details:

Name: Megan Hardie

Department: Department of Psychology

University: Goldsmiths, University of London

Email: meganhardie@live.co.uk

Twitter: @MeganHardie8

Towards a more comprehensive ethical approach: Potential impacts of studying sensitive topics

Nihan Albayrak-Aydemir

The current ethical approach in psychological research gives importance to protecting the physical and psychological safety of participants. This article highlights the need to go beyond the existing ethical standards in order to improve the safety of researchers in psychological research in sensitive topics as well.

IN MY PhD, I look into the social psychology of helping refugees, examining how social identity and cognitive factors affect the ways in which people help Syrian refugees. I collect data from different countries and make crosscultural comparisons in terms of helping responses. That is, I scrutinise the helping attitudes, intentions and behaviours of certain groups of people towards refugees. In doing so, I ran into some challenges I was not particularly expecting due to the sensitive nature of my topic. For example, I sometimes received particularly harsh and devastating comments from my participants about how refugees do not deserve any help. At that time, I felt extremely hopeless and thought that my research will not have any actual impact to promote help for refugees. Moreover, as a researcher, my intention to make crosscultural comparisons about helping refugees was misinterpreted and questioned by some potential participant groups when I initially contacted them, which afterwards changed the direction of my research. In addition, while following and witnessing the sufferings of numerous refugees, I questioned the worth of my research and asked myself whether I should be researching helping refugees or *actually helping refugees*. Due to such challenges, there were times when I found it extremely difficult to focus on my PhD and continue my research.

With these experiences in mind, in this article I argue that participants are perhaps the main but not the only part of the research process. Research on sensitive topics may also cause harm to people other than participants, including the researchers themselves. Therefore, we – as researchers – need to be both physically and psychologically prepared for what we may encounter during research before the research process begins. To do this, we need to improve our ethical approach to psychological research; that is, ethical training should become more comprehensive and extensively consider issues about the safety of researchers.

Researching sensitive topics

Lee (1993) defines sensitive research as ‘research which potentially poses a substantial threat to those who are or have been involved in it’. Those who are involved can embrace the researchers, together with the researched and the wider society. For example, if you are undertaking research about domestic violence victims, you as the researcher might be emotionally affected by their traumatic experiences. Similarly, your communication with these victims might lead to some negative psychological responses among them, as they may re-experience some traumatic moments. Thus, any research topic that can engender

a physical danger (e.g. suicide) or a negative emotional response (e.g. depression) to those who are involved in the research process can be called sensitive. In this respect, this type of research can be principally seen as 'intimate, discreditable and incriminating' (Renzetti & Lee, 1993).

Sometimes sensitivity issues in psychological research may not show themselves prior to research and might arise as research moves forward. Therefore, considering the broader implications of psychological research is essential. The context in which the research is taking place, from whom the data is being collected, by whom the research is being undertaken and conditions where physical and psychological safety issues may arise are some sample questions that could determine how to take careful ethical actions for researching sensitive topics.

A comprehensive ethical approach

Ethical training in psychological research usually aim to protect participants from researchers who might otherwise cause them harm while conducting research. However, it is not sufficient to merely protect the physical and psychological safety of the participants. It is equally important to accommodate the physical and psychological safety of researchers as this might also be threatened by research (Lee & Renzetti, 1990). As researchers, we are also involved in the research process and therefore, we might also be affected by any part. Although ethical training or guidelines we receive advise us about potential safety issues that we might experience with our participants, we are not very well-informed about what to do when our own safety is at risk. This could be the case, especially when undertaking research in sensitive topics because the nature of such topics itself may pose certain safety challenges for researchers.

Current ethical training covers some of the potential physical impacts of researching sensitive topics on researchers. For example, we receive necessary permissions and are given a point of contact if we are collecting

data from a context that might possibly cause physical danger (e.g. illness or violent attacks). On the other hand, the potential psychological impacts of researching sensitive topics on researchers remain largely neglected in existing ethical preparations. Just as their participants, researchers might as well be psychologically affected by the research they do. Researchers may not be as directly influenced as participants are, but any impact could have consequential outcomes. In addition, these impacts can arise during or after research, last short-term or long-term, and harm researchers as well as the research itself.

The content of sensitive research may 'invade or destroy' the lives of the researchers as well as the researched (Dickson-Swift et al., 2010). Because of the psychological impacts of our research on ourselves, we may become more vulnerable (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007). This vulnerability can, in turn, influence our research process, especially as the early-career researchers. If we did not learn how to cope with this vulnerability prior to research, this could lead us to experience various problems that may not only decrease the quality of the research but also our effectiveness as a researcher in undertaking such studies. Some examples regarding the problems of researchers' effectiveness could be feeling uncomfortable carrying out research and having difficulties in focusing on research procedure after witnessing actual traumatic experiences. Additionally, problems about research quality could be exemplified as forming subjective arguments, collecting data by only reaching specific samples, and drawing one-sided conclusions. Consequently, researchers should be better equipped to deal with such problems caused by sensitive research (Lee, 1993) and psychological safety of researchers should be treated as one of the key elements of both researcher's effectiveness and research quality.

At present, the ethical preparations we make for research may not completely correspond to the ethical challenges we face.

There seems to be more ethical issues than we are ready to deal with. For better quality research, we must improve our ethical standards by taking all parties of research into consideration and prioritising safety for all. For instance, researchers' safety issues can be part of ethical approval process by providing a statement of awareness/readiness for potential dangers or a statement of contact with relevant support providers. With such advancements, we could then hopefully move towards a more comprehensive ethical approach to undertaking safer and better research on sensitive topics.

Helpful tips

- Check if your university has specific ethics or mental health training to support researchers working on sensitive topics. Sometimes universities or certain departments have such training but they are not well advertised, so you need to go and find them.
- Prior to research, list possible sources of support both internally and externally to your university in case you need it during research. When you need it, you may not have the energy to do so, thus it would be extremely helpful if these contacts are just an e-mail or a phone call away.
- Create a support network from people working on similar topics. You might be more empathetic to each other as your experiences are more similar. With them, you could also seek solutions to better deal with the problems you encounter.
- Do not hesitate to talk to your cohorts, supervisors, or other academics/researchers about your negative experiences or feelings caused by research. People may seem strong and not affected by their own research, but you may be surprised to find out that other people go through the same stages that you do.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank PsyPAG for awarding me a research bursary to help with participant costs for my experiment about helping Syrian refugees. I would also like to thank Michael Scott Evans for his amazing workshop on grant preparation in the PsyPAG Annual Conference in 2018, thanks to which I was able to put together a strong application and earn this bursary.

Correspondence

Nihan Albayrak-Aydemir

PhD Student & Graduate Teaching Assistant,
London School of Economics and Political
Science

Email: n.albayrak1@lse.ac.uk

Twitter: @nihanalbay

References

- Dickson-Swift, V., James, E.L., Kippen, S. & Liamputtong P. (2007). Doing sensitive research: What challenges do qualitative researchers face? *Qualitative Research*, 7(3), 327–353.
- Dickson-Swift, V., James, E.L. & Liamputtong P. (2010). *Undertaking sensitive research in the health and social sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, R.M. (1993). *Doing research on sensitive topics*. London: Sage.
- Lee, R.M. & Renzetti, C.M. (1990). The problems of researching sensitive topics. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 33(5), 510–528.
- Renzetti, C.M. & Lee, R.M. (Eds.) (1993). *Researching sensitive topics*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Is measuring psychopathy as defined by the Hare Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) the most important single component in assessing risk of offending behaviour and likely response to treatment in offenders?

Menna Rose

Hare's (2003) Psychopathy Checklist – Revised (PCL-R) comprises a 20-item checklist designed to assess the clinical construct of psychopathy. There is research to show that the PCL-R has impressive predictive validity for offending behaviour, and this has led some to suggest that psychopathy is the most important single component to measure when assessing risk of offending behaviour and likely response to treatment. Here I consider and critique the evidence for and against this argument.

ASSESSING the risk of offending behaviour and likely response to treatment are essential elements of the decision-making process that runs from the sentencing to release of an offender (Campbell et al., 2009). Consequently, there is a wealth of research in risk assessment, and many instruments have been developed for this use. In addition, existing measures that assess personality constructs relating to offending, such as Hare's (2003) Psychopathy Checklist – Revised (PCL-R) have also been used when assessing risk of offending and treatment response. The PCL-R comprises a 20-item checklist designed to assess the clinical construct of psychopathy (Grann et al., 1999). Psychopathy is a personality disorder characterised by an interpersonally deceptive, affectively cold, behaviourally reckless and antisocial personality style (Klein et al., 2018; Hare & Neumann, 2010). Whilst Hare developed the PCL-R as an instrument to quantify psychopathy, research has reported that the PCL-R has impressive predictive validity for

offending behaviour (Barbaree et al., 2001). This has led some to argue that measuring psychopathy, as defined by the PCL-R, is probably the single most important component in assessing risk of offending behaviour and likely response to treatment. This discussion piece will evaluate the importance of measuring psychopathy in this context by presenting a critical review of the literature.

Assessing risk of offending behaviour

Firstly, with regards to assessing risk of offending behaviour, Salekin et al. (1996) conducted a meta-analysis, estimating the extent of the relationship between psychopathy scores, as measured by the PCL-R, and offending behaviour. They generated 29 effect sizes of the PCL-R's predictive validity, and found a mean overall moderate to large effect size ($d = .68$). These results demonstrate that psychopathy is associated with an increased risk of offending behaviour. Subsequently, Salekin et al. (1996) stated that the PCL-R was 'unparalleled' as a measure

for assessing such risk. Similarly, Hemphill et al. (1998) found that psychopaths were three times more likely to re-offend compared to non-psychopaths. This research suggests that measuring psychopathy is the most important component in assessing risk of offending behaviour. Summarising this notion, Hare (1998) wrote, '...psychopathy is the most important clinical construct in the prediction of offender risk' (as cited in Gendreau et al., 2002, p.400).

However, whilst a lot of the research considering the importance of psychopathy in assessing risk of reoffending seems convincing, many of these studies have been criticized. Subsequently, their conclusions have been challenged. For instance, Gendreau et al. (2002) noted that only 55 per cent of Salekin et al.'s (1996) effect sizes were truly positive. Furthermore, Salekin et al. (1996) only considered male offenders and did not compare psychopathy to any alternative measures. Considering these limitations, one should question whether their conclusion that psychopathy is 'unparalleled' as a measure for risk of offending behaviour should be so readily accepted. It must also be considered that not all psychopaths re-offend. For instance, Serin & Amos (1995) found that 20 to 30 per cent of psychopaths are not reconvicted. This is noteworthy because it undermines the importance of psychopathy as a risk factor for offending behaviour. Furthermore, Wong & Burt (2007) found that there were no significant differences between the PCL-R scores of reconvicted and non-reconvicted psychopathic offenders (Klein et al., 2018). Consequently, they stressed the importance of viewing psychopathy as a heterogeneous construct and suggested that psychopathic individuals might differ in 'criminogenic needs' – dynamic attributes of an offender, including pro-offending attitudes, impulsivity, poor problem-solving skills and substance abuse (Ward & Stewart, 2003; Andrews & Bonta, 1998). This idea is supported by Cooke and Logan (2015), who argue that there has been an incorrect

assumption of structural homogeneity in the functioning of psychopathy.

With the above findings in mind, one might suggest that assessing criminogenic needs is more important than measuring psychopathy when assessing risk of offending behaviour. There is in fact research to support this notion. Gendreau et al. (1996) found that the Level of Service Inventory (LSI-R; Andrews & Bonta, 1995) was superior to the PCL-R in its predictive validity of offending. This finding is noteworthy because the LSI-R is the recommended criterion for assessing criminogenic needs including family/marital status, alcohol/drug use, and attitude/orientation (Howitt, 2017). Likewise, Gendreau et al. (1999) found that the LSI-R was superior to the PCL-R in predicting general and violent offending 78 and 75 per cent of the time, respectively. These findings suggest that criminogenic needs have greater predictive validity than psychopathy. Consequently, we must question whether psychopathy is actually the most important component in assessing risk of offending behaviour.

Research into particular offender groups has also cast doubt on the alleged importance of measuring psychopathy when assessing risk of offending behaviour. In sex offenders, for example, it has been suggested that 'sexual deviance' – sexual preference that is statistically unusual and likely to inflict unwarranted harm on oneself or others (Hildebrand et al., 2004) has greater predictive validity for sexual offending in comparison to psychopathy. For instance, Barbaree et al. (2001) found that the Rapid Risk Assessment of Sexual Offense Recidivism (RRASOR) tool (Hanson, 1997) was the best predictor of sexual re-offending in comparison to four other actuarial risk assessment tools and the PCL-R. This is important because the RRASOR measures sexual deviance and does not take psychopathy into consideration. Interestingly, whilst Olver & Wong (2006) similarly found that sexual deviance provided a stronger link to sexual re-offending than psychopathy, they

also found a significant interaction between psychopathy and sexual deviance. This led them to suggest that the presence of psychopathic features could still increase the risk of sexual offending. This research highlights the importance of considering the comorbidity of risk factors, and further challenges the notion that measuring psychopathy is the single most important component in assessing risk of offending behaviour.

Assessing likely response to treatment

It has also been argued that psychopathy is one of the most important measures to consider when assessing likely response to treatment. This can be deduced from research that suggests psychopaths are less likely to respond to treatment. For instance, Cleckley (1941) stated that psychopaths show a lack of response to treatment of any kind. Likewise, Karpman (1946) described psychopathy as incurable (Caldwell et al., 2007). Interestingly, Rogers et al. (1997) also found that psychopathy scores significantly correlated with treatment noncompliance, and Rice et al. (1992) found that some treatment programmes actually increased the risk of violent re-offending behaviour. Researchers such as Hare et al. (2000) have suggested that this might be because such programmes help psychopaths to develop better ways of manipulating and deceiving others, instead of improving themselves. Together this research suggests that measuring psychopathy could be the most important component in assessing likely response to treatment.

However, some of the widespread research labelling psychopathy as 'untreatable' has also been criticised. For instance, Klein et al. (2018) highlighted that a number of these studies only include offenders that score high to very high on the PCL-R, thus eliminating approximately 80 per cent of the total sample of psychopathic offenders. Others have argued that the treatment programmes examined in some studies have been inappropriate. For example, the 'Therapeutic Community' programme studied by

Rice et al. (1992) has been described as inappropriate for psychopathy because it was highly coercive (the patients were not allowed to opt out), chiefly peer-operated, and involved extreme 'defence altering' techniques (Skeem et al., 2002). This undermines the validity of the study. Furthermore, not all psychopaths appear 'untreatable'. For example, Salekin (2002) found that cognitive behavioural, psychodynamic and eclectic intervention methods were effective for some psychopathic individuals. This heterogeneity in treatability of psychopathy challenges the idea that it is the single most important component in assessing likely response to treatment.

Conclusion

In summary, the idea that measuring psychopathy is the most important single component in assessing risk of offending behaviour and response to treatment is likely to have originated from research that labels its predictive validity as 'unparalleled', and its challenging treatable nature as 'incurable'. However, this research has since been challenged, and subsequently it has been found that alternative factors, such as offenders' criminogenic needs, outperform psychopathy in predictive validity, and in some cases psychopathic offenders are treatable. This evidence leads one to conclude that psychopathy is probably not the most important single component to measure when assessing risk of offending and likely response to treatment.

Critically it also seems necessary to note that it is unlikely that a single risk factor will be superior to all others that exist when assessing risk of offending. That is, different measures and risk factors are likely to interact and have different levels of importance when assessing the risk of different offending behaviours. For example, one might measure criminogenic needs using the LSI-R when assessing the risk of general offending behaviour, whilst measuring sexual deviance using the RRASOR when assessing the risk of sexual offending behaviour. Furthermore,

when assessing the risk of serious violent behaviour, it may be important to measure psychopathy using the PCL-R in conjunction with criminogenic needs. In other words, the importance of measuring psychopathy, as defined by the PCL-R, will vary depending on the needs and demands of the specific clinical context in question. Thus, whilst I argue that measuring psychopathy cannot be labelled as the most important single

component to consider in assessing risk, its value within risk assessment as a whole should not be undermined.

Correspondence

Menna Rose

MSc Forensic Psychology Student,
Royal Holloway, University of London
Email: Menna.Rose.2018@rhul.ac.uk

References

- Andrews, D.A. & Bonta, J. (1995). *The Level of Supervision Inventory – Revised* (pp.19–52). Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems.
- Andrews, D.A. & Bonta, J. (1998). *The psychology of criminal conduct* (2nd edn). Cincinnati, OH: Anderson.
- Barbaree, H.E., Seto, M.C., Langton, C.M. & Peacock, E.J. (2001). Evaluating the predictive accuracy of six risk assessment instruments for adult sex offenders. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 28(4), 490–521.
- Caldwell, M., Skeem, J., Salekin, R. & Van Rybroek, G. (2006). Treatment response of adolescent offenders with psychopathy features: A 2-year follow-up. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 33(5), 571–596.
- Campbell, M.A., French, S. & Gendreau, P. (2009). The prediction of violence in adult offenders: A meta-analytic comparison of instruments and methods of assessment. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 36(6), 567–590.
- Cleckley, H. (1941). *The mask of sanity: An attempt to clarify some issues about the so-called psychopathic personality* (1st edn). Louis, MO: Mosby.
- Cooke, D.J. & Logan, C. (2015). Capturing clinical complexity: Towards a personality-oriented measure of psychopathy. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43(4), 262–273.
- Gendreau, P., Little, T. & Goggin, C. (1996). A meta-analysis of the predictors of adult offender recidivism: What works! *Criminology*, 34(4), 575–608.
- Gendreau, P., Goggin, C. & Smith, P. (1999). Predicting recidivism: LSI-R vs. PCL-R. *Canadian Psychology Abstracts*, 40, 2a.
- Gendreau, P., Goggin, C. & Smith, P. (2002). Is the PCL-R really the ‘unparalleled’ measure of offender risk? A lesson in knowledge cumulation. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 29(4), 397–426.
- Grann, M., Långström, N., Tengström, A. & Kullgren, G. (1999). Psychopathy (PCL-R) predicts violent recidivism among criminal offenders with personality disorders in Sweden. *Law and Human Behaviour*, 23(2), 205–217.
- Hanson, R.K. (1997). *The development of a brief actuarial risk scale for sexual offense recidivism* (No.1997). Quebec, QC: Solicitor General Canada.
- Hare, R.D. (1998). The Hare PCL-R: Some issues concerning its use and misuse. *Legal and criminological psychology*, 3(1), 99–119.
- Hare, R.D., Clark, D., Grann, M. & Thornton, D. (2000). Psychopathy and the predictive validity of the PCL-R: An international perspective. *Behavioural Sciences and The Law*, 18(5), 623–645.
- Hare, R.D. (2003). *The Psychopathy Checklist – Revised*. Toronto, ON: Pearson.
- Hare, R.D. & Neumann, C.S. (2010). *The role of antisociality in the psychopathy construct: Comment on Skeem and Cooke* (2010).
- Hemphill, J.F., Hare, R.D. & Wong, S. (1998). *Psychopathy and recidivism: A review*. *Legal and criminological Psychology*, 3(1), 139–170.
- Hildebrand, M., De Ruiter, C. & De Vogel, V. (2004). Psychopathy and sexual deviance in treated rapists: Association with sexual and nonsexual recidivism. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 16(1), 1–24.
- Howitt, D. (2017). *Introduction to forensic and criminal psychology*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Karpman, B. (1946). Psychopathy in the scheme of human typology. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 103, 276–288.
- Klein Haneveld, E., Neumann, C.S., Smid, W. et al. (2018). Treatment responsiveness of replicated psychopathy profiles. *Law and human behaviour*, 42(5), 484.
- Olver, M.E. & Wong, S.C. (2006). Psychopathy, sexual deviance, and recidivism among sex offenders. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 18(1), 65.

- Rice, M.E., Harris, G.T. & Cormier, C.A. (1992). An evaluation of a maximum security therapeutic community for psychopaths and other mentally disordered offenders. *Law and Human Behaviour*, 16(4), 399–412.
- Rogers, R., Johansen, J., Chang, J.J. & Salekin, R.T. (1997). Predictors of adolescent psychopathy: Oppositional and conduct-disordered symptoms. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law Online*, 25(3), 261–271.
- Salekin, R.T., Rogers, R. & Sewell, K.W. (1996). A review and meta-analysis of the Psychopathy Checklist and Psychopathy Checklist – Revised: Predictive validity of dangerousness. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 3(3), 203–215.
- Salekin, R.T. (2002). Psychopathy and therapeutic pessimism: Clinical lore or clinical reality? *Clinical psychology review*, 22(1), 79–112.
- Serin, R.C. & Amos, N.L. (1995). The role of psychopathy in the assessment of dangerousness. *International journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 18(2), 231–238.
- Skeem, J.L., Monahan, J. & Mulvey, E.P. (2002). Psychopathy, treatment involvement, and subsequent violence among civil psychiatric patients. *Law and Human Behaviour*, 26(6), 577–603.
- Ward, T. & Stewart, C. (2003). Criminogenic needs and human needs: A theoretical model. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 9(2), 125–143.
- Wong, S.C. & Burt, G. (2007). The heterogeneity of incarcerated psychopaths: Differences in risk, need, recidivism, and management approaches. In H. Hervé, J.C. Yuille (Eds.) *The psychopath: Theory, research, and practice* (pp.461–484) Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

The worrying decline in children's playtime: The need for intervention on a nation-wide level

Holly Stokes

Play promotes holistic development in children and is often considered one of their fundamental rights. However, opportunities for play are steadily decreasing in the child's two main environments, at home and in school. Parents are largely unaware of the value play has. Similarly, teachers are under pressure to provide structured academic activities which leave little time for free play. If it is to be more readily endorsed at a societal level, recognition of the important roleplay has in development is needed at a governmental level. Psychological research supports the need for such significant shifting. Crucially, we must encourage play, both as a home-based leisurely activity and a concrete element of the UK curriculum, in order to enhance our children's learning.

THIS ARTICLE highlights the worrying issue of the decline of play within the child's two main environments, at home and in school, and the need to tackle this issue on a nationwide basis. Play is a vital element of childhood, a fundamental right of the child, which promotes holistic development and allows children to learn about their surrounding world (Ginsburg, 2007). Gleave and Cole-Hamilton's (2012) literature review highlights how a lack of childhood play opportunities can have a profoundly negative effect on children's physical, psychological and social wellbeing. Despite this, play opportunities have declined in recent years. Instead, such opportunities are being replaced with structured activities driven by the pursuit of academic excellence.

Play opportunities in school

Within the school environment, teachers face increasing pressure to provide structured activities with measurable outcomes. Consequently, play is often perceived as an interim activity, simply a reward for completing structured activities. This setup reflects the beliefs that 'work' and 'play' are

distinct and incompatible, and that play is the less important of the two. An OFSTED report in 2015 warned that this belief, especially in preschool environments, could be extremely harmful to a child's development and learning. Rather than being viewed as separate activities, play should be intertwined with the 'academic' curriculum.

The most effective learning often occurs when a child is enjoying the learning activity and play can subsequently enrich learning simply through encouraging engagement and participation (Bodrova & Leong, 2003). Play experiences also build the essential skills needed for school success. For example, socio-dramatic play can build skills related to school readiness including self-regulation, social skills, language and motivation (Bredenkamp, 2004). There is also evidence for a link between play and a child's ability to master specific academic skills. Roskos and Christie's (2000) critical analysis of 20 studies examining the play-literacy relationship found pretend play engagement to positively and significantly correlate with literacy competencies including comprehension, metalinguistic awareness and understanding the purpose

of writing and reading. They concluded that the play environment can enhance the learning of literacy skills, as it provides an opportunity to teach and learn literacy in a setting in which these skills are promoted and play activities serve as an opportunity to build connections between written and oral language expression.

However, Keating et al.'s (2000) study conducted across 10 UK primary schools found that curriculum pressure inhibits both the amount of time dedicated to play within the classroom, and teacher involvement within play. The researchers commented that there was a very distinct and apparent feeling of guilt from the teachers interviewed; it was a 'double-edged' sword in that they felt guilty for letting the children play, but also felt guilty if they did not. The only instances where teachers seemed comfortable using play was when this was part of assessing the child, congruent with the instilled focus on measurable progress.

Further, previous research demonstrates mixed parental perceptions about the relationships between play and learning. The teachers in Keating et al.'s (2000) study expressed beliefs that parents would perceive play to only have recreational value, though in reality many parents interviewed in the study did recognise the role of play in promoting cognitive and social development also. However, Kane (2016) found in their sample of parents that play and learning were perceived as binary terms and very separate constructs, with play being considered less important than the acquisition of numeracy and literacy skills. Though they did express the belief that play was somewhat important for child development, Kane (2016) argued that this binary thinking overlooks the potential for play to enhance learning and undermines child wellbeing.

Play and child mental wellbeing

The Play Collation (2018) report found 93 per cent of children reported feeling happier when they could play, but

1 in 5 stated they were 'too busy' for playtime. This finding may be a reflection of the increasing importance and time dedicated to structured academic activities. With increasing concerns about children's mental health, especially in relation to school environments, intertwining play into the curriculum can make the experience of school less intense and more enjoyable. Crucially, children can learn without the realisation that this is occurring.

Though well-intentioned, the focus on testing and academic performance in the current school curriculum puts increased pressure on children, leading to increasing levels of performance-related anxiety. Hewes' (2014) review presents the case for play's ability to build emotional strength and resilience in children, as it distracts from the stresses of everyday life and enables them to feel in control. This building of resilience has been identified as key for dealing with academic pressure. In line with the protective-reactive model of resilience (Luthar et al., 2000), play weakens the correlation between risk factors (i.e. academic pressure) and the outcome (i.e. poor wellbeing). Play could also be interpreted in line with the protective-protective model of resilience (Brook et al., 1986, 1989) as play opportunities also allow children to access other potentially protective factors (i.e. positive social relationships), which buffer against stress. This further highlights the benefits of incorporating play into the UK curriculum to promote and improve child wellbeing, as well as to facilitate learning.

Play in the home:

The importance of parental involvement

Parental involvement is also necessary to engage children in more sophisticated play. In relation to the concept of the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1978), children can exceed in what they would achieve playing alone when they have a more competent play partner (i.e. their parent) as this partner can expose them

to new ideas, materials and opportunities (Marjanovič-Umek & Fekonja-Peklaj, 2017). However, if parents are unaware of play's benefits, they may not cultivate enriching environments, encourage play behaviours or participate within play themselves. Fisher Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2008) studied a sample of mothers via a large-scale internet survey and found a link between positive perceptions of play and play encouragement: mothers were more likely to encourage the play activities which they perceived them to hold learning value. Ivrendi and Isikoglu's (2010) study provides further evidence here, as their sample of Turkish fathers demonstrated a clear link between play perceptions and parental play involvement. When they considered play to contribute to learning, they participated within their children's play more often.

Even when parents are aware of the benefits of play, other factors may serve as blockers to parental involvement. For example, single parents may find it difficult to involve themselves in play due to being 'time poor' (Kendig & Bianchi, 2008). Whilst married mothers' time spent with their children has shown an increase in previous years, single mothers' time spent with their children decreased (Bianchi, 2000), possibly as they are likely to be the sole breadwinner for the family. However, the notion of being 'time poor' may be wider-reaching than single parents in the modern day. For instance, a survey conducted by the Real Play Coalition (2018) found 81 per cent of children wishing their parents would play with them more, but 49 per cent of parents, both single and married, stated they do not have enough time to play.

Studies of low-income parents have highlighted other potential blockers to parental play involvement. For example, Smith et al. (2015) explored the play involvement of mothers experiencing intergenerational poverty. Their findings suggest that even when the mothers held positive perceptions of playtime and parental involvement, they often reported not engaging in play

with their child. Low-income parents may lack the confidence to provide high-quality play experiences for their children through their involvement. This was evidenced in following interviews with the Smith et al. (2015) participants, who expressed a belief that they were not 'adequate play partners'. Research by McHardy (2015) found that a key coping mechanism of families with a low-income was to cut down on leisure activities due to a lack of financial resources. Cutting down on outside-of-home activities increases the importance of cultivating play opportunities inside the home, though blockers such as a lack of confidence may negatively impact parents' ability to provide this.

Intervening with the issue

A review by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013) stressed a lack of recognition for play's importance at a governmental level in the UK. More focus is needed on the issue of play's decline in order to cultivate new societal attitudes that promote and support play activities. Furthermore, as the steady decline of play in schools does not seem to be slowing down any time soon, it is also vital that parents feel confident in providing play opportunities which are enriching and sophisticated within the home.

Awareness interventions could cultivate positive perceptions of play and parental play-involvement. Consequently, such interventions could also drive a push towards a curriculum which utilises play rather than shelving it to focus on structured academic activities. Previous parent education programmes have been successful in enhancing child development, encouraging age-appropriate care and building essential parenting skills (Family Strengthening Policy Centre, 2007). Success has also been seen in specific play campaigns led by 'Play Scotland'. Their 'PlayTalkRead' campaign provided resources for parents which focused on the importance of play and suggested how to implement play

within the home to enhance development and learning. This campaign was extremely successful in cultivating positive attitudes towards play and increasing acknowledgement of play's benefits; an evaluation of its impact found 84% of parents surveyed to acknowledge the benefits of playing, talking and reading for their child's development (Play Scotland, 2011).

Those aware of the campaign were also more likely to agree that they should play more to benefit their child and there was a small 7% increase in parents who reported playing 'several times a day' with their child (Play Scotland, 2011), despite parental involvement not being the main focus of the campaign. This suggests that an additional campaign, which specifically focuses on parental play involvement, could enhance the outcomes already observed here. By disseminating evidence for the importance of parental play involvement and giving suggestions to parents on how to effectively achieve this, greater confidence can be built for parents in their ability to facilitate play in the home.

Though England has a similar organisation to 'Play Scotland' named 'Play England' which has successfully addressed issues of limited outdoor play spaces, they are yet to actively target the education of parents

on the importance of play. An evaluation of the organisation stated that stakeholders in the charity have acknowledged the ongoing challenge of improving the general public's attitude towards play and that this requires more attention (Blades & Gill, 2010). The Real Play Coalition (2018) has recently released a report detailing the need for meaningful research into the impact of play for wellbeing and development to further build awareness of the importance of play and how to integrate it into everyday life. Later this year they plan to release a 'Play Gap Report' which will highlight what they term as the 'silent play emergency' in children's lives, providing a clearer understanding of the issue and strategic resolutions to tackle this. Greater efforts are needed to halt this worrying trend of play decline in the child's two main environments, but without governmental recognition, this is a challenge.

Correspondence

Holly Stokes

MSc Applied Psychology Student,
Coventry University;
Psychological Experimental Officer,
Arden University
Email: Hollystokes1997@icloud.com

References

- Bianchi, S.M. (2000). Maternal employment and time with children: dramatic change or surprising continuity? *Demography*, 37(4), 401–414. doi:10.1353%2Fdem.2000.0001
- Bodrova, E. & Leong, D. (2003). The importance of being playful. *Educational Leadership*, 60(7), 50–53.
- Bredenkamp, S. (2004). Play and school readiness. In E.F. Zigler, D.G. Singer, & S.J. Bishop-Josef (Eds.) *Children's play: The roots of reading* (pp.159–174). Washington, DC: Zero to Three.
- Brook, J.S., Whiteman, M., Gordon, A.S. & Cohen, P. (1986). Dynamics of childhood and adolescent personality traits and adolescent drug use. *Developmental Psychology*, 22(3), 403–414.
- Brook, J.S., Whiteman, M., Gordon, A.S. & Cohen, P. (1989). Changes in drug involvement: A longitudinal study of childhood and adolescent determinants. *Psychological Reports*, 65, 707–726.
- Family Strengthening Policy Centre (2007). *The Parenting imperative: Investing in parents so children and youth can succeed* (Policy Brief No.22). Retrieved from www.nassembly.org/fspc/practice/practices.html
- Fisher, K.R., Hirsh-Pasek, K., Golinkoff, R.M. & Grye, S.G. (2008). Conceptual split? Parents' and experts' perceptions of play in the 21st century. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 29, 305–316.
- Ginsburg, K. (2007). The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds. *Paediatrics*, 119(1), 182–191. doi:10.1542/peds.2006-2697
- Gleave, J. & Cole-Hamilton, I. (2012). *A literature review on the effects of a lack of play on children's lives*. London: Play England.

- Hewes, J. (2014). Seeking balance in motion: The role of spontaneous free play in promoting social and emotional health in early childhood care and education. *Children, 1*, 280–301.
- Ivrendi, A. & Isikoglu, N. (2010). A Turkish view of father's involvement in children's play. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 37*(6), 519–526.
- Kane, N. (2016). The play-learning binary: U.S. parents' perceptions on preschool play in a neoliberal age. *Children & Society, 30*(4), 290–301.
- Keating, I., Fabian, H., Jordan, P., Mavers, D. & Roberts, J. (2000). 'Well, I've not done any work today. I don't know why i came to school': Perceptions of play in the reception class. *Educational Studies, 26*(4), 437–454
- Kendig, S.M. & Bianchi, S.M. (2008). Single, cohabiting and married mother's time with children. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 70*(5), 1228–1240.
- Luthar, S.S., Cicchetti, D. & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development, 71*(3), 543–562.
- Marjanovič-Umek, L. & Fekonja-Peklaj, U. (2017). The roles of child gender and parental knowledge of child development in parent-child interactive play. *Sex Roles, 77*(7–8), 496–509.
- McHardy, F. (2015). Playing in and around the home: Play and poverty in Fife. Glasgow: The Poverty Alliance. Retrieved from www.povertyalliance.org/userfiles/files/Play%26Poverty_in_Fife_FINAL_March15.pdf
- OFSTED (2015). *Teaching and play in the early years – A balancing act? (150085)*. Manchester: Crown. Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444147/Teaching-and-play-in-the-early-years-a-balancing-act.pdf
- Play Scotland (2011). *Play talk read*. Briefing paper no.8. Retrieved from www.playscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/No8-Play-Talk-Read.pdf
- RealPlay Coalition (2018). *Value of play report*. Retrieved from www.realplaycoalition.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/The-Real-Play-Coalition_Value-of-Play-Report.pdf
- Roskos, K. & Christie, J. (2001). Examining the play-literacy interface: A critical review and future directions. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 1*(1), 59–89.
- Smith, R.L., Stagnitti, K., Lewis, A.J. & Pépin, G. (2015). The views of parents who experience intergenerational poverty on parenting and play: A qualitative analysis. *Child: Care, Health and Development, 41*(6), 873–881.
- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013). *General comment No.17 on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (Art.31)*. Retrieved from www.refworld.org/docid/51ef9bcc4.html
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Developing a guided imagery intervention in consultation with service users

Kelsey Smith, Emmeline Goodby & Louise Johns

Guided imagery interventions have a range of applications to affect emotion, thought and behaviour. They may be effectively used by staff with minimal training and are simple and quick to use. Service user involvement is essential in developing a guided imagery intervention. This article provides guidance on how to develop an effective and vivid guided imagery intervention in collaboration with service users. Guidance is also offered on how to administer and review these interventions.

MENTAL IMAGERY describes the perceptual experience of ‘seeing with the mind’s eye’ or ‘hearing with the mind’s ear’ rather than perceiving information directly from the senses (Kosslyn et al., 2001). Mental imagery has a greater impact on emotion than does verbal-based thought (Holmes & Mathews, 2010), and imagining the performance of a task in detail increases motivation (Vasquez & Buehler, 2007) and the likelihood of completing it in the future (Libby et al., 2007).

Given the power of mental imagery, it may affect emotion, motivation and behaviour and contribute to difficulties with mental health across diagnostic categories. Evidence supports this across mood disorders, psychosis, suicidal behaviour, substance-related and addictive disorders (Ji et al., 2019). Guided imagery interventions have shown promise for improving symptoms of several disorders, including improving depression (Holmes et al., 2016) and social anxiety (McEvoy et al., 2015) and increasing anticipatory success for future events in people with psychosis (Cox et al., 2016).

Purpose of the research

This article outlines the development of a single-session imagery intervention to improve future-directed thinking (that is, the process of imagining possible future

events) in people with first-episode psychosis. Psychosis may be defined as a loss of touch with reality, for instance seeing or hearing things that others do not, strongly holding unusual or unsubstantiated beliefs, or having disorganised speech or behaviour (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Two valences of imagery script (positive and neutral) were developed as our study aimed to ascertain any differences in the effectiveness of these at enhancing future-directed thinking.

This article describes the process of developing a guided imagery intervention, the importance of service user involvement, and feedback on the acceptability and utility of the imagery intervention. Although the population we recruited were people with first-episode psychosis, the process should be applicable across clinical populations.

Developing a guided imagery intervention

The researchers created both positive and neutral guided imagery scripts, designed to elicit a detailed imagining of a future event and an everyday object respectively. The positive script aimed to encourage thoughts and feelings of anticipatory pleasure and success, and the neutral script to encourage a similar focus on the scenario by detailing sensory qualities, but avoid eliciting strong thoughts or emotions. It was key that each

script be perceived of as intended (positively or neutrally) by the participants.

Initially, a questionnaire was given to service users in a local early intervention in psychosis service with example scenarios of possible future events (e.g. 'being successful at an interview', 'walking around a supermarket', 'catching the bus into town'. They were asked to select whether they would consider these to be positive, neutral or negative, and to provide examples of other future scenarios they would see as positive, neutral or negative. Seven service users completed this questionnaire and the results were collated. No example was viewed as positive or neutral by all service users, although several were rated consistently by six of the seven service users.

Consequently, the researchers agreed that providing participants with a choice of scenarios from those most consistently rated would be an acceptable method of ensuring that each participant listened to an imagery script which they perceived as either positive or neutral (depending on which experimental condition they were assigned to). Three scenarios that were perceived as positive by most service users (a successful interview, catching up with a friend and receiving positive feedback at work) were selected for the positive imagery script. Three objects that were generally perceived as neutral were chosen for the descriptive neutral condition (a rug, a chair and a table).

The next task was to develop these themes into imagery scripts that would evoke detailed and vivid images. It is important that an imagery intervention simulates all of the senses and allows the participant to feel as though they are really present in the imagined scene. Provisional written scripts and audio recordings were discussed with a service user, who provided constructive feedback regarding the speed of speech and how to ensure the neutral scripts remained engaging while emotionally neutral. This constructive feedback was applied to create the final guided imagery interventions. In line with this feedback, a practice task was first conducted

for each participant, where detailed instructions were given; for example, to close their eyes, use all of their senses, and to bring their attention back if it wandered away. A practice task which required patients to vividly imagine a lemon in detail was then used to elicit reflections on the participant's ability to imagine an object in detail and ways of increasing its vividness for the imagery intervention.

Feedback on the imagery interventions

These interventions were delivered to participants with first-episode psychosis as part of a larger research project. Participants were randomised to either the positive or neutral imagery condition. They selected one of the three scenarios within each condition to listen to twice in succession. Feedback was collected by visual analogue scales which ranged from 0 to 10. When asked 'from 0–10 how easy was it to concentrate on the imagery exercise?', where 10 was very easy to concentrate, the average score was 6.66 ($SD = 2.44$). When asked 'from 0–10 how vivid was the mental image in your mind?', where 10 was very vivid, the average score was 6.61 ($SD = 2.15$). When asked 'from 0–10 how much did it feel as though you were really in the situation being described?', where 10 was I really felt as though I was there, the average score was 6.50 ($SD = 2.17$). Most participants felt as though their mental image was more vivid the second time, they listened to the script used to generate the image.

The feedback demonstrates that participants were able to concentrate on the imagery exercise, develop a vivid mental image and, to some degree, feel as though they were really in the situation being described. The observation that participants found it easier to create a vivid mental image when listening to the guidance for a second time supports using repetition of imagery exercises to enhance images. The study wished to examine the potential of mental imagery to enhance future-directed thinking in people with psychosis, therefore it was important to ensure that this intervention was as effective as possible.

Guidance for other researchers developing imagery interventions

Although the imagery exercises were developed for a specific purpose, and created with, and tailored for, a specific population, some key aspects are relevant for those wishing to develop imagery interventions with other clinical groups. Firstly, it is important to consider what the imagery intervention is aiming to achieve, to guide the content of the image and what aspects to focus on. For example, the goal could be to increase activity levels, increase anticipated enjoyment, or change self-perception.

Secondly, meaningful and iterative service user consultation and feedback is invaluable. In order to design an imagery intervention that carries the intended meaning and is acceptable, input and feedback from those who have experience of the problem are essential. For instance, in our study to convey the mixed thoughts and emotions, someone may have when receiving positive feedback at

work. The finding that our imagery exercises were acceptable to participants supports the ability of clinicians to develop idiosyncratic imagery exercises that suit their populations and which may be of help.

Correspondence

Kelsey Smith

Clinical Psychologist, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, Warneford Hospital, Oxford

Email: kelsey.smith@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Dr Emmeline Goodby

Clinical Psychologist, Oxford Early Intervention in Psychosis Service, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, Warneford Hospital, Oxford

Dr Louise Johns

Consultant Academic Clinical Psychologist, Oxford Early Intervention in Psychosis Service, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, Warneford Hospital, Oxford

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th edn). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association.
- Cox, C., Jolley, S. & Johns, L. (2016). Understanding and treating amotivation in people with psychosis: An experimental study of the role of guided imagery. *Psychiatry Research*, 246, 387–391.
- Holmes, E.A., Blackwell, S.E., Burnett Heyes, S., Renner, F. & Raes, F. (2016). Mental imagery in depression: Phenomenology, potential mechanisms and treatment implications. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 12, 249–280.
- Holmes, E.A. & Mathews, A. (2010). Mental imagery in emotion and emotional disorders. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 30, 349–362.
- Ji, J.L., Kavanagh, D.J., Holmes, E.A., MacLeod, C. & di Simplicio, M. (2019). Mental imagery in psychiatry: Conceptual and clinical implications. *CNS Spectrums*, 24, 114–126.
- Kosslyn, S.M., Ganis, G. & Thompson, W.L. (2001). Neural foundations of imagery. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 2(9), 635–642.
- Libby, L.K., Shaeffer, E.M., Eibach, R.P. & Slemmer, J.A. (2007). Picture yourself at the polls: Visual perspective in mental imagery affects self-perception and behavior. *Psychological Science*, 18(3), 199–203.
- McEvoy, P.M., Erceg-Hurn, D.M., Saulsman, L.M. & Thibodeau, M.A. (2015). Imagery enhancements increase the effectiveness of cognitive behavioural therapy for social anxiety disorder: A benchmarking study. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 65, 42–51.
- Vasquez, N.A. & Buehler, R. (2007). Seeing future success: Does imagery perspective influence achievement motivation? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(10), 1392–1405.

The constellation of psychopathy: All in the brain? A critical review of the neuroscientific literature

Louise Bowen

Psychopathy is a complex personality disorder encompassing a constellation of behavioural, affective and interpersonal features. This critical review considers the neuroscientific literature in relation to the disorder. The neuroscience of psychopathy is a burgeoning field with promise, both in terms of diagnosis and potential treatment. Akin to any discipline in its early stages, the study of psychopathology is also fraught with interpretative variation caused by methodological inconsistencies. Moving forward, two issues will be fundamental in the maintenance of momentum in this field: (i) overcoming issues in methodology, and (ii) application of the knowledge gleaned to diverse fields, such as legal ethics and neurogenetics.

PSYCHOPATHY is a complex personality disorder, encompassing a constellation of behavioural, affective and interpersonal features, including antisocial behaviour, lack of empathy, superficial charm, glibness and grandiosity (Hare, 2003). The disorder can be difficult to identify due to the psychopath's propensity toward displaying a façade of congeniality, which obscures significant deficits in interpersonal attachment, guilt and empathy (Cleckley, 1988). From a conceptual point of view, the operationalisation of psychopathy is fraught with challenges concerning the boundaries and nature of the disorder. Clarity of definition is hampered further by the relation of psychopathy to its supposed counterpart: anti-social personality disorder (ASPD; Smith & Lilienfeld, 2015). Whilst the two disorders are moderately correlated, particularly within the remit of antisocial behaviour, they differ both conceptually and empirically. Conceptually, ASPD is operationalised as a pattern of behaviour which violates social norms, whereas psychopathy is operationalised by personality dispositions (Lilienfeld et al., 1994). Empirically,

psychopathy delineates from ASPD by its more pronounced affective and interpersonal facets, particularly those of superficial charm and callousness (Venables et al., 2014). Challenges of conceptualisation were addressed by Hare (1980) with the development of the Psychopathy Checklist (PCL) and its revision, Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 2003), intended to measure antisocial behaviours and personality traits connected with psychopathy. The PCL-R distinguishes between several psychopathic features, treated as dimensional characteristics including lifestyle (e.g. irresponsibility), affective (e.g. shallow emotions), interpersonal (e.g. superficial charm) and antisocial (e.g. poor behavioural controls). Indeed, the checklist is widely used in basic, applied and neuroimaging research (e.g. Contreras-Rodríguez et al., 2015). Conversely, recent research conducted by Ismail and Looman (2016) called into question the inter-rater reliability of the PCL-R in applied settings, contending that whilst the checklist has been established as consistent in research contexts, it lacks support for reliability

in field settings. As a result, research exploring the inter-rater reliability of the PCL-R in a non-adversarial field setting ($n = 178$) found the reliability of the tool in field settings comparable to those in research settings. Inter-rater reliabilities, as measured by intra-class correlation coefficients, yielded .90 for the scale overall, this being considered close to an 'almost perfect' agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977) and interestingly, higher than those originally reported by Hare (2003). Along the same vein, the reliability and validity of the PCL-R as a method of assessing psychopathy in prison, psychiatric and forensic settings is well supported in empirical, theoretical and experimental literature (e.g. Storey et al., 2016; Hare & Neumann, 2008).

Given the extreme profile of psychopathic individuals, there has been significant interest in the phenomena. To date, two theoretical camps dominate the field of psychopathy. The first focuses on deficiencies in emotion processing, attributing psychopathic dysfunction to an inability to develop typical moral emotions such as empathy and guilt, as well as a general inability to experience or learn from fear (Hamilton et al., 2015). The second views psychopathy as an attentional disorder, suggesting that psychopathic traits do not stem from emotion deficit but are instead manifestations of broader cognitive deficiencies (Zeier et al., 2009). Although both theories have undeniable strengths, there is surprisingly little integration across theories. Therefore, no single model addresses psychopathic syndrome in its entirety. By way of illustration, emotion-focused models neglect the non-affective information deficit and situational specificity of psychopathy proposed by attentional theorists. In contrast, attention-based models have yet to address growing evidence pointing to brain abnormalities associated with psychopathy (Hamilton et al., 2015). Arguably, this lack of integration hinders a holistic appreciation of the psychopathy construct. Critically, it also risks simplifying the disorder.

Aims and methodology

The present review focuses on functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) research of psychopathic personality in adulthood. Specifically, fMRI studies published in peer reviewed journals, assessing male psychopathy using the PCL-R (for ease of comparison) with the aim of establishing the major functional neural correlates of psychopathy. In addition, literature considered for inclusion is limited to studies published from 2010 onward to afford a more contemporary picture of the extant literature. It is suggested that an understanding of the neurological underpinnings of the disorder may improve therapeutic interventions (Del Casale et al., 2015). However, certain methodological issues are currently hampering progress in this regard.

Cortical network alterations and psychopathy

A major gap in the research concerning neural correlates of psychopathy concerns the impact of cortical network connectivity alterations on the disorder. Indeed, several psychiatric conditions have recently been acknowledged as disorders of neural circuitry; large-scale network connectivity perceived as a critical biological parameter related to mental health. This is supported by an array of neuroimaging research connecting various psychiatric disorders with altered resting state connectivity in distinct cortical networks (Whitfield-Gabrieli & Ford, 2012). Philippi et al. (2015) addressed this issue, examining whether psychopathy has an association with alterations in the functional connectivity involving three large-scale cortical networks. Using fMRI, resting state functional connectivity (computed using seeds from frontoparietal, default and cingulo-opercular networks, and two comparison sensory networks; auditory and visual), were related to psychopathy scores in 142 prison inmates. Findings suggested overall psychopathy sensitivity is associated with a reduction in functional

connectivity between the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex (dACC) and the lateral parietal cortex. Intriguingly, the dissociation between functional connectivity between the dACC and the anterior insula cingulate cortex were particularly evident, indicating that neurobiological correlates of the factors are distinct. Conversely, no association was demonstrated between functional connectivity within auditory or visual networks and psychopathy scores. Taken together, findings point to alterations in interactions within multiple cortical-networks, as well as distinctions between network characteristics for psychopathy factors. These findings suggest a potential neurobiological marker of the disorder may lie with the connectivity between cortical association hubs, such as the dACC. Whilst such findings build on the work of Contreras-Rodríguez et al. (2015), in which diminished dACC was also observed in psychopathy, the functional significance of such decreased connectivity remains elusive. Notably, some theorists posit the interaction of the regions as part of the unitary frontoparietal control system could be important for the integration of cognitive information. This lack of clarity might be addressed by further fMRI research using cognitive tasks to examine whether dACC dysfunction is linked to externally directed attention, such as external stimulus processing and cognitively demanding undertakings. In this way, the role (or otherwise) of the dACC in psychopathy may become more apparent.

Psychopathy and the amygdala

Reduction in amygdala volume has been implicated in the development of the psychopathic personality. This connection is perhaps intuitive given the importance of the amygdala in the role of several aspects of emotion processing (Baxter & Croxson, 2012). It is significant to note, however, that null findings have also been reported in this regard (e.g. Skeem & Cooke, 2010). Nonetheless, lower amygdala volume, associated with aggression and psychopathic

personality traits in adults as well as children, could be a useful biomarker for the delineation of individuals at risk of developing psychopathy. However, there is little research on the impact of amygdala volume on psychopathic features from childhood to adulthood. Of the limited literature available, notable research includes that of Pardini et al. (2013), who examined longitudinal data from 503 male subjects, recruited whilst at primary school during the 1980s. At age 26, the cohort was examined for signs of aggression or violence, with 56 individuals having exhibited these behaviours recruited for a neuroimaging study. Individual differences in amygdala volume in childhood and adolescence were analysed to examine potential associations between amygdala volume and psychopathic features. Results revealed males with lower amygdala volume exhibited higher levels of psychopathic features from childhood through to adulthood. Furthermore, the association was observed during three year follow up, providing some support for the hypothesis that amygdala volume may be a useful biomarker for the emergence of psychopathy. These findings have undeniable utility in our appreciation of the disorder. Critically, the authors also recommend more rigorous research attention to regions like the amygdala in order to ascertain the complex dynamics the relationship between structural abnormalities and anti-social facets of psychopathy.

Punishment, reward and the ventral striatum

It has been theorised for many years that psychopaths have distinct deficits in processing both punishment and reward (e.g. Cleckley, 1988), due in part to the high level of criminal recidivism apparent in individuals with the disorder. The ventral striatum (VS) functions as the main cortical target for mesolimbic dopamine neurons and the resultant signalling of prediction and receipt of pleasure rewarding stimuli. Subsequently, this area appears to be an obvious region

of interest for exploration with regard to psychopathology (Shultz, 2010). In line with this view, recent research has robustly demonstrated the association of psychopathic traits with increased VS activity during the anticipation of monetary gain – although it should be noted that the relationship between psychopathy and neural responses related to monetary loss was not considered in this study (Bjork et al. (2012). Pujara et al. (2014) examined the neural correlates of gain and loss in psychopathy, using both magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and fMRI. Questions previously overlooked in the neuroscientific literature, such as whether psychopaths have significantly altered loss and/or reward sensitivity in the VS, and whether there is a relationship between psychopathy severity and such loss and reward, offer a convergent theory. This in turn leads to a novel comprehension of the neural substrates of psychopathy. In a similar study, forty-one male prison inmates, of whom eighteen were identified as psychopaths by the PCL-R and twenty-three non-psychopaths completed an fMRI imaging task involving the loss or gain of money. Results demonstrated no overall differences in mean levels of VS activity between psychopaths and non-psychopaths. Importantly though, a marked difference was observed in the relationship between VS activity to loss or reward and severity of psychopathy between the groups, with non-psychopaths demonstrating no significant correlation and psychopaths demonstrating a strong positive correlation. Furthermore, the volume of the accumbens area of the right VS correlated positively with psychopathy severity amongst psychopaths. This indicates that differences in accumbens volume, coupled with differential VS activity relative to losses and gains, may directly correspond to greater levels of psychopathic behaviour. Consequently, rehabilitation programmes which focus on treating behavioural problems in psychopaths in the same way as non-psychopaths are doomed to failure, perhaps explaining high rates of reoffending amongst this population.

Emotion processing and psychopathy

Turning attention toward the aforementioned deficits in emotion processing account, recent research undertaken by Anderson et al. (2017) explored the neural underpinnings responsible for such effects. Emotion–attention interactions among 120 incarcerated participants were examined using a task designed to manipulate attention toward the emotional features of implicit and explicit visual stimuli and attention facilitation processing. Results demonstrated antisocial lifestyle factors, as measured by the PCL-R, were associated with increased activity in both the amygdala and related salience network areas. Additionally, the affective-interpersonal factors relating to psychopathy were connected with decreased emotion dependent expansion of activity during visual implicit emotional processing in visual processing areas. During explicit emotional processing, upregulation in the superior frontal regions, insula and medial prefrontal cortex were associated with psychopathic traits. However, after isolating the impact of explicit attention on emotional stimuli, only affective-interpersonal factors led to heightened activity in the angular gyrus and upregulation of activity in the visual processing stream. These observations suggest the existence of – as well as reaffirm the importance of – attention facilitation processing when evaluating differences related to emotion in psychopathy – although arguably there is a great deal still to be learnt from these findings. The source of compromised emotional-dependent facilitation of neural activity is still unclear, with several explanations, such as possible failures in amygdala feedback currently remaining largely neglected by researchers.

Conclusions

Without doubt, findings from research using neuroimaging to identify brain anomalies in psychopathy have implications for both the legal and clinical management of psychopaths. That said, methodological

concerns ought to be acknowledged in the current context. Most importantly, heterogeneity in psychopathy imaging data may be hampered by inconsistencies in the procedure for identifying and evaluating psychopaths. Whilst the literature discussed in the present work has been selected due to the use of the PCL-R, such scores are ideally generated by way of a review of file records, such as criminal records. This is possible in research conducted on prison inmates; however, samples using non-incarcerated individuals may be deprived of such information, as was apparent in recent research undertaken by Glenn et al. (2010). It is certainly possible that such criteria inconsistency adversely impact reproducibility and variability of imaging research findings. Indeed, psychopathy imaging studies have employed a multitude of different design and analysis protocols, with some using complex decision-making tasks and others adopting simplistic passive viewing tasks. Furthermore, some researchers focus exclusively on *a priori* determined regions of interest in the brain, whereas others comment upon observed effects throughout the brain, creating confusion as to the potential connectivity (or otherwise) between regions (Koenigs et al., 2011). Despite this, the neuroscience of psychopathy is a burgeoning field with much promise in terms of diagnosis and potential treatment. Akin to any discipline in its early stages, it is bound to be fraught with interpretative variation caused by methodological incon-

sistencies (Pardini et al., 2012). Additionally, it is sensible to consider structural and functional brain abnormalities identified in psychopaths in combination with other factors, such as heredity and the environment (O’Nions et al., 2015), which although beyond the scope of the current review may also play a significant part in the development of the disorder.

Moving forward, two issues will be fundamental in the maintenance of momentum in the progress we are currently enjoying. The first is overcoming issues in methodology already discussed. The second is the application of the knowledge gleaned to more diverse fields, such as legal ethics and neurogenetics. Certainly, evidence supportive of psychopathy as a persistent neurocognitive disorder, with a strong genetic component is rapidly accumulating, calling into question issues of responsibility and sentencing in criminal settings. In this respect, interdisciplinary collaboration, together with a commitment to rigorous experimental methods, may hold the key to the neural correlates of the constellation of psychopathy.

Correspondence

Louise Bowen

PhD Researcher

School of Psychology

Cardiff University

Email: BowenL7@cardiff.ac.uk

References

- American Psychiatric Association (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th edn). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.
- Anderson, N.E., Steele, V.R., Maurer, J.M. et al. (2017). Differentiating emotional processing and attention in psychopathy with functional neuroimaging. *Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral Neuroscience*, 35, 131–151.
- Baxter, M.G. & Crosson, P.L. (2012). Facing the role of the amygdala in emotional information processing. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109, 21180–21181.
- Bjork, J.M., Chen, G. & Hommer, D.W. (2012). Psychopathic tendencies and mesolimbic recruitment by cues for instrumental and passively obtained rewards. *Biological Psychology*, 89, 8–15.
- Cleckley, H. (1988). *The mask of sanity*. St Louis: Mosby.
- Contreras-Rodríguez, O., Pujol, J., Batalla, I. et al. (2015). Functional connectivity bias in the prefrontal cortex of psychopaths. *Biological Psychiatry*, 78, 647–655.
- Del Casale, A., Kotzalidis, G.D., Rapinesi, C. et al. (2015). Functional neuroimaging in psychopathy. *Neuropsychobiology*, 72, 97–117.

- Glenn, A.L., Raine, A., Yaralian, P.S. & Yang, Y. (2010). Increased volume of the striatum in psychopathic individuals. *Biological Psychiatry*, *67*, 58–58.
- Hamilton, R.K.B., Racer, K. & Newman, J.P. (2015). Impaired integration in psychopathy: A unified theory of psychopathic dysfunction. *Psychological Review*, *122*, 770–791.
- Hare, R.D. (1980). A research scale for the assessment of psychopathy in criminal populations. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *1*, 111–119.
- Hare, R.D. (2003). *Hare Psychopathy Checklist-Revised PCL-R*. Ontario: Multi-Health Systems.
- Hare, R.D. & Neumann, C.S. (2008). Psychopathy as a clinical and empirical construct. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, *4*, 217–246.
- Koenigs, M., Baskin-Sommers, A., Zeier, J. & Newman, J.P. (2011). Investigating the neural correlates of psychopathy: A critical review. *Molecular Psychiatry*, *16*, 792–729.
- Kiehl, K.A. (2006). A cognitive neuroscience perspective on psychopathy: Evidence for paralimbic system dysfunction. *Psychiatry Research*, *142*, 107–128.
- Landis, J.R. & Koch, G.G. (1977). The measurement of observer agreement for categorical data. *Biometrics*, *33*, 159–174.
- Lilienfeld, S.O., Waldman, I.D. & Israel, A.C. (1994). A critical examination of the use of the term comorbidity in psychopathology research. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, *1*, 71–83.
- Marsh, A.A., Finger, E.C., Fowler, K.A. et al. (2011). Reduced amygdala-orbitofrontal connectivity during moral judgments in youths with disruptive behavior disorders and psychopathic traits. *Psychiatry Research Neuroimaging*, *194*, 279–286.
- O’Nions, E., Tick, B., Rijdsdijk, F. et al. (2015). Examining the genetic and environmental associations between autistic social and communication deficits and psychopathic callous-unemotional traits. *PLOS ONE*, *10*, 239–257.
- Pardini, D.A., Raine, A., Erickson, K. & Loeber, R. (2013). Lower amygdala volume in men is associated with childhood aggression, early psychopathic traits, and future violence. *Biological Psychiatry*, *75*, 73–80.
- Phillipi, C.L., Pujara, M., Motzkin, J.P. et al. (2015). Altered resting-state functional connectivity in cortical networks in psychopathy. *Journal of Neuroscience*, *35*, 6068–6078.

A reflection on implementing an acceptance and commitment therapy group in an NHS adult community mental health team

Katie Place & Katie Veale

This article reflects on incorporating the 'Plan-Do-Study-Act' quality improvement model to develop, test, implement and evaluate an acceptance and commitment therapy group within an NHS adult community mental health team.

ACCEPTANCE and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a third wave therapy encouraging people to live a meaningful life, accepting their inner experiences, which is referred to as psychological flexibility. This method is in contrast to trying to remove or change their inner experiences, even if they are unwanted, which is referred to as experiential avoidance. A meaningful life, in terms of ACT, is a life in which people behave in ways that fit with their values (Hayes et al., 1999: 2001). ACT is a transdiagnostic approach, which does not require an individual to have any particular diagnostic label; instead, ACT aims to be useful for anyone feeling 'stuck' (Hayes et al., 2001). An Adult Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) incorporated the 'Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA)' model for quality improvement to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of an ACT group (ACT Academy, 2018). After the group finished, the two facilitators, an assistant psychologist and a trainee clinical psychologist, engaged in a formal reflective session informed by Gibbs reflective cycle (Gibbs, 1988) and was facilitated by the group supervisor, a clinical psychologist.

Reflections of PDSA: Plan

ACT is a relatively new therapeutic approach and the availability of treatment protocols is limited (Jacobs et al., 2018). The eight-week group was therefore inspired by a similar eight-week group offered in local perinatal services and drew on other resources including 'ACT made simple' (Harris, 2009) and online video content (Harris, 2016). The group protocol and booklet were approved by the local psychology team and a local ACT training course. Delivery involved group discussion, group attendees sharing their own experiences and multimodal learning including videos, demonstrations, metaphors, roleplays and experiential exercises (Luoma et al., 2007).

We were aware that amendments would be made to the group protocol and booklet after facilitating the ACT group, the amendments would be in line with the group attendees' feedback. This meant that the facilitators provided space to discuss the content and structure of the group with group attendees after each week. Although this was not written in the protocol, it was apparent space for discussion on the group's development felt beneficial for the facilitators and the group attendees. In these discussions, some attendees reported that certain videos

and metaphors were difficult to relate to, which subsequently facilitated further group discussion around ACT concepts. Facilitators observed how group attendees appeared to feel empowered when invited to offer suggestions to change the booklet and content. Amendments were made; for example, quotes from group attendees will be included in future booklets so content feels more relatable. Additionally, facilitators and attendees shared a preference for the topics of 'emotions' and 'values' to be discussed earlier in the group to reinforce the purpose of the other topics (i.e. mindfulness and thought defusion). Observation made by the facilitators and verbal feedback from group attendees indicated 'thought defusion' can be a challenging concept and should come later on in the group when the ACT model is more familiar. Therefore, the order of the group content will be rearranged accordingly. Group attendees expressed that the group felt too short and did not cover specific problems such as trauma and self-esteem. This may reflect the fact that the majority of people invited to the group were waiting for trauma therapy. Subsequent groups will be ten weeks long and include these topics, following staff training. Overall, emphasising the value in engaging the intended audience in the development and the planning part of the PDSA cycle.

Reflections of PDSA: Do

A letter of invitation was sent to people waiting the longest for psychology input with the rationale of working towards the government waiting time targets. Some of those invited were previously considered unsuitable for group work, hence being on the individual therapy waiting list. Someone may be thought of as unsuitable for group work due to the severity of their symptoms and ability to tolerate a group setting. Twenty-five people were invited despite the group being able to accommodate a maximum of twelve, as we expected a low turnout because those invited were not expecting to have group input. Additionally, on average for the other

groups our CMHT facilitated had an average turnout of half of those invited. Considering that people invited to the group were referred for individual psychology input rather than group input and 36 per cent of the people invited attended, this showed us that people may be more willing to engage in group input than originally thought.

The qualitative feedback forms and quantitative outcome measures suggested that those who attended the group found it beneficial (e.g. knowing that they were not alone with their struggles). Individuals who dropped out of the group also stated on their qualitative feedback forms that they had gained something from the group (e.g. knowledge that they can step outside of their comfort zone). Initially, this evoked an emotional response of frustration and unfairness that people were quickly being categorised as appropriate or not appropriate for group input. Therefore, it would be helpful to formally collect information on the type of assumptions that are being made when staff are determining whether someone was suitable for group input. These assumptions are clearly impacting on an individual's journey through the service. To begin to address these assumptions, information about ACT will be disseminated through the multidisciplinary team to emphasise that individuals with different difficulties can connect in a supportive way. Poster adverts placed in waiting rooms could also help individuals make informed decisions about attending the ACT group.

From the nine people that initially attended the group, four later dropped out and five completed the group. Group drop out is a common occurrence across other groups our CMHT facilitate, and was not unique to this group, therefore some drop out was expected. In our reflection, we explored ways to reduce the dropout rate and to increase the number of group attendees. Considering the anxiety provoking nature of attending a group with unfamiliar people in an unfamiliar location, we contemplated reducing the unfamiliarity by meeting with

people on a one-to-one basis prior to the group. However, due to limited staff and limited capacity we did not feel that this was achievable in our service. Additionally, facilitators and group attendees thought that the interaction between a group attendee that had completed the ACT group and group attendees that were about to begin the group felt beneficial to 'sell' the group. This process may elicit hope for new attendees and encourage them to continue to attend therefore reducing dropout rates. Therefore, in the CMHT there is a relatively new 'volunteer co-facilitator' project running this will be considered for a future ACT group.

The group dynamics were reflected on and the facilitator observed difficulties between group attendees when they felt the group did not allow space for everyone to contribute to discussions. It was explored whether it would be of benefit to consider group dynamics before inviting people to attend. However, despite some difficulties in the group dynamics, it enabled group attendees to practise tolerating uncomfortable emotions and thoughts. Additionally, it was felt that facilitating group attendees to give and receive validation was of benefit, eliciting the sense that group attendees were being understood and could relate to one another despite their differences. At the end of the group, the attendees set themselves up a WhatsApp group and stayed in touch once the sessions had finished. Rather than considering group dynamics prior to the invitation process, the facilitators would be mindful and address any difficult group dynamics, as it was apparent that valuable learning was had from these difficult group dynamics.

Reflection of PDSA: Study

At the beginning and end of the eight-week group, two outcome measures were completed to evaluate the effectiveness of the group. The outcome measures used were the CORE-34 (1993) as it was a requirement of the service and ACE-II an ACT specific outcome measure. When analysing the data, it appeared that the measures used did not explore the commit-

ment to living life by your values. The Recovering Quality of Life (ReQoL; Keetharuth et al., 2018), the Valued Living Questionnaire (TVLQ) (Wilson & Murrell, 2004) and Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS; Mundt et al., 2002) appeared to capture this, and we considered adding one of these to the outcome measures used. Facilitators were mindful of balancing service demands (e.g. use of CORE-34) and collecting rich and meaningful data whilst ensuring group attendees were not fatigued with excessive outcome measures. The study of the group could be enriched by having a follow-up meeting, where outcome measurers can be repeated to assess whether measurable changes were maintained.

We did not find any pre-existing qualitative ACT feedback forms. Therefore, a feedback form with four open-ended questions on was completed by group attendees after each weekly group session. When compiling the written feedback forms it was clear that points raised in verbal discussion were not captured. Therefore, a more ACT-specific prompting questions on the forms could be beneficial in accessing more in-depth views of the group content and delivery. Conversely, notes taken during verbal discussion about the group development could be a helpful way to informally collect qualitative data.

Currently, our CMHT facilitates groups on mindfulness for stress reduction, and building resilience. There was concern about overlap with the ACT group; however, these groups either have a very small element of ACT or are CBT-based. The ACT group offers a depth of content, guided by individual values and a multi-learning delivery method. We concluded the ACT group offers added value to the current provision of groups in the service. It was discussed whether ACT would be most appropriate for people working towards discharge from the service to emphasise the process of living their life by their values. After considering current evidence, it may be helpful for those that found other models such as CBT ineffective (Forman et al., 2007).

Limitations

The group was facilitated in an adult CMHT and the reflections may not be generalisable to other services or contexts.

Conclusion (PDSA: Act)

Facilitator reflections and discussion with group attendees identified a number of developments that will be implemented. Another ACT group will be facilitated and the PDSA cycle will continue, driving forward group developments, quality improvement and efficacy (ACT Academy, 2018).

References

- ACT Academy (2018). *Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycles and the model for improvement*. Retrieved from www.improvement.nhs.uk/documents/2142/plan-do-study-act.pdf
- CORE Information Management Systems (1993). *Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation Outcome Measure*. Rugby: Author.
- Harris, R. (2016). *Acceptance commitment therapy*. Retrieved from <http://m.youtube.com/channel/UC-SmfSZaAA7c9POYTLAMbVa>
- Forman, E.M., Herbert, J.D., Moitra, E. et al. (2007). A randomized controlled effectiveness trial of acceptance and commitment therapy and cognitive therapy for anxiety and depression. *Behavior Modification*, 31(6), 772–799.
- Hayes, S.C., Barnes-Holmes, D. & Roche, B. (Eds.) (2001). *Relational frame theory: A post-Skinnerian account of human language and cognition*. Berlin/Heidelberg, Germany: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Hayes, S.C., Strosahl, K.D. & Wilson, K.G. (1999). *Acceptance and commitment therapy: An experiential approach to behaviour change*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Jacobs, L.M., Luci, K. & Hagemann, L. (2018). Group-based acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) for older veterans: Findings from a quality improvement project. *Clinical Gerontologist*, 41(5) 458–467.
- Keetharuth, A., Brazier, J., Connell, J. et al. (2018). Recovering Quality of Life (ReQoL): A new generic self-reported outcome measure for use with people experiencing mental health difficulties. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 212(1), 42–49.
- Luoma, J.B., Kohlenberg, B.S., Hayes, S.C. & Fletcher, L. (2012). Slow and steady wins the race: A randomized clinical trial of acceptance and commitment therapy targeting shame in substance use disorders. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 80(1), 43–53.
- Mundt, J., Marks, I., Shear, M. & Greist, J. (2002). The Work and Social Adjustment Scale: A simple measure of impairment in functioning. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 180(5), 461–464.
- Wilson, K.G. & Murrell, A.R. (2004). Values work in acceptance and commitment therapy: Setting a course for behavioral treatment. In S.C. Hayes, V.M. Follette & M.M. Linehan (Eds.) *Mindfulness and acceptance: Expanding the cognitive behavioral tradition* (pp.120–151). New York: Guilford Press.

Correspondence

Katie Place

Assistant Psychologist
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
CMHT, Newport
Email: Katie.Place@wales.nhs.uk

Katie Veale

Trainee Clinical Psychologist
Cardiff University, Cardiff
Email: VealeK@cardiff.ac.uk

Acknowledgements

This paper was supervised by Sarah Douglass, Clinical Psychologist, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, CMHT and Perinatal Team; Sarah.Douglass@wales.nhs.uk.

Hints and Tips

Conducting your first systematic review

Clare Howie

Systematic reviews are a type of literature review conducted through comprehensive, systematic searching and defined by premeditated eligibility criteria, according to guidelines. The manner in which these reviews are carried out ensures replicable research with explicit methods that are preregistered. Systematic reviews allow for the appraisal of evidence on a particular topic, which can be done through narrative synthesis, meta-analysis, and qualitative analyses. They are often considered to be the 'gold standard' in evidence synthesis (Evans, 2003).

DURING postgraduate study, conducting a systematic review can provide the opportunity to develop important research skills and allow you to gain in-depth knowledge in a certain aspect of your PhD topic while creating an original piece of research. The review may provide the basis for a thesis chapter, as well as a possible publication, so it is worth considering a systematic review for your own project.

Tip 1: Planning

Systematic reviews are suitable for both quantitative and qualitative research, but discuss with your supervisors if a systematic review is suitable for your research topic. There are many other forms of literature review that may be more appropriate for your work and it is important to identify this at the beginning (Grant & Booth, 2009). Meta-analysis is only one aspect of systematic reviews – it is not possible to conduct this on heterogeneous outcomes and it is important to consider how you will present results. For outcomes of interest that are not homogenous, narrative synthesis allows the reviewer to describe their results systematically, perhaps with the aid of some statistical data.

If you have never conducted a systematic review, discuss this with your colleagues as they may have tips from conducting their own reviews and can advise on possible challenges you may face. I would advise identifying if there are training courses on systematic reviews

available through your university or online. Cochrane offers online training courses (<https://training.cochrane.org/interactive-learning>) or there are other free courses available (e.g. www.coursera.org/learn/systematic-review). If you are considering submitting your systematic review for publication, check the potential journal guidelines to help guide the structure of your manuscript. Look at blog posts or Twitter to see others' experiences of conducting their reviews. They may have tips or identify things you may not have planned for. I found the 'Meta-Evidence' blog (Campbell UK & Ireland) to be a great resource, particularly during the planning stages.

Plan the timescale for doing your review and increase it! A systematic review is an original piece of research, and like other projects there may be challenges to overcome that can impede on your timing. If this is your first systematic review, prepare to learn as you go along. You will need a second reviewer for the title/abstract screening and full-text eligibility stages, at the very minimum. Consider the second reviewer's workload and how much time they can dedicate to the review process when planning your timeline. Allow plenty of contingency time when planning.

Hint: Do your research before you do your research. Read up on the PRISMA guidelines, look at Cochrane and Campbell Collaboration guidelines.

If your research is focused on a health topic, Cochrane Collaboration is a worldwide organisation focused on the dissemination of high-quality reviews for health research. They provide guidelines on their website on how to conduct reviews to their standards. They also have an online library of their reviews which may provide a starting point for your own search into reviews in your area (www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/reviews). Similarly, the Campbell Collaboration focuses on the production and circulation of systematic reviews in the area of social, behavioural, and education research (www.campbellcollaboration.org). PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses; Moher et al., 2009) provides an 'evidence-based set of minimum items' that systematic reviewers should use for reporting their review. They provide checklists on what should be reported at each stage of your review (for example, introduction, methods).

Tip 2: Formulating the research question

You may have a research question for your review already in mind. Great! However, check that there hasn't already been a systematic review conducted for the research question. If you are still planning your question, examining other systematic reviews in your area may also identify gaps in the research and help with identifying your review topic. Previous reviews may also help identify keywords or databases that can be included within your own search strategy.

Formulating your research question could be the most time-consuming aspect of the review, but it is arguably the most important. It will influence your search strategy, your inclusion and exclusion criteria, and your data extraction process, so taking care and attention during this time may reduce the chances of making mistakes and costing more time. Making use of the Population Intervention Comparison Outcome (PICO) framework can greatly help with identifying your question as well as help influence the other stages of the review. While

PICO is popular, it may not be suited to the question you wish to answer. Sample, Phenomena of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research Type (SPIDER; Cooke et al., 2012) and Setting, Population, Intervention, Comparison, Evaluation (SPICE; Cleyle & Booth, 2006) are other guides that may be more suited to both qualitative and quantitative reviews. SPIDER focuses more on study design and populations, whereas SPICE may be used for reviews focused on evaluations of interventions or services.

Once you have formulated the research question, you should register your review protocol. The review protocol should include your question, search strategy, data extraction process, and how you will report your outcomes. Discuss this process with your supervisory team to determine the best place to publish your protocol (e.g. Prospero, Cochrane, Campbell Collaboration).

Tip 3: Search strategy and the search itself

Talk to your subject librarian, if possible, as early as you can. Arrange a one-to-one meeting with them, as they are experts in using the databases that you may need to use. They can advise you on the best databases to use for your review, provide help with Boolean operators, and how to set up alerts on your searches. Don't be afraid to ask for their help.

When considering what to include in your search strategy, a good starting point is to identify key papers in the topic of interest. Published articles will typically have a number of keywords to help identify them in databases. Examine these keywords and consider if they may be useful for inclusion in your strategy. There may be other systematic reviews in your topic; it may be beneficial to examine the search strategy they employed and determine if aspects of previous search strategies may be suitable to include in your own. The key to a good search strategy is to ensure your terms are specific enough to your research question, without missing out potentially relevant literature.

After conducting the searches, you should set up an alert on each database to notify you of new, potentially relevant papers. Most importantly, make sure you save your search strategy! You will need this to report how you conducted your search, as well as rerunning searches at a later date. When you have run your searches, make sure you keep detailed notes of dates, strategies, and the number of results from each database.

You may wish to consider using grey literature databases. Grey literature is used to describe evidence not published in ‘commercial publications’ (Paez, 2017). These can include government reports, theses and dissertations, and conference papers. There are some databases dedicated to identifying grey literature, such as ‘Open-Grey’ or ‘EThOS’ (an online library of UK-based doctoral theses). The inclusion of grey literature is recommended in systematic reviews; they can provide further insight into your topic that you may not have identified through traditional database searching.

Hint: Consider how you are going to manage and screen your search results. Will it be an Excel spreadsheet or will you store it all on a reference management software? There are different options for this and some systematic review management software programmes offer free trials, or introductory prices. These can significantly streamline the screening process, but research before using as they may not have some functionalities that are required for your review. For example, I was using Covidence for my own review and found out at the end of the screening process that they do not calculate the inter-rater agreement. It does keep a voting history on each article, so crisis nearly averted. However, it did add much more time onto this aspect of the review.

Tip 4: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria for your review will determine what studies will or will not be included for analysis. The criteria will be based around your research question,

and the use of PICO, SPICE or SPIDER will help to form the reasons for inclusion or exclusion. Depending on your review question, it may be beneficial to include exclusion criteria such as study type (you may only wish to include randomised controlled trials), year of study (the topic of interest may not have been developed before a certain year), population (may exclude certain ages, genders, characteristics), or type of intervention. Your inclusion and exclusion criteria need to be clear to ensure replicability of your systematic review.

For example, in my own review I examined screening to detect individuals at risk of developing psychosis in educational settings. My population of interest was individuals in educational settings, such as schools or colleges, aged 14–35 years (as this is the age range of the phenomena of interest) and I included any screening tools for psychosis risk. As this area of research is still developing, I chose to include all study types and did not limit the years of study, as I did not want to exclude potentially relevant studies from the small pool of evidence that is available. Exclusion criteria for my review were studies that had individuals already engaged in mental health services and studies that were not available in English (due to limited resources for translating). I found the use of the PICO framework to be crucial for establishing my criteria, and I chose to keep my exclusion criteria limited to ensure I captured all evidence for my question. However, this framework will not suit all reviews.

Tip 5: Don’t panic! This is the first systematic review you have conducted, be prepared to make mistakes. Taking your time in preparing your question and search may ensure you don’t make major mistakes, but there may be some bumps along the way. Share these with your supervisory team straight away – they are seasoned researchers and may know the solution to potential challenges.

Good luck!

Correspondence

Clare Howie

PhD Student

Centre for Medical Education

Queen's University Belfast

Email: chowie02@qub.ac.uk

References

- Campbell UK & Ireland (n.d.). *Meta-evidence*. Retrieved from www.meta-evidence.co.uk
- Cleyle, S. & Booth, A. (2006). Clear and present questions: Formulating questions for evidence based practice. *Library Hi Tech*, 24(3), 355–368.
- Cooke, A., Smith, D. & Booth, A. (2012). Beyond PICO: The SPIDER Tool for Qualitative Evidence Synthesis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 22(120), 1435–1443.
- Evans, D. (2003). Hierarchy of evidence: A framework for ranking evidence evaluating. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 12, 77–84.
- Grant, M.J. & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: An analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, 26(2), 91–108.
- Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J. et al. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement (Chinese edn). *Journal of Chinese Integrative Medicine*, 7(9), 889–896.
- Paez, A. (2017). Grey literature: An important resource in systematic reviews. *Journal of Evidence-Based Medicine*, 10(3), 233–240.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisory team: Dr Ciaran Mulholland, Dr Gavin Davidson & Dr Ciaran Shannon for their support during my own systematic review.

Hints and Tips

Making the most of international conferences as an ECR

Madeleine Pownall

Conferences in academia are unique spaces. They can be enriching and exciting, filled with a sense of opportunity. However, they can also be overwhelming and daunting. This is especially true in international settings, where cultural differences of social codes are subtle yet pervasive. In this article, I share some insights from my first venture abroad as a first-year PhD student. I offer advice to those preparing for a trip away and reflect on the benefits of international travel as an Early Career Researcher.

IN A SUNNY waterside hotel in San Diego, California, approximately 500 psychologists, policy makers and scholars congregate at the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues 2019 Annual Conference. Among them is me, a very jet-lagged and nervous first-year PhD student from Leeds, clutching my programme and poster tube. Over the two and half days of the conference, my nerves subsided slightly and I was immersed in a world of policy discussions and critical psychology. I was part of many meaty conversations about social justice, politics and human rights, all acknowledging how social psychology has a place in each of these issues. I was only in the US for one day longer than the duration of the whole conference, meaning I was catapulted into the academic energy and relatively quickly found myself returning to UK soil with a thud. The conference was an intellectual whirlwind, 12-hours-a-day of hard-hitting academia with very little time to come up for air.

Now, after a couple of months firmly in PhD home territory to digest the events and spend a bit of time reflecting, I have some tips to really make the most of your time at international conferences as an early career researcher. Some of these are things I had been prepared for before I boarded the plane, and some are things I really wish I had known before I arrived.

1. The different faces of networking

As an early career researcher, everyone says that networking is important. This is ingrained into us from the moment our feet land on academic ground. However, it is not always clear what ‘academic networking’ looks like. For example, before I headed state-side, the only conferences I had attended were small to medium-sized UK conferences with a healthy PGR/ECR scene. The networking section of these conferences often felt like an informal add-on, usually over a coffee or a 15-minute comfort break. At the SPSSI conference, networking was embedded in every facet of the programme. Lunch breaks were long, the programme spilt out well into the evenings, and there were dedicated spaces in the venue for meetings and chats. Networking really was ingrained into the culture of the conference and I felt underprepared for the amount of talking to others that was expected of me.

It is (very) easy to panic when you’re faced with a sea of unfamiliar faces, all of whom seem to have their ‘academic conference clique’ carved out. However, I soon learned that ‘networking’ need not be a scary, formal, handshake of a situation. Subsequently, I felt more at ease. Whilst nervously peering around to find a way into the various conversations, I found another UK-based PhD student (the only other at the conference), also looking around nervously. We, as

Brits often do, naturally gravitated towards each other and found solace together in our corner of the convention centre. Both pleased that we at least had one other person to talk to, we then began making our way through the crowd together, shaking hands and nodding heads with other people.

I was pleased that I let myself approach these networking spaces in my own time and eventually left with some productive conversations and contacts. I also found taking time out from the networking events to explore the city, have time alone, and get some fresh air, equally as nourishing.

Tip: Find your own rhythm with networking and involve yourself at your own pace.

2. Use social media creatively

I found Twitter to be a powerful tool during the conference. Before you set off, make sure you know what the conference hashtag is going to be and try to engage in the relevant Twitter streams.

I was lucky enough to meet a like-minded PhD student on Twitter through the conference hashtag months before I boarded the plane. We were both travelling internationally to San Diego (from Canada and the UK) and began messaging each other in preparation for the big day of travel. We quickly became friends and agreed to split the cost of accommodation by boarding together. I am a real advocate for the benefits of social media in academia, and have found Twitter in particular to provide great opportunities if you know where to look.

If you are savvy with a smartphone, consider live-tweeting interesting aspects of the conference programme too. This can create a real sense of community and engagement online and helps as an ice-breaker during those networking segments. If you do opt to live tweet, try to 'mention' (@) the speakers directly, so you have a point of contact for future questions or work.

I also found it useful to stay in contact with delegates through Twitter and email after the conference had finished. I requested

copies of slides, continued contributing to online conversations, and let people know I had enjoyed hearing about their work after I returned home. This helped make the impact of the conference last beyond the final plenary session.

Tip: Use relevant hashtags to engage in conversations before, during and after the conference.

3. Consider collaborations

In the age of open science, collaborations are more necessary than ever before. Multi-site replications of studies far outweigh one underpowered single-lab study. Therefore, if you can (and you are not struck by the overwhelming nature of your first big international conference), try to think about how you could foster collaborations abroad.

It is also worth considering how the phenomena or effect that you are interested in may (not) translate overseas. There could be great value in widening your theoretical net to include international parties. For example, my PhD research investigates the 'baby brain' stereotype, which dictates that pregnant women have reduced cognitive capabilities compared with other groups. Therefore, my studies are intrinsically linked with policy issues such as maternity leave procedures, sex-based discrimination and flexible working standards. After discussing my work with others at the conference from various areas within the US, Canada and Australia, I learned that policies, procedures, and indeed social attitudes differ considerably by country (and indeed, by state too). Conversations with scholars from different countries prompted me to consider the assumptions I was making about my participants, data set, and conclusions in my PhD. It also made me re-evaluate the UK-centrism of my work. These kinds of theoretical insights are a huge benefit of international conference attendance.

Tip: Think about how your work may (or may not) be successfully applied internationally.

4. Remember cultural differences

This is something I wished I had been briefed about before attending. I made the (very wrong) assumption that PhD experiences are relatively well aligned from the UK to the US. I thought that the PhD process that I had grown familiar to – research proposal, interview, funding, transfer/update viva, three years full-time, viva – was the norm across the pond. Therefore, when I began chatting with other PhD students about their studies, progress, and relationship with their work, I realised that my frames of reference were slightly off.

For example, some of the PhD students I spoke to were enrolled in five-year doctoral programmes, which include graded assignments and exams. Others were conducting their studies part-time whilst working in different fields. Others were in the process of writing research proposals and going through the PhD selection procedures. Everyone's experiences were hugely varied and this was largely influenced by culture and the procedures associated with diverse postgraduate programmes. Subsequently, I realised that for my poster presentation to have a real impact, in my opening spiel I first needed to give a brief description of the context in which my research is situ-

ated. This allowed me to capture a complete picture of my postgraduate studies and provided a helpful starting point from which other delegates could understand my work.

Tip: Watch your assumptions and try to be open-minded.

All in all, my trip to SPSSI was fulfilling, enriching and overwhelming. It prompted me to consider aspects of my research process that I never anticipated, from participants to design to broader implications. It also helped me to understand the wider context of psychology and how my work 'fits' into something bigger than me and my PhD. I would encourage others, particularly ECRs, to think about spaces beyond the UK that might be useful for these reasons.

If you are inspired and want to take your research international, consider applying for a PsyPAG International Conference Bursary to assist with your expenses.

Correspondence

Madeleine Pownall

Chair of PsyPAG

PhD student

University of Leeds

Email: M.V.Pownall@leeds.ac.uk

StatsCloud: The online statistics package for psychologists

Daniel Gurney

StatsCloud is a new web application designed to make statistics more open and accessible to psychologists. As StatsCloud runs in a browser window, it works on all devices (smartphones, tablets, Chromebooks, desktops, laptops, etc.) without the need to download or install any software. The app has many new features, including the ability to select the most appropriate and up-to-date test for your data, an 'Export to R' window which displays and annotates R code, and a window to view the formulae behind every analysis. These features make StatsCloud an excellent tool for both students and researchers in psychology.

AS PSYCHOLOGISTS, there are many statistics packages we can use to analyse our data. However, despite the range of software available to us, none of the packages seem particularly well suited for individuals who are new to statistics or early on in a research career. Statistics software packages are generally designed for professional statisticians; they assume that users already have extensive knowledge of a wide variety of tests, that they always select the correct analysis for their data, are familiar with all the relevant assumption checks, have conducted the appropriate reliability tests, and interpret the output of all analyses correctly.

Realistically, it is very easy for a researcher to overlook something while completing their data analysis and statistics software could be doing more to ensure that analyses are conducted accurately and reliably, and give users the support they need along the way. Another issue is that statistics software only runs on (and is designed for) desktops and laptops. However, as smartphones, tablets and Chromebooks are becoming much more widely used, there is a growing need for statistics packages to be available on these devices too.

To address these issues, I have created StatsCloud (www.statscloud.app). StatsCloud is a new online statistics package designed to

make statistical analysis more open and accessible to psychologists. It runs as a web application and therefore works on all devices (smartphones, tablets, Chromebooks, desktops, laptops, etc.) without requiring users to download or install any software. In addition, it offers a range of new features for both researchers and educators of statistics to make statistical analysis much easier to run and interpret. The app is currently in beta as more features are being added, but the current features are discussed below.

Selecting the correct test

As we conduct new research in psychology, it is important that we use the best and most robust methods of statistical analysis available. However, some researchers may struggle to maintain intricate knowledge of all statistical tests available and are not always aware of alternative (and more appropriate) statistical methods. Additionally, researchers may also be prone to overlooking the assumptions of their analysis and run a test that produces unreliable effects.

StatsCloud seeks to address this by offering recommendations on the best test to use for your data. It moves beyond the 'tick-box' interface when running analyses, and instead provides a dynamic summary of each analysis which users can interact with.

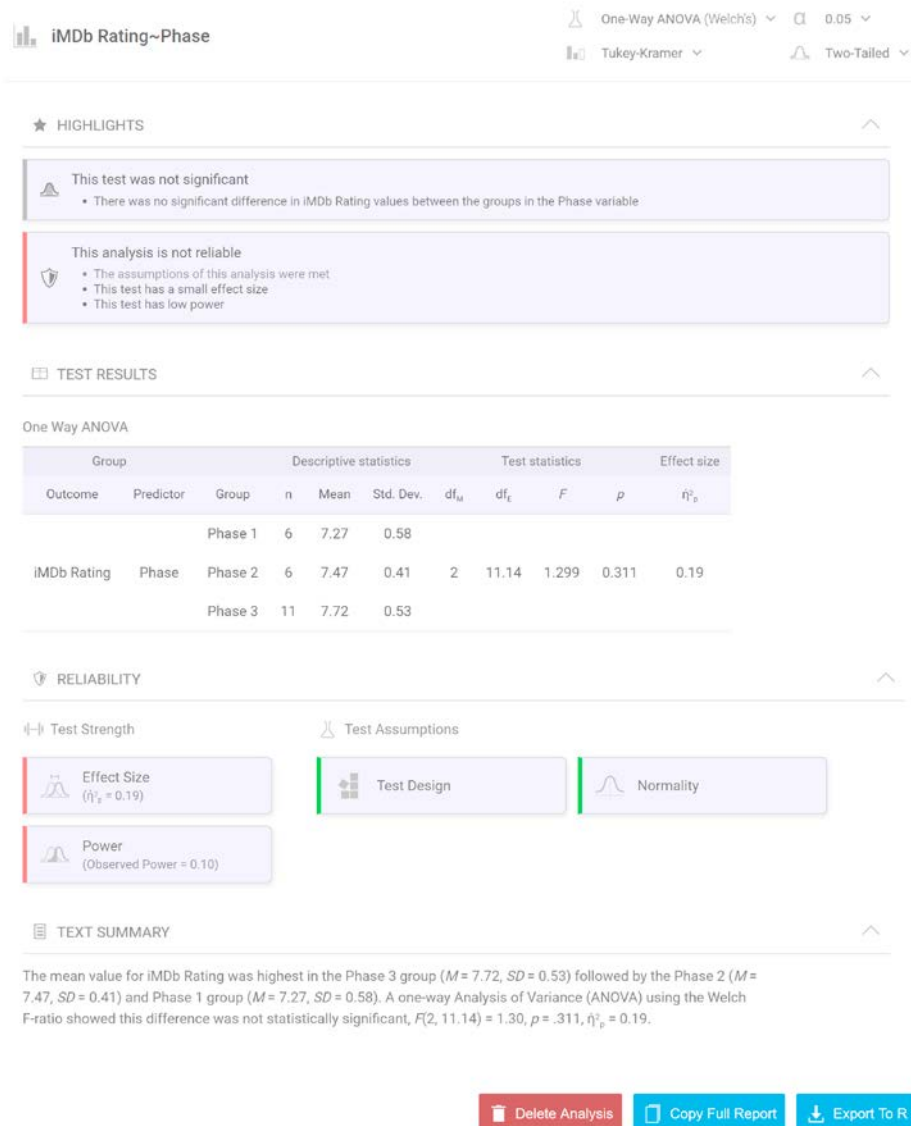
Once you have selected your independent and dependent variables, StatsCloud will run every reliability test for that test design and provide a recommendation on the best analysis to use as a result. Users then have the ability to toggle between tests, alpha levels and (where appropriate) a one- or two-tailed hypothesis, and see the results change on the screen live, in real time. As standard, StatsCloud also calculates effect sizes and observed power values to provide

an indication of how reliable each analysis is, and all of this information is summarised in plain English.

Exporting data and analyses

You can export your data and analyses at any point while using the app. StatsCloud can export your data to a spreadsheet (.csv) or an R (.R) data file. All outputs in the analysis summary (e.g. charts, tables and the text summary) can be copied and pasted

Figure 1: An interactive output summary generated for an analysis



into a word processor. You can also select multiple analyses and click the 'copy full report' to allow you to save your entire analysis output too.

Using up-to-date techniques

As statistics can be quite a fast-moving area, ensuring researchers stay on top of the latest methods and best practices in statistics can often seem unfeasible. StatsCloud aims to remedy this by ensuring the tests it recommends are current and up to date. For instance, recent research by Delacre et al. (2017) has revealed that, when running an independent-samples t -test, the Welch's t -test is a more reliable test to run than the Student t -test, even if the additional assumption of the Student t -test (e.g. equal variances between groups) is met. As a result, StatsCloud always recommends the Welch t -test over the Student t -test. The applica-

tion was also adapted this year following the publication of a similar article by Delacre et al. (2019) on the independent one-way ANOVA, where the W -test is recommended over the standard F -test. One major advantage of using a web application for a statistics package is that users can be sure they are running the latest version of the software and benefitting from these features without the need to reinstall or update the software manually.

Exporting to R

When running statistical analysis in psychology, the programming language R is often regarded as the best tool to use. In fact, some universities have gone so far as to teach R to psychology undergraduate students in favour of point-and-click statistics software (Quintana & Heathers, 2019). While learning a programming language may

Figure 2: The 'Export to R' window exposing R code with annotations

The screenshot shows the 'Export to R' window. The main area contains R code with annotations. The code defines a data frame, installs the 'onewaytests' package, and runs a Welch's ANOVA test. The information panel on the right explains the data frame creation process. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Close', 'Copy Code', and 'Download R File'.

```
> worldwideGross <- c(585174222.00, 263427551.00, 623933331.00, 449326618.00,
370569774.00, 1518812988.00, 1214811252.00, 644571402.00, 714264267.00,
773328629.00, 1405403694.00, 519311965.00, 1153304495.00, 677718395.00,
863756051.00, 880166924.00, 853977126.00, 1346913161.00, 2048359754.00,
622674139.00, 1128274794, 2793794145, 1045936001)

> iMdbRating <- c(7.9, 6.7, 7.0, 7.0, 6.9, 8.1, 7.2, 7.0, 7.8, 8.1, 7.4, 7.3,
7.8, 7.5, 7.7, 7.5, 7.9, 7.3, 8.5, 7.1, 7.0, 8.7, 7.9)

>
> # Create data frame:
> data <- data.frame(filmTitle, phase, worldwideGross, iMdbRating)
> data
>
> # Install and run packages:
> if(!require(onewaytests)) { install.packages("onewaytests") }
> library(onewaytests)
>
> # Report numbers in numeric (not scientific) format
> options(scipen = 99)
>
> # Run Analyses:
> # Run One-way ANOVA (Welch's):
> welch.test(formula=iMdbRating~phase, data=data)
```

OPTIONS

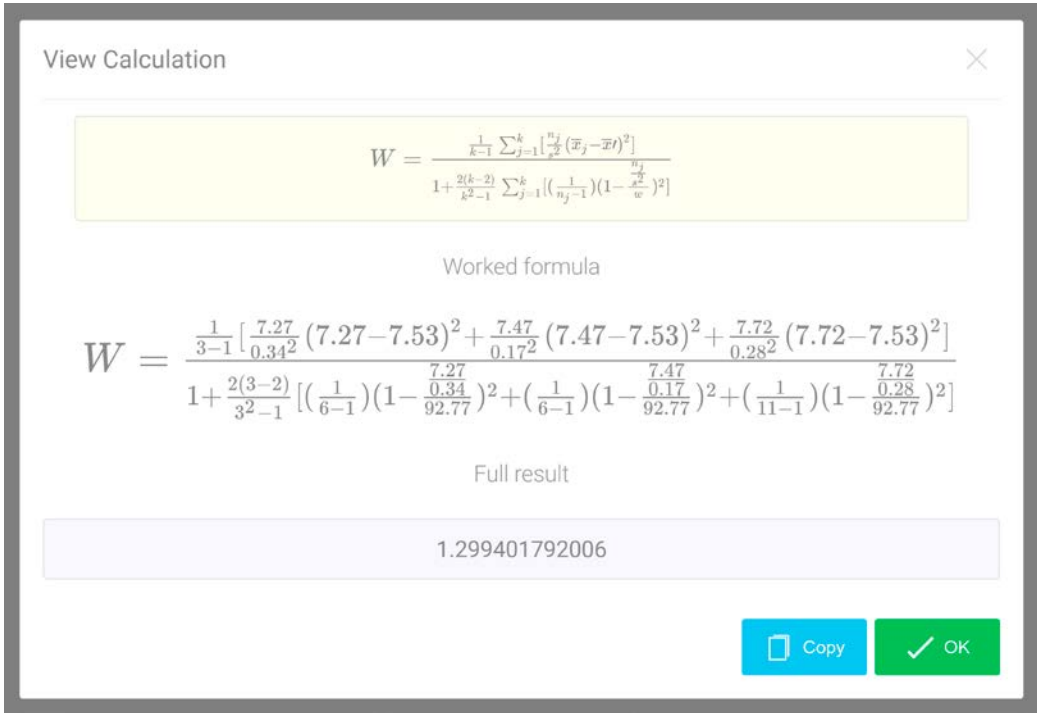
- Data
- All Tests
- Libraries
- Reliability
- Comments

INFORMATION

Here, we define the dataframe. As we have now assigned values to all of our variables (or columns), we can now assign each of these variables to the whole data frame. When we run analyses, this is the variable R will use to get the data. To do this, we use the `data.frame` command in R (which is quite similar to the 'concatenate' command we just used above) to assign each variable to the data frame.

Close Copy Code Download R File

Figure 3: A window displaying the full calculation of a test statistic



not suit all psychologists at undergraduate level, StatsCloud recognises the importance of learning R in research, and therefore offers a feature to help users to migrate to R when they are ready to. When users open the 'Export to R' window, the code used by R to conduct that analysis is displayed on screen, and every line of code is annotated to show users what each command in the block of code is doing. By doing so, StatsCloud offers both a user-friendly point-and-click interface to support individuals new to statistics, but grants the ability to transition to a more advanced statistics environment at whatever stage users are ready to.

Live formulae

One of the most powerful features of StatsCloud is that it not only exports the R code needed to run an analysis, but also the formulae it uses when running each analysis. When users click on a value in an output table, StatsCloud opens a window that displays the formula used to calculate that value with the relevant numbers plugged in.

You can then copy the formula into LaTeX. Providing worked examples of every analysis is very useful for researchers or students who want to understand the theory behind their analysis, for stats tutors who want to use formulae in their teaching materials.

StatsCloud in the classroom

One of the great advantages of having a statistics package as a web app is that it is very easy to get students started with it. As it runs on all devices, it is possible for a student to use the app during a lecture even if they do not have a laptop with them. Similarly, because the app does not need to be installed, it can be opened with a single link, and the link can determine exactly what is opened in the app. For instance, visiting www.statscloud.app/beta/?data=marvel-movies will open the StatsCloud app preloaded with a 'Marvel Movies' data set. Links can also include projects with analyses completed (bit.ly/2yGJe0J) or even an 'analysis template' with a blank data set and an analysis ready to run once data has been

entered (bit.ly/2z86Prq). The variety of project links available means that students can be exposed to relevant projects that accompany every stage of their learning process.

Summary

In summary, StatsCloud is a statistics package built for a new generation of psychologists. It has a wide variety of features that are of great benefit to students, statistics tutors and researchers, and is being adopted more widely across the UK and internationally as a result. If you'd like to join the growing number of people using StatsCloud, just visit the homepage at www.statscloud.app for more information. You can also follow the app on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram (@StatsCloud) for all the latest features and developments.

Correspondence

Daniel Gurney
Creator of StatsCloud
dan@statscloud.app

References

- Delacre, M., Lakens, D. & Leys, C. (2017). Why psychologists should by default use Welch's t -test instead of Student's t -test. *International Review of Social Psychology*, 30(1).
- Delacre, M., Leys, C., Mora, Y.L. & Lakens, D. (2019). Taking parametric assumptions seriously: Arguments for the use of Welch's F -test instead of the classical F -test in one-way ANOVA. *International Review of Social Psychology*, 32(1).
- Quintana, D.S., Heathers, J.A.J. (Hosts) (2019, February 18). Large-scale collaborative science (with Lisa DeBruine). *Everything Hertz* [podcast].

Find out more

Webpage: statscloud.app

Twitter: twitter.com/statscloud

Facebook: facebook.com/statscloud

Instagram: instagram.com/statscloud

The European Federation of Psychology Students' Associations Junior Researcher Programme: A review from two research project supervisors

Rose Turner & Edward John Noon

The European Federation of Psychology Students' Associations (EFPSA) Junior Researcher Programme (JRP) provides opportunities for students to gain experience of conducting or supervising international research projects. Two UK PhD students reflect on their experiences as supervisors on the current (2019–2020) programme, with a particular focus on the European Summer School, a week of social and research activities that initiates the programme. Summaries of their research projects are provided, as well as reflections on the benefits and challenges of taking part in the programme. This review is intended to serve as a useful resource for potential JRP applicants.

THE European Federation of Psychology Students' Associations (EFPSA) is an international network of student volunteers which works to serve psychology students across Europe. Each year, EFPSA's programme of events includes an annual conference, a congress and a European Summer School (ESS) which kicks off the annual Junior Researcher Programme (JRP). As part of the JRP, prospective research supervisors (usually PhD students and early career researchers) propose a 12-month research project based on the annual theme – this year's theme was 'Communication and Learning in the Digital Age'. Undergraduate and postgraduate students then apply to one of the six selected research projects. Six students are recruited to each team, resulting in six teams of one supervisor and six students.

We (the authors) are two supervisors currently enrolled on the JRP. We met our research teams, and introduced them to our projects, at the July 2019 ESS in Lithotopos, Northern Greece. During this week-long event, we also had the opportunity to explore the nearby city – Thessaloniki – and attend several

workshops relevant to early career researchers, such as a session on publishing your research, and an introduction to registered reports. In this article, we present our perspectives on the JRP and ESS, and make recommendations for potential applications to the programme.

Why did you apply to be a supervisor at the JRP?

EJN: Having never conducted research outside of my current institute, when I saw the call for supervisors for the JRP, I immediately felt that this was the perfect opportunity to gain some cross-cultural research experience and remove me from my comfort zone. I also hoped that the experience would improve employability by increasing my research output, supporting professional development by enhancing my leadership and communication skills.

RT: I was approaching the end of my PhD write up, and with job opportunities in mind, I thought it would be great to develop a project that extended my current research and that allowed me to gain experience of supervising a research team.

What are your projects about?

RT: I proposed a project examining the effects of digital and non-digital forms of fiction engagement on people's empathic abilities (the abilities involved in successfully interpreting the inner experiences of others). This represents an extension of my previous research which has looked at correlations between different ways of engaging with fiction and empathic abilities. Our team aims to conduct research across six countries and languages, though the data will be analysed collectively.

EJN: Our project is a replication and extension of the first study from my doctoral research. We are going to examine the frequency of, and motivations for, social comparisons on Instagram, and determine how such comparisons connect with adolescent identity development. In addition to this 'core' study – which everyone in the six-person team will collect data on – each member will also conduct their own individual 'side' project concerning a topic of personal significance. For example, one study will consider the extent to which social networking site network homophily influences adolescent identity development. Another project will examine how social networking site body comparisons associate with inspiration via the mechanisms of benign and malicious envy.

What was attending the ESS like as a supervisor?

EJN: The ESS far exceeded my expectations and was, without question, the most enjoyable week of my doctoral journey to date. My research team were among the most engaged, passionate and ambitious students that I have ever worked with, and it was extremely reassuring to see others so enthused about the topic I am studying for my PhD! Overall, spending the week with such a diverse group of psychologists from each corner of Europe (my team consisted of students from Austria, Germany, Ireland, Romania, Serbia and Turkey) was both intellectually stimulating and personally

enriching. As such, I feel I have left the ESS not only with new ideas that I can weave into my own research, but also with new friends.

RT: The ESS was a great experience. My research team are absolutely fantastic – I couldn't hope for a more committed and insightful group. I was really impressed by the depth of their ideas and questions, and their motivation. It was also great to meet the other supervisors and to get to know the EFPSA community. There was a good balance of social and work-related activities, which made for an exhausting but rewarding week!

What do you think will be the main challenges over the next year of the project?

EJN: Other than ethics – which I expect to be a nightmare – I think maintaining high levels of motivation throughout the 12-month project may be challenging. As we are all based in different European countries, much of our contact will be through either WhatsApp or Skype. Furthermore, given that each member of my team has other commitments – be that work or study-related – ensuring that they remain focused on this project may become a challenge.

What would you say to others considering applying to the next JRP?

EJN: To do it! One thing to be wary of, I guess, is time. It is quite a commitment, and if you already have a high workload, be that teaching, doctoral study, postdoc research etc., it may not be feasible. However, if time is not a concern, I think it is an amazing opportunity to expand your networks beyond those in the UK, meet some amazing people, and conduct some interesting cross-cultural research!

RT: I would recommend having a close look at the timeline to see how the key events (the ESS, busy set-up period at the beginning of the project, sharing of research at the end of the year) coincide with your other commitments. The ESS is a really fun week, but there is some pressure on supervisors to run

the team meetings, so try to have as much preparation done up front as possible so that you can join in with the social events as much as you wish to. Overall, I would recommend the programme in particular to anyone who is hoping to progress in an academic career – it's a great opportunity to develop experience of project supervision, as well as to gain experience of producing a registered report.

Conclusion

The central challenge facing supervisors on the JRP is time-commitment. As such, it may particularly suit individuals with a clearly defined schedule for the full year of the programme (for example, being in the early or middle stages of a PhD or postdoctoral position). The key benefits are developing a cross-cultural research project,

producing a registered report, and getting to know a range of psychology students involved in EFPSA. We aim to report back at the conclusion of the 12-month programme to share our reflections on the JRP as a whole and provide further information for those considering applying in the future.

Correspondence

Rose Turner

PhD Candidate

Kingston University

E-mail: R.turner@kingston.ac.uk

Edward John Noon

PhD Candidate

Sheffield Institute of Education

Sheffield Hallam University

Email: dsejn@exchange.shu.ac.uk

Conference Review

PsyPAG 2019 Annual Conference: A personal reflection

Darel Cookson

The PsyPAG 34th Annual Conference 2019 took place from Tuesday 23 to Friday 26 July 2019 at Sheffield Hallam University. This year, the focus of the conference was to promote the health and wellbeing of delegates while they had the opportunity to meet, network and share their research with peers. PsyPAG 2019 was a wonderful, challenging and reflective week, where I had the opportunity to share my research, learn of other people's work, and also discuss the challenges of postgraduate study with like-minded people.

AS THIS PUBLICATION is produced by PsyPAG, it is likely that the readership will be aware of PsyPAG and the annual conference. Briefly, PsyPAG is the psychology postgraduate affairs group and is funded by the Research Board of the British Psychological Society. PsyPAG is run purely by postgraduates for the benefit of postgraduate psychology students at UK institutions. PsyPAG provides support for postgraduate students in the UK, and the annual conference fulfils a vital and invaluable role, bringing together postgraduates from different institutions. Across three days, psychology postgraduate students meet, sharing their work via oral and poster presentations, providing feedback, attending workshops and keynotes, and building support systems and collaborations! This was my second year attending the PsyPAG annual conference and it was again an indispensable opportunity to receive feedback on my work so far, discuss any issues I have with like-minded people, attend workshops tailored for postgraduate students and develop friendships and collaborations.

PsyPAG was a very full three days, therefore in this article I will discuss some of the personal highlights for me and how I feel they have benefited my PhD studies. Firstly, the keynote presentations were perfectly selected by the organisation committee to marry with

the conference theme of promoting health and wellbeing. Moreover, these talks were crafted and delivered to target the postgraduate audience admirably. The first keynote was from Professor Sir Chris Husbands. I was particularly looking forward to this talk, as his work had helped me enormously when studying for my PGCE. Husbands discussed academic careers in the 21st century, urging us to understand what the big issues are that we are interested in, and to use these rather than the small problems, to maximise our impact beyond academia. At the end of the keynote we were presented with some 'things to remember', one being to always say 'thank you', which I think resonated with the audience. The next keynote was given by cognitive psychologist Dr Dan Smith. Dr Smith focused on work from his lab investigating whether cognitive processes are embodied in the motor system. Dr Smith explained a series of elegant experiments addressing this issue in an enjoyable storytelling style which engaged the audience. This talk was a helpful and instructive demonstration of how to explain complicated studies and findings in an interesting and fluid way.

The second day of the conference began with a keynote from Professor Madelynne Arden. Professor Arden discussed how her career developed after she received a pivotal phone call in 2013 requesting her input

into work on medication adherence. Since then, Professor Arden has developed a body of work exploring adherence to medication in cystic fibrosis, using a behavioural science approach to intervention research. The next keynote was from Dr Emma Norris, who shared her journey from PhD to post-doctoral researcher. Dr Norris discussed the differences moving from independent research in a PhD programme to working on a large multidisciplinary project. Insights from someone who has succeeded on the journey you are attempting is invaluable and Dr Norris emphasised the importance of the PsyPAG community and reminded us that rejection is always a learning experience! The final keynote was from Dr Jennie Drabble, a forensic psychologist, who also discussed life after PhD. Dr Drabble emphasised the importance of taking time for yourself outside of academia and motivated the room to help change the culture of academia from within.

A further highlight of PsyPAG 2019 was the workshop 'Bringing Reproducible Science to the People – The Story of Change', produced and delivered by Olly Robertson and Dr Jon Sutton. At first it was acknowledged how, at times, the media can communicate science inaccurately. However, emphasis was also placed upon the importance of researchers proactively tackling this problem and learning to communicate our work outside of academia. The workshop instructed researchers to take opportunities to communicate their work and explained how to do this with both accuracy and elegance. We were given a task which I invite any readers here to do, as it was frustratingly difficult but very helpful! At the start of the workshop, we were told that we had five minutes and no more than 10 sentences to summarise our research for a science communication piece. We then discussed the importance of 'telling a story' with our research and catering to our audience's needs in an accurate but relatable way. Re-reading our first attempt of science communication, in my case at least, was laughable! We were

then given the same instructions and set about improving our pieces and discussing ideas together. I took a lot away from this session and it was so helpful to receive advice from the editor of *The Psychologist*. We were given postcards to write our take-away from the session and mine reads: 'All the details don't have to be in the first paragraph, share the main finding, the bit that is new, and then explain the details.'

All the symposia at PsyPAG are led by postgraduate researchers and it was an incredible opportunity to be part of the 'Social Psychology' symposium. I am the BPS Social Psychology Section PsyPAG representative and was happy that the section had agreed to sponsor this symposium. My close colleague and I from Staffordshire University, Tanya Schrader, shared our research focusing on belief in conspiracy theories. Tanya began the session with her research exploring the darker side of conspiracy theories, specifically the relationship between conspiracy belief and violence. Using hierarchical regression analysis, Tanya has found that conspiracy beliefs play a unique role in predicting the acceptance of violence. A growing body of research is consistently discovering the negative consequences of conspiracy belief, which Tanya's research extends. Next, I presented the first two studies of my PhD. Across this research, I explored the role of social norms in conspiracy belief, with the aim of developing tools to reduce the negative consequences of conspiracy beliefs. Specifically, I asked, do we see conspiracy beliefs as more normative than they are? And do the perceived beliefs of others in conspiracy theories predict personal beliefs? Currently, my research suggests that we overestimate the extent to which other people endorse conspiracy theories and we are significantly influenced by the perceived beliefs of others. However, when we try to demonstrate this experimentally, we run into trouble – belief in conspiracy theories is very hard to shake!

The next speaker in the Social Symposium was Becky Scott. Becky gave an interesting and

polished presentation discussing her discursive analysis of representations of people with mental health difficulties who claim benefits. This is important research and the audience were clearly moved by some of the quotations Becky used to illustrate the analysis. The final presentation in this symposium was from Madeleine Pownall, who explained a theory she is currently working on to ask: Can positive self-objectification diffuse stereotype threat effects in women? Madeleine has amalgamated three theories in social psychology with impressive sophistication and is now developing a body of research to test these ideas. It was inspiring to see such innovative ideas from my peers! I am grateful to the Social Psychology Section for sponsoring this symposium and for everyone who attended, asked us questions, and gave us feedback. It is really interesting to receive input from peers who are studying different topics as it allowed me to hear unique thoughts and perspectives in terms of my research.

Throughout the three days there were several coffee breaks, activities at lunch, and social events in the evenings which gave us an opportunity to discuss our work further, any issues, and build friendships. One of the social events was a 'Skeptics in the Pub' talk on the Psychology of Magic by Dr Gustav Kuhn. This was a really interesting talk in an area of psychology which I didn't know anything about. Dr Kuhn explained how magic creates a cognitive conflict in our mind; between what

we experience and what we know to be possible and there was also some pretty cool magic tricks. Looking back at the theme of the conference; promoting the health and wellbeing of delegates, the conference was set up thoughtfully to endanger this. From the keynote topics of postgraduate journeys, the workshops themes, the social events and there was even a break-out room for delegates to escape to throughout the three days- the assembly of the conference ensured that delegates had time to reflect on this. The organisers from Sheffield Hallam University, Suzy Hodgson, Martine Lamb and Nikki Dean Marshall, were incredible and did such a fantastic job this year, so thank you very much!

Correspondence

Darel Cookson
PhD Student
Staffordshire University
Darel.cookson@research.staffs.ac.uk
Twitter: @DarelCookson

Save the date

The 35th Annual PsyPAG Conference is scheduled to take place at the University of Leeds, 28–31 July 2019. For updates, follow @PsyPAG2020 on Twitter.

Dates for Your Diary

Conferences

8 January 2020, Northampton

TEP Annual Conference 2020

8–10 January 2020, Stratford-upon-Avon

Division of Occupational Psychology Annual Conference 2020

9–10 January 2020, Northampton

DECP Annual Conference 2020

22–23 January, 2020, Solihull

Division of Clinical Psychology Annual Conference 2020

26–27 March, 2020, Belfast

Northern Ireland Branch Annual Conference 2020

Workshops

6 January 2020, London

A Triad of Taoism

14 January 2020, London

Supervision skills training: Workshop 1 – Essentials of supervision

Supervision skills: Workshop 2 - Enhancing supervision skills, 28 January 2020, London

Supervision skills: Workshop 3 – Models of supervision, 26 February 2020, London

Talks and seminars

5 December 2019, Belfast

How to do research as a Clinical Psychologist in NI: Panel and discussion

9 December 2019, London

Leadership Summit: New Directions and Building for the Future for Psychological Professionals

The BPS website has a full list of BPS events: www.bps.org.uk/events

PsyPAG Committee 2019/2020

Position	Currently held by	Due for re-election
Core Committee Members: corecommittee@psypag.co.uk		
Chair	Maddi Pownall chair@psypag.co.uk	2021
Treasurer	Benjamin Butterworth treasurer@psypag.co.uk (For claim forms: payments@psypag.co.uk)	2021
Vice Chair	Catherine Talbot vicechair@psypag.co.uk	2020
Communications Officer	Olly Robertson commsofficer@psypag.co.uk	2020
Information Officer	Oliver Clark info@psypag.co.uk	2021
Quarterly Editors: quarterly@psypag.co.uk		
Bradley Kennedy b.kennedy@chester.ac.uk		2021
Vacant		-
Josephine Urquhart jau2@st-andrews.ac.uk		2020
Alex Lloyd Alex.lloyd120@gmail.com		2020
Division Representatives		
Division of Clinical Psychology	VACANT	2020
Division of Counselling Psychology	Rebecca Haslam r.c.haslam@leeds.ac.uk	2021
Division of Educational and Child Psychology	VACANT	-
Division for Academics, Researchers and Teachers in Psychology	Veronica Diveica psuda2@bangor.ac.uk	2019
Division of Forensic Psychology	Ana DaSilva anadasilva203@gmail.com	2021
Division of Health Psychology	Lauren Rockliffe lauren.rockliffe@manchester.ac.uk	2021
Division of Neuropsychology	Michelle Newman Michelle.Newman.2@city.ac.uk	2020

Position	Currently held by	Due for re-election
Division Representatives (contd.)		
Division of Occupational Psychology	Louise Bowen BowenL7@cardiff.ac.uk Benjamin Butterworth (maternity cover) treasurer@psypag.co.uk	2020
Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology	Dawn-Marie Armstrong dawnmarie.r.armstrong@gmail.com	2020
Section Representatives		
Cognitive Psychology Section	Joanne Eaves J.Eaves@lboro.ac.uk	2021
Consciousness and Experiential Psychology Section	Alex Wilson Alex.Wilson@northampton.ac.uk	2020
Cyberpsychology Section	Danielle Paddock d.paddock@yorks.ac.uk	2021
Defence and Security Psychology Section	Ben Morrison ben.morrison@northumbria.ac.uk	2021
Developmental Psychology Section	Ellen Ridley ellen.ridley@durham.ac.uk	2021
History and Philosophy of Psychology Section	VACANT	-
Psychology of Sexualities Section	VACANT	-
Male Psychology Section	Marek Nikolic marek.nikolic.2019@uni.strath.ac.uk	2021
Mathematical, Statistical and Computing Section	Oliver Clarke oliver.clark3@stu.mmu.ac.uk	2020
Political Psychology Section	VACANT	-
Psychobiology Section	Sarah Docherty s.docherty@northumbria.ac.uk	2021
Psychology of Education Section	Elaine Coxon E.M.Coxon@2017.ljmu.ac.uk	2021
Psychology of Women and Equalities Section	Farah Elahi F.Elahi@warwick.ac.uk	2021
Psychotherapy Section	Nicola McGuire n.mcguire.1@research.gla.ac.uk	2020
Qualitative Methods Section	Candice Whitaker C.M.Whitaker@Leedsbeckett.ac.uk	2020

Position	Currently held by	Due for re-election
Section Representatives (contd.)		
Social Psychology Section	Darel Cookson darel.cookson@research.staffs.ac.uk	2020
Transpersonal Psychology Section	Alex Wilson Alex.Wilson@northampton.ac.uk	2020
Special Group in Coaching Psychology	Tia Moin – u1637352@uel.ac.uk	2021
Community Psychology Section	Michelle Jamieson m.jamieson.2@research.gla.ac.uk	2020
Crisis, Disaster and Trauma Section	Sara Gardener sgardn07@mail.bbk.ac.uk	2021
Branch Representatives		
North East of England Branch	Jake Pywell jake.pywell@northumbria.ac.uk	2021
East of England Branch	VACANT	–
East Midlands Branch	VACANT	–
North West of England Branch	Charlotte Maxwell charlotteamaxwell@outlook.com	2021
Northern Ireland Branch	Clare Howie chowie02@qub.ac.uk	2020
Scottish Branch	Benjamin Butterworth benjamin.butterworth@gcu.ac.uk	2020
South West of England Branch	Anastasiia Kovalenko A.G.Kovalenko@exeter.ac.uk	2021
Welsh Branch	Veronica Diveica psuda2@bangor.ac.uk	2021
Wessex Branch	Brandon May brandon.may@port.ac.uk	2020
West Midlands Branch	Kristina Newman newmankl@aston.ac.uk	2020
London and Home Counties Branch	Christopher Robus Christopher.Robus@study.beds.ac.uk	2021
Board Representatives		
Ethics	Catrin Jones CatrinPedder.Jones@beds.ac.uk	2021
Research Board (Chair)	Maddi Pownall chair@psypag.co.uk	2021

Other Committees		
Standing Conference Committee	Anna Widemann anna.wiedemann@hotmail.com	2021
Undergraduate Liaison Officer	Tanya Schrader tanya.schrader@research.staffs.ac.uk	2021

Need a reason to write for us?

- Great addition to the CV
- Engage with the wider academic community
- Provides experience in the process of publishing (i.e., responding to peer-review etc.)
- Most importantly, it is good fun!

More information can be found on our website (www.psypag.co.uk) or on the back pages of this issue. Alternatively, email or tweet us ideas:

quarterly@psypag.co.uk / [@PsyPAGQuarterly](https://twitter.com/PsyPAGQuarterly)

We look forward to hearing from you.



THE PSYCHOLOGY POSTGRADUATE AFFAIRS GROUP



Call for applications to the PsyPAG Workshop Fund

PsyPAG are now accepting applications to host workshops for postgraduates.

Previous workshops include: 'R for psychologists', 'Exploring culture and experience: choosing methodologies in qualitative research', and 'Books, burnout and balance'.

We encourage applicants to ask for joint funding from another source (e.g. your university, a division/section of the BPS or an employer). This is because we want our budget to support as many events as possible.

Applying for workshop funding is valuable experience:

- IT SHOWS EMPLOYERS THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO USE YOUR INITIATIVE, BUDGET, NEGOTIATE AND PLAN
- IT FILLS A GAP IN YOUR OWN TRAINING NEEDS AND BENEFITS OTHERS AT THE SAME TIME
- IT BUILDS YOUR CONFIDENCE IN ORGANISING AND CHAIRING EVENTS
- IT GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO NETWORK AND MEET PEOPLE YOU MAY BE ABLE TO WORK WITH IN THE FUTURE

If interested, or would like more information, please contact the Vice Chair at vicechair@psypag.co.uk

Guidance notes and application forms are downloadable at: psypag.co.uk/workshops



Postgraduate bursaries

Need help with the cost of attending a conference, workshop or other event related to your research? PsyPAG might be able to help!

All psychology postgraduates registered at a UK institution are eligible to apply for our bursary funds. We have three rounds of bursaries each year.

The deadlines for each round are: 10 February, 10 June and 10 October.

We offer the following bursaries:

- **International Conference Bursaries***: Apply for up to £300
- **Domestic Conference Bursaries**: Apply for up to £100
- **Study Visit Bursaries***: Apply for up to £200
- **Workshop/Training Bursaries**: Apply for up to £100
- **Research Grant Bursaries***: Apply for up to £300
- **Travel Bursaries**: Apply for up to £50

*Successful applicants are required to write an article for the PsyPAG Quarterly.

To apply, or further information, please visit: www.psypag.co.uk or contact the PsyPAG Information officer at info@psypag.co.uk.



@PsyPAG



facebook.com/PsyPAG



the british
psychological society
promoting excellence in psychology

PSYPAG

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.

PsyPAG's 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 Division within the British Psychological Society, with 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 tinyurl.com/PsyPAGjiscmail.

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 (twitter.com/PsyPAG) and add us on Facebook (tinyurl.com/PsyPAGfacebook).

This information is also provided at www.psypag.co.uk.

www.psypag.co.uk

Contents

Editorial	
<i>Josie Urquhart</i>	1
Chair's Column	
<i>Maddi Pownall</i>	3
Meet the Readers	4
Discussion papers:	
Towards a more comprehensive ethical approach: Potential impacts of studying sensitive topics	
<i>Nihan Albayrak-Aydemir</i>	6
Is measuring psychopathy as defined by the Hare Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) the most important single component in assessing risk of offending behaviour and likely response to treatment in offenders?	
<i>Menna Rose</i>	9
The worrying decline in children's playtime: The need for intervention on a nation-wide level	
<i>Holly Stokes</i>	14
Research in brief:	
Developing a guided imagery intervention in consultation with service users	
<i>Kelsey Smith, Emmeline Goodby & Louise Johns</i>	19
The constellation of psychopathy: All in the brain? A critical review of the neuroscientific literature	
<i>Louise Bowen</i>	22
Reflective article:	
A reflection on implementing an acceptance and commitment therapy group in an NHS adult community mental health team	
<i>Katie Place & Katie Veale</i>	28
Hints & tips:	
Conducting your first systematic review	
<i>Clare Howie</i>	32
Making the most of international conferences as an ECR	
<i>Madeleine Pownall</i>	36
Software review:	
StatsCloud: The online statistics package for psychologists	
<i>Daniel Gurney</i>	39
Training programme review:	
The European Federation of Psychology Students' Associations Junior Researcher Programme: A review from two research project supervisors	
<i>Rose Turner & Edward John Noon</i>	44
Conference review:	
PsyPAG 2019 Annual Conference: A personal reflection	
<i>Darel Cookson</i>	47
Dates for your Diary.....	50
PsyPAG Committee 2019/2020.....	51



the british
psychological society
promoting excellence in psychology

St Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7DR, UK
t: 0116 254 9568 f: 0116 227 1314 e: info@bps.org.uk w: www.bps.org.uk
© The British Psychological Society 2019
Incorporated by Royal Charter Registered Charity No 229642