



# Pain Research Institute

*This is the Pain Research Institute newsletter, the purpose of which is to keep researchers and clinicians informed of the current research going on in the institute. We hope this will enable clinicians to identify areas of research that they may be interested in whilst keeping informed about studies opening to recruitment as they may have pain patients they wish to refer.*

## Fibromyalgia Guidelines Now Published



New guidelines aiming to support clinicians in the diagnosis of fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) have been published by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP). FMS, although common, is often challenging to diagnose and as a result, patients may receive the wrong diagnosis and only receive the correct one after years of delay. The new guidance aims to correct this, by supporting patient-facing clinicians to consider a diagnosis of FMS.

The Guidelines can be found [here](#)

Dr. Andreas Goebel, Reader in Pain Medicine & Director of the PRI



Francis McGlone, Professor in Neuroscience, School of Natural Sciences & Psychology, Liverpool John Moores University



Dr. Bernhard Frank, Consultant in Pain Medicine and Anaesthesia  
Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust



Selina Johnson, Clinical Research Fellow



Manohar Lal Sharma, Consultant in Pain Medicine, Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust



Andy Marshall, Senior Lecturer UOL & Consultant in Pain Medicine, Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust



Uazman Alam, senior Clinical Lecturer in Diabetes & Endocrinology



Francis O'Neill, Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant in Oral Surgery



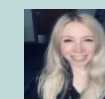
Helen Poole, Professor of Applied Health Psychology, Liverpool John Moores University



Serena Sensi, Research Technician at the Rheumatology Laboratory, University Hospital Aintree



Katie Herron Specialist Clinical Psychologist & research lead for pain management programmes



Hayley McCullough, PRI Administrator





## **Pain Management Programme Audit 2021-2022 (Summary by Matt Liptrot & Katie Herron)**

The team at Walton Pain Management Programme (PMP) designed an online PMP (OPMP) in order to offer a continued service when restrictions were imposed during the pandemic. We aimed to compare the efficacy of the new OPMP with our pre-pandemic face to face (F2F) PMP.

The F2F PMP is an intensive 16-day treatment delivered by the multidisciplinary team. The new online PMP required adaptation in order to be feasible online. It comprised 18 half-day clinician led group therapy sessions using MS Teams. The timetable continued to cover the same topics as used for F2F.

We compared the outcomes of 60 online PMP patients from September 2020 to August 2021 with 177 face to face patients from September 2018 to August 2019. All patients were over 18 years old and assessed for PMP suitability by the multidisciplinary team as standard practice for both patient groups. Only patients suitable to make progress on an OPMP were offered a place. Those requiring F2F for clinical reasons were on hold till restrictions were lifted. Data were collected at pre-treatment baseline and post-treatment reassessment. The results were compared using established benchmarks for comparison using effect sizes (Fenton & Morley, 2013). We also calculated the percentage patients who achieved a 'clinically significant change' due to treatment using the criteria of improving by 1 standard deviation of the group baseline.

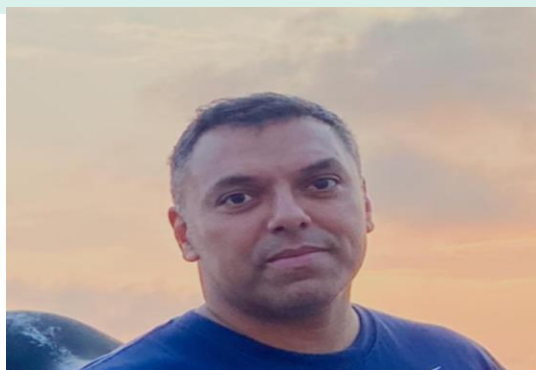
Outcomes measures comprised of pain intensity and distress, pain catastrophizing, depression, pain self-efficacy, occupational performance and physical functioning

We found that patients who attended the OPMP were, on average, 10 years younger, more were female and more likely to be employed compared to the F2F group. This highlights a difference in patient profile who are suitable and attending OPMPs. Furthermore, the lower conversion rates from referral to online attendance compared to the pre-pandemic F2F group suggests online therapy is not appropriate for some patients.....Continued overleaf

OPMP improvements were largely comparable to the F2F group and both groups surpassed the expected benchmarks for effect size across all domains (where benchmarks were available). More online patients described a clinically significant reduction of their pain symptom distress and intensity. The F2F PMP outperformed the OPMP for reducing pain catastrophizing and depression, and improving self-efficacy.

Patient feedback showed practical benefits of an OPMP such as avoiding traveling to hospital and it being more manageable with work and family demands. However, patients did report potentially losing out on clinical benefits not being in person such as physiotherapy support and missing out of social opportunities with other patients.

It is important to highlight that the OPMP group outcomes does not suggest this treatment is 'as good as' face to face PMPs because it is treating a different population who are suitable. Unlike some online programmes that are automated and self-directed, our programmes show the benefit of clinician led and interactive therapeutic work for 60+ hours over 6 weeks. We are let to determine the long term efficacy of the OPMP so stay tuned for the follow up data!



## PRI Spotlight

Our most recent spotlight on the PRI webpage is Dr Uazman Alam. **Dr Uazman Alam** is an expert in the field of diabetic neuropathy and has worked extensively the field of corneal confocal microscopy (CCM) as a surrogate endpoint. Dr Alam has published over 100 manuscripts in high impact journals such as Diabetes Care, Diabetes, Diabetologia over the last 12 years. His achievements were acknowledged with the Clinical Research Award in 2019 by the NeuroDiab, the international diabetic neuropathy satellite organisation of the European Foundation for the Study of Diabetes (EFSD). He has an ongoing programme of work in the surrogacy of corneal nerves in non-diabetic pain conditions (fibromyalgia, idiopathic small fibre neuropathy, chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy) funded by the Versus Arthritis, Pain Relief Foundation and interventional studies of painful diabetic neuropathy funded by the NIHR HTA. He along with collaborators at the University of Liverpool have developed an artificial intelligence based deep learning algorithm to detect and classify diabetic neuropathy with future developmental work in other nervous system disorders. Dr Alam is also the Honorary Secretary for the Vascular Medicine & Lipids section of the Royal Society of Medicine and is an active grant reviewer for a number of scientific committees including the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) (UK).

If anybody has anything to add to the PRI newsletter then please contact [Hayley.McCullough@Liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Hayley.McCullough@Liverpool.ac.uk)

## Research Studies... a few to mention

- Investigating Diabetic Neuropathy During Initiation of Intensive Glycaemic Control
- The Utility of Non-Invasive Ocular Imaging in Diabetic Foot Disease
- A Multicentre, double-blind, centre-stratified multi-period crossover trial to evaluate the efficiency of the Optimal Pathway for Treating neuropathic pain in Diabetes Mellitus (OPTIONDM)
- Pain Relief Foundation Studentship-A study looking into validity of confocal corneal microscopy in patients with painful chemotherapy induced and idiopathic small fibre neuropathy.

**For more information on all of the above studies please contact the Principal Investigator on [Ualam@Liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Ualam@Liverpool.ac.uk)**

- Serum IgG autoantibodies in patients with Fibromyalgia-We require 100 patients with a diagnoses of FMS (>1year), without other conditions, we will be collecting blood to be used in laboratory experiments. Principal investigator at [andreasgoebel@rocketmail.com](mailto:andreasgoebel@rocketmail.com)
- Define-FMS- 77 patients – 28 of these for Microneurography and 1 year follow up. Main aim is to understand how nerve damage occurs in the nerves in the front of the eye and compare this to the nerves in the skin to determine if the eye examination is as good as skin biopsy. Contact [anne.marshall@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:anne.marshall@liverpool.ac.uk) for more information
- A qualitative study into the experience and outcomes of those attending a specialist facial pain management programme-Three focus groups have been carried out exploring the experiences of services users attending a specialist facial pain management programme.
- Doctorate Clinical Psychology trainee project- How do people with fibromyalgia relate to their romantic partners? A qualitative study' Principal Investigator [Sean.Harris@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk](mailto:Sean.Harris@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk)
- A study for long term benefit of Spinal Cord Stimulator –Principal Investigator [Bernhard.frank@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk](mailto:Bernhard.frank@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk)

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



### Participate in an online sleep programme for adults with chronic pain

Our new pilot study of a six session online behavioural sleep programme for adults with chronic pain and co-existing sleep problems is now recruiting. Request an information sheet and view more information below:

**[www.uclserl.com/scripstudy](http://www.uclserl.com/scripstudy)**

[Zoe.Zambelli.18@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:Zoe.Zambelli.18@ucl.ac.uk)

THIS RESEARCH IS FUNDED BY:



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council

Now recruiting for a new pilot study to improve sleep and wellbeing in adults with chronic pain. To find out more, please visit <https://uclserl.com/scripstudy> or email [zoe.zambelli.18@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:zoe.zambelli.18@ucl.ac.uk)

To publish in our news letter please contact [Hayley.McCullough@liv.ac.uk](mailto:Hayley.McCullough@liv.ac.uk)



Dr Gina Wieringa (Specialist Clinical Psychologist) has recently joined the Pain Management Programme (PMP) Department at The Walton Centre. In addition to her clinical work, she has recently commenced a research post with Liverpool John Moores, where she will spend two days a week focusing on PMP themed projects which will have a direct impact on service delivery.

She attained her undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of York in 2017, following which she spent a year as an assistant psychologist in Reading working with older adults experiencing cognitive impairment and dementia. In 2018, she started a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Lancaster. It was during the doctorate that her interest in working in the field of chronic pain initially developed, after spending a 6-month placement working in the Pain Management Service in Blackpool.

Her main research interests include pain management in ethnically diverse individuals, pelvic pain in both males and females, pain management in primary care and pain management education and prevention. She is particularly keen to enhance patient and public involvement in research and to this aim, plans to establish an expert by experience group at the Walton Centre to support the development of any projects.