

University of Stirling
PhD studentship in Diabetes and Pre-hospital Emergency Care

Background

Diabetes is a growing health concern placing increasing pressure on NHS resources. In the UK 2.3 million people are currently diagnosed with the condition; a figure predicted to rise to 3 million by the end of the decade. A significant number of people with diabetes experience hypoglycaemic emergencies. An analysis of emergency calls received by West of Scotland Emergency Medical Despatch Centre (EMDC), which accounts for approximately 40% of all emergency calls received by the Scottish Ambulance Service, showed that during the 12 months from March 2007 to February 2008, 1409 calls were for hypoglycaemic related emergencies. Further analysis of the dataset highlighted that repeat callers accounted for a significant number of hypoglycaemic emergency calls: 16% of people calling 999 because of a hypoglycaemic emergency accounted for 36% of hypoglycaemic emergency callouts. A similar proportion of repeat callers and callouts is also found in hypoglycaemic emergencies in England and Wales.³ A recently conducted systematic review of post-hypoglycaemic patient safety in the pre-hospital environment concluded that an investigation in the causes of repeat hypoglycaemic events, and reasons for repeat calls to emergency services was required (Duncan & Fitzpatrick *In Press*, *Emergency Medical Journal*).

The NMAHP Research Unit

The NMAHP RU is a national research unit, funded by the Scottish Government's Chief Scientist Office. Its remit is to develop high quality research which is useful and relevant to direct patient care staff throughout Scotland, to provide a strong national focus for patient care research, and where appropriate to actively involve NMAHP staff in its research. Research within the unit comprises three programmes; Stroke, Urogenital Disorders, and Decision Making. The Decision Making Programme is based within the University of Stirling and includes research in maternity care, mental health and pre-hospital emergency care. The programme has a strong track record of collaboration with academic partners, within the University of Stirling and beyond.

NMAHP Research Unit/Scottish Ambulance Service collaboration

In 2006 the NMAHP Research Unit commenced a strong and developing research collaboration focusing on pre-hospital paramedic emergency care with the Scottish Ambulance Service. This strand of the Unit's Decision Making Programme is led by Dr Edward Duncan. To date, the NMAHP Research Unit/Scottish Ambulance Service collaboration has had successful research output, and is nationally recognised for its knowledge exchange activities.

The PhD project

This study will examine the causes and patient experiences of repeat callouts for people who experience repeat hypoglycaemic events. This will help inform future research interventions to guide and improve the delivery of their care and consequently aim to decrease the frequency of emergency callouts. The studentship will be supervised by Dr Duncan of the University of Stirling and Prof Catherine Niven in the NMAHP Research Unit. An advisory group will guide and inform the study. This will include service user representation from Diabetes UK (Scotland); expertise in patient experience, primary care and knowledge exchange (Prof Elizabeth Ireland); a research paramedic (David Fitzpatrick); and senior Scottish Ambulance Service managers responsible for service redesign and continuous improvement (Mr Calum Kerr, Mr Andrew Wymss, and Mr Bill Mason).

The studentship is jointly funded by the Scottish Ambulance Service and the University of Stirling. The PhD will be registered within the University of Stirling's Department of Nursing and Midwifery and the successful candidate will be based in the NMAHP Research Unit at the University of Stirling. The University and the Unit provide a dynamic and supportive research environment and it is expected that the student will benefit from working alongside clinical and academic colleagues from a range of disciplines.

It is expected that the student would be in a position to submit their PhD in autumn 2012 assuming a start date of October 2009. The successful applicant is also expected to publish academic papers at each stage of their work, and present at relevant conferences.

Who may apply?

The studentship is open to new social science and NMAHP graduates with a relevant 1st or 2:1 honours degree.

How to apply:

Applications should be made on the form for a full-time research degree in Nursing and Midwifery to commence on the 1 October 2009. This can be obtained from:

<http://www.external.stir.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/index.php>.

Applications should be accompanied by a CV and a statement (approximately 1000 words long) about how your previous experience fits with doing this PhD. **All applications should be entitled "PhD studentship in Diabetes and pre-hospital emergency care"**. Applications may be submitted electronically or returned by post to the Graduate Admissions Office, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA by Friday **31st July 2009**.

Interviews will be held in Stirling.

The University is committed to ensuring the safety of vulnerable people and our recruitment process is designed to support this. The successful applicant for this post will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure Scotland check.

