Action on Autism
Research in Scotland
– Improving Impact Seminar Series

Seminar 1
26, 27 November 2013
The Lighthouse, Glasgow

Psychological Research, Interventions and Impact

All presentations will be made available through the Action on Autism Research in Scotland Virtual Network hosted by Autism Network Scotland. Delegates will be able to access these by first joining Autism Network Scotland at the address below

www.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk
@Autism_Network
We are delighted to welcome you to the Action on Autism Research in Scotland Seminar Series which aims to link policy, research and practice: An international perspective on Psychological, Clinical, Social and Educational fields of research into autism will show the quality and level of research evidence needed to inform policy direction. Speakers will lead on these topics shown and their presentations will be complemented by local research and practice presentations: each will be asked to demonstrate such connections how their own research links to policy and practices. International research studies make an enormous contribution to our wider knowledge base and we would like to understand better where Scottish research sits in this picture, where we may be making, or could make, a unique, distinctive or culturally relevant contribution and how this can link to the Scottish policy direction encapsulated in the Scottish Government’s ten year Autism Strategy.

The series will be launched by Scotland’s Minister for Public Health, Mr Michael Matheson. Each Seminar will be chaired by Professor Tommy MacKay in his role as Interclocuteur for the Series. The development of the series has been led by Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop with the support of the Organising Team.

PROFESSOR TOMMY MACKAY

Professor Tommy MacKay is Director of Psychology Consultancy Services, Co-Founder of the National Centre for Autism Studies at the University of Strathclyde and Clinical Director of the National Diagnosis and Assessment Service for Autistic Spectrum Disorders. He has over 40 years’ experience in working with children and young people with ASD and other difficulties. His work has won many national awards as an ‘outstanding and original contribution to psychology’. He has been described by former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown as ‘an inspiration and a visionary’.

PROFESSOR ALINE WENDY DUNLOP

Professor Aline Wendy Dunlop leads the Action on Autism Research in Scotland Seminar Series Organising Team. She is Professor Emerita at the School of Education at the University of Strathclyde, where she was the first Course Director of the Masters in Autism. Aline-Wendy is a member of the Scottish Government Autism Reference Group, Chair of Autism Network Scotland’s Steering Group and was awarded an MBE “for services to autism in Scotland” in June 2013: She extends a huge thank you to each of our funders: Scottish Government, Research Autism and Scottish Autism.
PROGRAMME DAY 1

Tuesday 26th November 2013

09.45
Welcome
– Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop

Address
- Mr Michael Matheson, Minister for Public Health,
The Scottish Government

Opening Remarks
- Professor Tommy MacKay

10.00 – 11.00

Dr Thomas Insel, Director, National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), USA
“Autism: What do we know? What do we need?”
Presentation and discussion

11.00 – 11.30
Break

11.30 – 12.45

Seminar 1 – 3 x Scottish Researchers, 15 mins each + 5 mins questions

1. Dr Karri Gillespie-Smith
   “Using eye-tracking to study early infant cognition: Implications for clinical practice”

2. Dr Juan Carlos Gomez
   “Referential cognition and autism: problems and individual differences”

3. Dr Mary Stewart
   “Auditory and language processing across the autism spectrum”

12.45 – 13.45
Lunch
Posters and Impact

13.45 – 14.45
Dr Liz Pellicano, Institute of Education, London
“A Future Made Together: New directions for autism research in the UK”
Presentation and discussion

14.45 – 15.15
Break

15.15 – 16.15
Impact Seminar
Round table discussion focussing on the potential impact of what we have heard today by use and classification

16.15 – 16.45
Summing up from speakers and chair

17.00
Close
DR KARRI GILLESPIE-SMITH
HERIOT WATT

“Using eye-tracking to study early infant cognition: Implications for clinical practice”

Karri completed a PhD at the University of Stirling on “Eye-tracking explorations of attention to faces for communicative cues in Autism Spectrum Disorders”. From 2012-2013 Karri’s research was on developing visual tasks that assessed infant’s early cognitive processing via eye-tracking methodology. These methods are now currently being adapted and applied to at-risk infant groups (mainly babies born pre-term). From September 2013 I began work as a teaching fellow in Psychology at Heriot-Watt University where I am currently pursuing funding to modify and apply my visual tasks to more at-risk infant groups and explore eye gaze behaviour as an early clinical marker of ASD and intellectual impairments.

DR JUAN CARLOS GÓMEZ
UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

“Referential cognition and Autism: problems and individual differences”

Dr. Juan Carlos Gómez is Reader at the School of Psychology and neuroscience, University of St.Andrews. He graduated and obtained his Ph.D. in psychology at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain, in 1992. He joined St Andrew’s University in 1998, where he teaches and conducts research on Developmental and Evolutionary Psychology. A member of the Center for Social Learning and Cognitive Evolution, and founding member of SARG, his areas of work include the origins of communication and social cognition in non-human primates, typically developing children and Autism Spectrum Conditions.

DR MARY STEWART
HERIOT WATT UNIVERSITY

“Auditory and language processing across the autism spectrum”

Dr Mary Stewart is a Reader in Psychology at Heriot-Watt University. The primary focus of research in her lab is to gain an understanding of how symptoms link to behaviour in ASD, both by describing the profile that is associated with this spectrum of disorders and also by testing within the context of current cognitive theories. Current research areas are auditory processing and language, emotional processing, co-morbidities and the broader phenotype.
**Wednesday 27th November 2013**

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<td>Pulling everything together on the seminar theme of Psychological Research, Interventions and Impact: Summing up from speakers and chair</td>
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MICHELLE DAWSON
UNIVERSITY OF MONTREAL
“Science, ethics, and autism intervention research: Should there be autism-specific standards?”
Michelle Dawson is an autistic researcher affiliated since 2004 with Laurent Mottron’s University of Montreal autism research group. Her research interests include learning and intelligence in autism, the autistic cognitive phenotype, how autistic brains process information, and science- and ethics-based approaches to autism.

DR KEN AITKEN
ASD REFERENCE GROUP – RESEARCH SUB GROUP:
“The Research, policy and practice context in Scotland”
Ken is a clinical developmental neuropsychologist. He has been a practicing clinician for over 30 years. He has been involved in developing best practice guidelines for ADHD and autism in the UK and is Chair of the Research Subgroup for the Scottish Autism Strategy. He is a frequent International speaker. Ken has published numerous books, articles, and academic papers. His most recent works deal with the recent changes to diagnostic criteria; sleep disorders in the ASDs; and the various assessment tools available to track behavioural progress.

DR HELEN MARWICK
“Developments in expressive language and symbolic play of young children with autism through participation in the ‘Playboxes’ joint-play intervention”
Helen Marwick is currently involved in research on intersubjectivity and conceptual development within autism spectrum disorders and has developed the Joint-Play Intersubjectivity Assessment Method (JPIAM), also known as ‘Playboxes’, which promotes and assesses active interpersonal engagement and communication, and which is being used in a number of school settings across Scotland.

PROFESSOR COLWYN TREVARTHEN
“Autism as a disorder of movement and affective regulation”
Colwyn Trevarthen is Professor (Emeritus) of Child Psychology and Psychobiology at The University of Edinburgh. He studies development of brain and body in infancy and how children move, communicate, and maintain emotional health in creative play and shared learning. He is interested in developmental disorders, including autism, and effects of stressful early childhood, and how rhythms and expressions of ‘communicative musicality’ in movement share emotions and help learning of language and other cultural skills. He has Honorary Doctorates from the University of Crete, the University of East London, and Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, a Member of the Norwegian Academy of Sciences and Letters, and a Vice-President of the British Association for Early Childhood Education, and has received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the British Psychological Society.

DR JONATHAN DELAFIELD-BUTT
“Autism as a disorder of movement and affective regulation”
Dr Jonathan Delafield-Butt is a Lecturer in Early Years in the School of Education at the University of Strathclyde. He completed his PhD in Developmental Neurobiology at the University of Edinburgh before moving to Psychology where he researched perception and movement in several organisms, including worms, birds, and babies. His recent work at Copenhagen and Strathclyde examines the development of perception-action systems involved in coordinating human interaction and social understanding, how these can be disrupted in neuropathology, and repaired in therapeutic treatment.

DR SUE FLETCHER-WATSON
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
“Should we be teaching theory of mind skills to children with autism?”
Sue’s PhD research, supervised by Sue Leekam, explored the spontaneous social attention of adults and adolescents with ASD, using a range of methods, including eye-tracking. Since then she has worked under the mentorship of Professor Helen McConachie including a recently-completed Nuffield Fellowship. In this project, called Click-East, an educational iPad app was designed and then trialled with more than fifty children with autism. Findings will be published by the end of 2013. Sue is also associated with a range of other projects at Edinburgh in the field of developmental psychology. These include: MRI and eye-tracking in infancy; exploring the experiences of siblings of children with autism; and developing better understanding of how families use technology at home.

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Two further Seminars will take place as follows –

Social Research, Interventions and Impact - 28th & 29th April 2014
Educational Research, Interventions and Impact - 9th & 10th June 2014

There will be a concluding conference in the Autumn of 2014.

NOTES OF INTEREST - If you or colleagues are conducting research on autism in the UK and would be interested in presenting research at one of the events, we would like to hear from you. Please email caroline.marley@strath.ac.uk to note interest, indicating your topic, whether you would prefer to present a talk or poster, and which of the seminars would be a best fit for the presentation proposed. We will then send you guidelines on submission of a summary for consideration by the review panel.
ALAN SOMERVILLE

Alan Somerville is Chief Executive of Scottish Autism, Scotland’s national autism charity and co-founder of this seminar series. He is also a Trustee of the Autism Alliance UK and a member of the Scottish Government’s External Reference Group developing and implementing the Scottish Strategy for Autism.

DR ANDREW STANFIELD

Dr Andrew Stanfield is the co-director of the Patrick Wild Centre for Research into Autism, Fragile X Syndrome and Intellectual Disabilities at the University of Edinburgh. Within the NHS, he is also an honorary consultant in intellectual disability psychiatry and a member of the SE Scotland autism diagnostic service. His research is focused around the biological and psychological mechanisms of autism and related conditions, with a particular focus on the translation of these findings into clinical practice.

ANNA ROBINSON

Anna Robinson is the Course Leader for the PgCert;PgDip;MEd in Autism at the University of Strathclyde. Prior to this she managed The Centre for Education and Training in Autism and the Autism Advisory Service for Scottish Autism. She has been a practising therapist for people with Asperger’s Syndrome for over 17 years. Her research explores emotional processing and the mechanisms of change within group Emotion-Focused Therapy.

DR EVELYN MCGREGOR

Dr Evelyn McGregor is a member of academic staff in the School of Education at the University of Edinburgh, a developmental psychologist, and currently Director of Post-Graduate Studies. Evelyn and colleagues formed the Scottish Autism Research Group (SARG): an interdisciplinary group which has run several funded seminar series for academics, practitioners and the autism community in Scotland. Her interests include intervention to help people with autism learn about belief, narrative skills and interests in autism and job interview skills in autism.

DR EWELENA NYDZEWNSKA

Dr Ewelina Rydzewska was appointed a Network Adviser for Autism Network Scotland in May 2012. Ewelina’s main research interest is on the process of transition to adulthood for people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Ewelina’s research is concerned with multidimensional reflections on adulthood and on the quality of life for people with disabilities. Ewelina is also interested in the impact of the available service provision on service users’ developmental trajectories and opportunities for social engagement.

DR HELEN MARWICK

Dr Helen Marwick is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Strathclyde. A developmental psychologist, she is currently involved in research on intersubjectivity and conceptual development within autism spectrum disorders. She developed the Joint-Play Intersubjectivity Assessment Method (JPIAM). Helen is a member of international research groups investigating neurodevelopmental disorders and social communication, and has published widely in this area.

DR JACKIE RAVET

Dr Jackie Ravet is currently a senior lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Aberdeen. She is also director of the Autism & Learning programme - a Masters pathway for postgraduate students. Jackie has a background in teaching pupils on the autism spectrum and also held the post of Autism Development Coordinator for Moray Council. She now lectures and researches in autism and inclusive practice.

RICHARD MILLS

Richard Mills is the National Autistic Society’s Director of Research and Research Director of Research Autism, an independent UK research charity specifically concerned with research into interventions in autism and co-funders of the present seminar series. His other appointments include Autism Advisor to the States of Jersey CI and Research Fellow, Bond University, Brisbane, Australia; He is Editor of Autism the International Journal of Research and Practice.
Scottish Government recognises that autism is a national priority. Given the importance of this agenda, the development and creation of a new Scottish strategy for autism was vital to ensure progress across Scotland in delivering quality services to people with autism and their families. Scottish Government Autism Strategy funding was awarded to The Action on Autism Research Seminar Series as an initiative to reach out to the autism research community and to bridge research, policy and practice.

Research Autism describes itself as “the only UK charity exclusively dedicated to research into interventions in autism. We carry out high quality, independent research into new and existing health, education, social and other interventions. Our goal is the improvement of quality of life and outlook for people on the autism spectrum and those around them.”

They have generously supplemented the original Scottish Government grant to the series.

http://researchautism.net/pages/welcome/home.ikml

Scottish Autism Describes itself as “an organisation dedicated to enriching the lives of people with autism. We are the largest provider of autism-specific services in Scotland and a leading authority and advocate for good autism practice. We exist to help those diagnosed with autism to lead full and enriched lives and become valuable members of the community they live in. We also seek to share our knowledge and expertise with parents, carers and other professionals in order to support the development of skills and strategies needed to provide the best care and support for people with autism”.

They have generously supplemented the original Scottish Government grant to the series.

http://www.scottishautism.org/

The Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Strathclyde collaborated with the seminar series proposal to develop the seminar series.