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Issue 8

Scottish Health Informatics Programme

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SHIP safe havens in Scotland

Inside this issue:

SHIP safe havens in Scotland	1
SHIP Retreat 2012	2
Introducing Tom Clemens	2
7th Mackenzie Lecture Day	3
Advanced Training Workshop with D'Arcy Holman	3

St Andrews Harbour

Safe havens are springing up across Scotland at the nodes of Health Science Scotland (previously called Scottish Academic Health Science Collaboration) namely Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Edinburgh's safe haven is well established, It is situated within NHS Lothian's headquarters at Waverly Gate, where it is maintained by the Health Intelligence Unit. It is compliant with SHIP security and functionality principles although remote access is still to be fully tested and researchers should be prepared to travel to Waverly Gate in the meantime. Information is currently being prepared for researchers and all enquiries should be via www.hsru.ed.ac.uk.

After more than a year of pilot work and user-engagement, The Health Informatics Centre in **Dundee** (HIC) has now implemented the TAyside medical Science Centre (TASC) remote-access Safe Haven for the East of Scotland region. All new projects with research teams accessing anonymised data for research analysis via HIC are now required to use the Safe Haven remote access system. See www.dundee.ac.uk/hic/

The safe haven at **Aberdeen** is soon to launch although it has grown out of a long collaboration between the Data Management Team and the Health Intelligence Unit. The Grampian Data Safe Haven (DaSH http://www.abdn.ac.uk/iahs/dahs/safe-haven/) aims to provide:

- safe and sustainable storage, transmission and linkage of data;
- clear and proportionate governance arrangements;
- secure and coordinated access to data for eligible researchers

Structural and operational plans go before the Grampian Safe Haven Steering group in early April. Once the plans are approved, the Grampian DaSH will "go live" with three identified pilot linkage projects. The projects will test different parts of the safe haven process; preparing for linkage of clinical audit datasets, transferring linked national datasets and managing researcher access to a linked dataset.

The **Glasgow** Safe Haven, is being developed within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, in partnership with the Robertson Centre for Biostatistics. It will provide access to linked datasets to support the use of clinical data for research purposes.

The Safe Haven will comprise a set of core datasets, including GP data, prescribing data, GRO and SMR data. These datasets will be linked with key local clinical datasets to provide a previously unavailable resource for researchers and NHS staff to answer research questions.

One of the main aims of Safe Haven is the security and confidentiality of patient data: the Safe Haven has a robust governance structure in place in the form of a Local Privacy Advisory Committee

A REC application is currently in progress for the safe haven as a research database.

Forthcoming SHIP Retreat at Dunblane Hydro

This year the SHIP Retreat 2012 is being held from 4pm on Thursday 31st May until 4pm Friday 1st June 2012 at:

The Doubletree by Hilton Dunblane Hydro Hotel
Perth Road
Dunblane
FK15 0HG

The aims of the day are:

- to report on progress of the SHIP infrastructure
- draw together the various branches of SHIP to foster collaborative working
- to take stock of the past year and plan for the next
- to give junior researchers the opportunity to present

Please contact Caroline Glen to register: c.j.glen@dundee.ac.uk tel 01382 496483.

Introducing Tom Clemens

Tom Clemens

Tom Clemens is a research fellow based in the department of Geography and Geosciences at the University of St Andrews and joined the Demographic, Socio-Economic and Environmental Data Linkage arm of the SHIP project in March 2011. He graduated with a first class BA degree in Human geography from Lancaster University in 2006.

Tom was successful in securing ESRC funding to continue his studies at the University of St Andrews and completed a master of research degree in Health Geography in 2007 and is due to graduate with a PhD in 2012. His PhD research applied innovative quantitative methods to establish a causal relationship between different forms of worklessness and subsequent mortality. The research made extensive use of the Scottish Longitudinal Study and involved the linkage of census data to other sources including health data from the Scottish Morbidity Record and death records from vital events data.

This work has led to developing interests in the utility of routinely collected administrative health data and associated analytical methods to inform research in the areas of public health and social epidemiology. His role within the SHIP project continues to develop these interests. Currently, Tom is working on a project to estimate and validate complex time-space exposures to various environmental agents through a linkage between environmental datasets, hospital admissions and the Scottish Longitudinal Study. Furthermore, the project aims to determine the degree to which the health effects of exposure to ambient air pollutants and its effects for health may be mediated by socio-economic position, deprivation and poverty.

Contact Tom at:
tc245@st-andrews.ac.uk

7th Mackenzie Lecture Day

This year's Mackenzie Lecture will be given by Professsor Trisha Greenhalgh who will speak on 'Why National eHealth Programs Need Dead Philosophers: Wittgensteinian Reflections on Policymakers' Reluctance to Learn from History'

Policymakers seeking to introduce national eHealth programs would be advised to study comparable examples from elsewhere. Many lessons can be learned from England's National Programme for IT. National eHealth programs unfold as they do partly because no-one fully understands what is going on. They fail when this lack of understanding becomes mission-critical. Detailed analyses of the fortunes of these programs, narrativized (as in-depth case studies) to illuminate the contextualized talk and action ("language games") of multiple stakeholders, offer unique and important insights. Such accounts set the stage for productive debate around the complex, interdependent social practices of which eHealth programs consist.

The complexity of contemporary healthcare combined with the multiple stakeholders in large technology initiatives means that national eHealth programs require considerably more thinking through than has sometimes occurred. We need fewer grand plans and more learning communities..

The seventh Mackenzie Lecture will be held on Tuesday 15 May 2012 at 1.00 pm in Lecture Theatre 4 (room 2G11) at the Dalhousie Building on the University of Dundee's Main Campus. A light lunch will be available in the foyer before the Lecture.

As well as the Mackenzie Lecture there will also be morning and afternoon sessions at the Dalhousie Building on 15 May, final content to be confirmed.

A bus will be available on the day from Ninewells Hospital to the Dalhousie Building and back.

Trisha Greenhalgh

Advanced Training Workshop with D'Arcy Holman

4-8th June 2012 at University of St Andrews, Dept of Geography & Geosciences, Irvine Building, St Andrews KY16 9AL

Educational objectives

Professor Holman provides students with a theoretical grounding in the classroom on each topic, followed by a training session on the corresponding technological computing solutions. Students use fictitious but realistic linked data files on CD-ROM in the hands-on exercises. Advanced Analysis of Linked Health Data provides health researchers with the opportunity to build on their pre-existing theoretical knowledge and skills in the analysis of linked health data by exploring a number of advanced topics.

Course prerequisites

The course assumes that students have completed Introductory Analysis of Linked Health Data or have equivalent knowledge. The computing component of the unit assumes a facile competence in the preparation of computing syntax for SPSS, SAS or STATA and familiarity with the statistical analysis of linked data files at an introductory to intermediate level.

To register for the Advanced Training Workshop please complete the on-line registration form at the University of St Andrews online Shop http://onlineshop.st-andrews.ac.uk

The fee for the Advanced Workshop is £350, which includes registration, lunches and coffees/teas (the fee for postgraduates and the unwaged will be £140 although the number of such spaces will be limited so please apply early). Registration for the Advanced Workshop will close on Friday 25th May 2012. Total places for the Advanced Workshop are limited to 35 so please book early.

For further information see the SHIP website: www.scot-ship.ac.uk/training-and-events

Or contact ship@st-andrews.ac.uk

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