

New Projects

These two pages give brief details on some of our current work. For a more comprehensive outline of the PSSRU programme for the next few years, see the Research Plans section on pages 6–9.

Innovations Forum evaluation

This accompanies the Health of Older People stream of the Innovation Forum programme, launched to improve the care and quality of life of older people and to avoid unnecessary, unplanned hospital admissions through service innovations. The nine participating councils have set a 'headline' target of a 20% reduction in the utilisation of hospital beds by those aged 75 and over between 2004–2007. The study will investigate how and to what extent creating a single point for strategic commissioning can achieve a reduction in the use of unscheduled inpatient care by people aged 75 and over.

The research has three objectives:

- To use the combined strengths of the evaluators and national stakeholders to ensure that the overall initiative and its individual components are evidence-based, wherever possible.
- To promote an open culture of knowledge sharing between pilot site teams, local evaluation teams and the national evaluation.
- To collate, analyse and draw conclusions from data about the outputs, outcomes and consequences of the initiative overall.

The national evaluation will examine the outputs, outcomes and consequences of the Innovation Forum (IF) initiatives. This first stage of the research will look at how the services to achieve this target are being implemented within the nine national pilot sites. It will also examine how the nine local authorities are working with the PCTs, other local partners and central government. The PSSRU LSE team is carrying out the quantitative data analysis and modelling of bed utilisation for the national evaluation; it is also conducting the local evaluation of four IF sites: Kent, Westminster, West Sussex and Hampshire.

International mental health research

The core element of this work in 2005 is phase II of the Mental Health Economics European Network (MHEEN). Supported by the EC, the Network now has 33 partners covering 31 European countries. Network activities to date have included preparation of a simple framework for identifying and collecting data on the primary economic dimensions relevant to mental health systems in Europe; collating information and indicators that would permit cross-country comparisons; and learning about economic issues and how they are addressed.

A report on Phase I of the network (which covered 17 countries) has now been submitted to the EC, including papers on financing, the role of economic evaluation, and the relationship between employment and mental health.

As part of Phase II, in addition to replicating work in the new member states of the EU, in-depth analysis will be undertaken on the potential cost-effectiveness of mental health promotion strategies, interventions in the workplace, and economic barriers to deinstitutionalisation in central and eastern Europe.

The PSSRU group has also been advising the SEBOD (Reducing the Socio-Economic Burden of Depression) group in Asia, using economic arguments to improve identification and treatment of the disorder. An economic and financial analysis of mental health care system in Russia has been completed as part of a multi-institution DFID project. Links with partners in Africa and other parts of the developing world have been strengthened. The group is also involved in a number of cross-national economic evaluations such as GENDEP, assessing the economic aspects of genetic testing in the diagnosis and treatment of depression in nine European countries; and the EQOLISE study of supported employment, evaluating the Individual Placement and Support model. An edited book on *Mental Health Policy and Practice in Europe* prepared in conjunction with the WHO Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, is also nearing completion.

For more on the PSSRU's mental health work, see pages 22 to 23.

Housing and care projects

A report on recent findings from our main Housing and Care Programme can be found on pages 24 to 25.

Housing and care research network

Researchers working in the field of housing and care come from a variety of backgrounds, and this has inhibited the sharing of information. The purpose of this research network is to bring researchers together to help develop greater collaboration and the sharing of expertise, and to provide a means of communication with commissioners, policy makers and end users. Two meetings have been held to date and, in addition to occasional meetings, an electronic discussion list and a research network website are being planned. For further details or to join the network, please contact Robin Darton, Jane Dennett or Ann-Marie Towers at PSSRU at Kent.

Benchmarking extra care housing

We are currently undertaking a benchmarking study, which will examine extra care housing provision in a sample of local authorities in 2005. We will be conducting telephone interviews with the extra care housing leads to provide context to current and planned provision of extra care housing. We hope to build on this work by repeating

this cross-sectional survey over time so that patterns of change can be studied.

Formula spending share study

The FSS formulae allocate funds for personal social services between local authorities in England and should reflect differences in area needs and costs. In a study designed to feed into a revised formula, we have conducted a cross-sectional survey of admissions to care homes and interviewed home care recipients in a nationally representative sample of local authorities. The results of this study will be available in the autumn of 2005.

Control project

In response to the policy agenda to increase service users' sense of control and the move towards outcome based targets for local authorities (local public service agreements, LPSAs), we are conducting a small-scale, in-depth study comparing older people's desire for and perception of control in care homes and extra care housing. The study aims to explore how services and service settings contribute to residents' sense of control and will feed into future work in this area. Pilot interviews are taking place in August and the main fieldwork period will run from September through to December 2005. A report of our findings will be available in the summer of 2006.

Future prevalence of cognitive impairment in older people

The Alzheimer's Research Trust has recently commissioned the PSSRU, in collaboration with Alastair Burns and Guk-Hee Suh, to explore scenarios about the future prevalence of cognitive impairment in older people through the views of experts working on the development of treatments for dementia. The cost implications of these scenarios will then be investigated using an updated version of the PSSRU cognitive impairment model, which makes projections of future demand for long-term care services and of associated expenditure based on alternative scenarios about the future.

Delayed discharges from hospital

The Community Care (Delayed Discharges) Act of 2003 placed new duties upon both councils with social services responsibilities and the NHS regarding improved inter-agency communication and patient involvement. This study, funded by Stockport SSD and partners and carried out by the PSSRU at Manchester, is designed to inform managers of the characteristics and circumstances of patients who experience a delayed discharge so as to improve their assessment, patients tracking and post hospital care services. It will identify factors which are associated with delayed discharge at the point of admission.

Changing patterns of old age psychiatry: the impact of the National Service Framework for Older People

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has commissioned the

PSSRU at Manchester to undertake this work, which will incorporate a survey of clinicians specialising in the mental health of older people. It is designed to provide a view of the way in which mental health services for older people have responded to the proposals for change outlined in the NSFOP. The aim of the study is to explore developments in three areas: the nature of the work undertaken by staff in mental health services for older people, the range of services available to older people with mental health problems in other sectors of the NHS, and the pace of service development.

Strategies for integrating people with disabilities into work

David McDaid of PSSRU at LSE is taking part in the EC-funded Opti-Work project, which sets out to develop and disseminate a conceptual framework consisting of a number of analytic tools and cross-national comparative reports, to assist in formulating EU policy, calculating the socio-economic impact of those policies and making recommendations for innovative strategies to enhance the labour market integration of citizens with disabilities. This is a 36-month project being undertaken by partners from the Netherlands, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Finland, Greece and Belgium. The project website is www.optiwork.org.

'Choose Life' initiative evaluation

Choose Life is the national strategy and action plan to prevent suicide in Scotland. The evaluation is a collaboration between the University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health and PSSRU at the LSE and it aims to report by the summer of 2006.

Research on schizophrenia

Two projects at PSSRU at LSE have been funded by Eli Lilly & Co Ltd to investigate the impact of schizophrenia. One will review evidence on the use of QALYs (Quality Adjusted Life Years) for schizophrenia, and – where it is relevant – for mental health more broadly. Another project will estimate up-to-date costs associated with health and social care, informal care by families and communities, lost productivity, premature mortality, criminal justice system contacts and – in so far as it can be expressed in monetary terms – impaired quality of life, of this devastating and long-lasting illness, in the UK. Further information can be obtained from Roshni Mangalore.

Social exclusion and mental health

As part of the Campaign for LSE, alumni Mr and Mrs Christian Brodersen have generously funded a project to explore the inter-relationship between dimensions of social exclusion and mental health. This is a joint venture between the PSSRU at LSE and the school's Centre for Social Exclusion to build on the results of a previously conducted mapping exercise by the two groups. It will conduct a user consultation session and explore the data, focusing on the extent of the problems and possible social and public policy solutions to them.