

WELCOME

Welcome to *SDO News*, the newsletter of the NHS Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) R&D Programme. Dr Naomi Fulop is on sabbatical until April 2004 and I am acting Centre Director in her absence.

Since our last newsletter in June 2003 we have commissioned many exciting new projects across our programmes of research, details of which can be found in the update below. In this issue we also bring you information on the third national SDO conference, changes to SDO staff and research themes and reports on the Access to Health Care Progress Conference and Chief Executives' Forum.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued interest in the Programme and to wish you a very Happy New Year.

Dr Stuart Anderson
Acting Centre Director, NCCSDO

THE THIRD NATIONAL SDO CONFERENCE

Delivering Research for Better Health Services
Wednesday 28 April 2004, Church House, Westminster

Following on from the success of the first two national SDO conferences, this third conference will promote discussion, highlight current thinking and raise awareness of on-going research into the organisation and delivery of health care services.

The conference will examine ways in which SDO research can help the NHS work better, by exploring a wide range of issues around the themes of workforce, evaluating models of health services delivery, access to health care, patient and carer-centred care, change management and organisational factors in health care.

The keynote speaker is Mr Harry Cayton OBE, Director for Patient Experience and Public Involvement at the Department of Health. Other speakers include Professor Roger Ulrich, Director of the Center for Health Systems and Design at Texas A&M University, and Ms Sue Osborn, Joint Chief Executive of the National Patient Safety Agency.

This conference will be of interest to health care professionals, health service managers, researchers, policy makers and health service users. For more information about the conference programme and booking details please visit www.healthcare-events.co.uk

Places are filling up fast so please book early to avoid disappointment.

CHANGES TO SDO PERSONNEL

In September 2003, NCCSDO bid a fond farewell to Dr Aileen Clarke, Senior Lecturer at the Centre. She has left to become Reader in Health Services Research at Queen Mary's School of Medicine & Dentistry, London and we wish her every success in her new role. We are delighted to welcome Dr Nick Goodwin, who will be joining the NCCSDO as a senior lecturer in January 2004. Dr Goodwin is currently a lecturer at the University of Birmingham's Health Services Management Centre.

CHANGES TO SDO RESEARCH THEMES

The SDO Programme focuses on commissioning programmes of research to develop bodies of knowledge on key themes. NCCSDO were asked by the SDO Programme Board and Senior Management Group to review the number of research themes that we currently have, in order to communicate more effectively about the Programme.

We have now reorganised the substantive themes and reduced their number from nine to five, with SDO methodological research as an additional theme. This has meant that some current themes now appear under a different heading.

We will however keep the current organisation of SDO commissioning groups. This means that we retain separate groups for access to health, continuity of care, nursing and midwifery, etc. It will simply not be practical in future for one commissioning group to do all the commissioning required under, for example, the theme 'Patient and carer-centred services'.

New Themes

1. Patient and Carer-Centred Services

Includes:

- Access to health care
- Continuity of care
- Carers

2. Workforce

Includes:

- Relationship to health outcomes
- Skills mix and substitution
- Local labour markets

3. Evaluating Models of Health Services Delivery

Includes:

- Current evaluating models work
- E-health
- Nursing and midwifery SDO

4. Change Management

Includes:

- Leadership in health care
- Relationships between health professionals and managers
- Diffusion and sustainability of change

5. Studying Health Care Organisations

Includes:

- Organisational factors and performance
- Centralisation, decentralisation and devolution
- Incentive effects of forms of governance

6. Methodological Research

Includes:

- Synthesising research findings
- Measures of human resource management
- Organisational culture

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE PROGRESS CONFERENCE



From left to right: Dr Myfanwy Morgan, King's College London; Dr Stuart Anderson, SDO Programme; Dr Mary Dixon-Woods, University of Leicester

On 4 November 2003 the SDO Programme held an Access to Health Care Progress Conference at BMA House, London. Participants included research teams previously and currently funded under the access to health care programme; members of the SDO commissioning group on access to health care; members of the SDO team; and other interested parties.

The research teams gave short presentations of their work, followed by question and answer sessions.

The objectives of the event were:

- to have a forum for exchange of information, for participants to gain an up to the minute overview of the access to health care programme of research;
- to start the process of planning the communication of the findings of the projects to a wide audience, including users and carers, managers, healthcare professionals, policy makers, as well as usual academic colleagues;
- to consider the issue of research methods under the access to health care programme;

- to ensure the coherence of current and future work within the access programme; and
- to consider geographical and other issues in relation to access where further research may be needed.

Forty five people attended the conference and informal feedback from participants indicated it was a useful and informative day, and a great opportunity to share ideas. For the NCCSDO it was very exciting to see so many excellent projects underway.

CHIEF EXECUTIVES' FORUM

Following the success of the first meeting of the CEOs' Forum in May 2003, the SDO hosted a second dinner on 27 November 2003. Invitees included CEOs from PCTs, NHS Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities. Professor Trevor Sheldon from the University of York presented findings from their SDO funded research entitled *The health care workforce and health outcomes: implications for policy and research*.



From left to right: Mr Malcolm Lowe-Lauri, Chief Executive Officer, King's College Hospital; Professor Trevor Sheldon, Vice-Chair, SDO Programme Board

Alan Burns, Chief Executive of Trent Strategic Health Authority then gave a presentation on financial flows and choice. Both presentations were well received and provoked lively discussion.

The CEOs' Forum has been established with three aims in mind:

- to give advice to the SDO Programme and the academic community about priorities for organisational research in the NHS;
- to act as an intermediary body to promote research findings within NHS Trust Boards; and
- to facilitate research activity in CEOs' own organisations.

COMMISSIONED PROJECTS – UPDATE

Theme 1: Patient and carer-centred services

Concordance

The SDO programme is currently inviting proposals to conduct a scoping exercise into concordance, adherence and compliance in medicine taking. The two main aims of the research are to produce a conceptual map of the area and to make proposals for future research.

A variety of meanings have been attached to the terms 'compliance', 'adherence' and 'concordance'. 'Compliance' and 'adherence' are generally used to describe the extent to which patients take medicines as prescribed or recommended by a health professional.

'Concordance' is a more complex term but is generally used to describe two things:

- the process by which a health professional and patient negotiate a joint agreement about diagnosis and treatment, one in which the patient's views and beliefs about illness and treatment are explored and respected;
- the outcome in terms of the extent to which the patient agrees with, or 'buys into' the prescribing decision.

The closing date for this call is Wednesday 28 January 2004 at 1:00pm. For more information visit www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/concordance.htm

Access to health care

Two empirical studies on innovations to improve access have recently been selected for funding. A team of researchers led by Dr Chris Salisbury at the University of Bristol will carry out an evaluation of Advanced Access in general practice, and Dr Mike Slade et al. from the Institute of Psychiatry will undertake an evaluation of the Threshold Assessment Grid (TAG) as a means of improving access from primary care to mental health services. These projects will commence in 2004.

Funding has been awarded to a research team led by Dr Aileen Clarke from Queen Mary's, University of London to carry out an empirical study entitled *The REFER project – Realistic Effective Facilitation of Elective Referral: an assessment of the current use of referral tools for referral from primary to secondary care for elective surgical assessment and design of new tools*. This project will commence in April 2004.

The following projects have recently finished and findings will be available in the New Year:

From the cradle to the grave. A literature review of access to health care for people with learning disabilities across the life span
Lead researcher: Dr Alison Alborz, National Primary Care Research and Development Centre, University of Manchester

Problems and barriers to access to health care for carers and effective interventions to remedy variations - a literature review
Lead researcher: Dr Hilary Arksey, University of York

Carers

Work has begun on an examination of good practice in practitioners giving information to carers. This project is being carried out by a team of researchers led by Professor Peter Huxley at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London and is due to finish at the beginning of June 2004.

The National Service Framework for Mental Health introduced compulsory assessments of carers' needs. The SDO Programme has commissioned a study of how carers are experiencing these assessments in practice. The lead researcher is Professor Mike Nolan from the University of Sheffield.

Two projects on carers that were commissioned using the SDO's rapid response mode of commissioning have now finished and are at peer review:

Respite services for carers for people with dementia
Lead researcher: Dr Hilary Arksey, University of York

Measuring outcomes for carers for people with mental health problems
Lead researcher: Professor Tom Burns, St George's Hospital Medical School

Findings from these projects will be available in the New Year.

Theme 2: Workforce

Three scoping exercises have recently finished:

Workforce and Health Outcomes - Scoping Exercise
Lead researcher: Professor Trevor Sheldon, University of York

The potential for improving the effectiveness of the workforce in secondary care: What is the evidence?
Lead researcher: Professor Roy Carr-Hill, University of York

The impact of local labour market factors on the organisation and delivery of health services
Lead researcher: Professor R.F. Elliott, University of Aberdeen

Findings from these projects will be available in the New Year. The SDO Programme expects to initiate a substantial agenda of empirical research in this area in 2004.

Theme 3: Evaluating models of health services delivery

Evaluating models

The first round of commissioning within this theme focused on evaluating innovations in health care delivery. The concept of innovations in the organisation and delivery of health services covers a very broad area. The SDO Programme aimed to commission research on different ways of organising and delivering services which both challenge traditional practice and which have not yet been adopted on a national scale. The SDO Programme was particularly interested in commissioning evaluations of innovations which clearly relate to NHS priorities and implementation of the NHS Plan.

Four literature reviews and five empirical studies have been commissioned so far, the latest being an empirical study on evaluating innovations in the delivery and organisation of gastroenterology services initiated directly or indirectly by the Modernising Endoscopy Service of the NHS Modernisation Agency. This study began in June 2003 and is being undertaken by a research team led by Professor John Williams at the University of Wales in Swansea. Two other empirical studies are in the final stages of being commissioned.

The organisation and delivery of inpatient mental health services

An R&D priority was identified from the Mental Health National Service Framework to build the evidence on different models of providing acute inpatient psychiatric care. The SDO Programme is in the process of commissioning research on the organisation and delivery of inpatient mental health services. This includes an evaluation of in-patient alternatives to traditional acute inpatient care such as crisis beds, specialised wards etc. (lead researcher to be confirmed); an evaluation of ward observation procedures (lead researcher: Professor Len Bowers, City University); an assessment of inpatient services for young people with mental health problems (lead researcher to be confirmed); and a review of the literature on staff morale on inpatient mental health wards (lead researcher: Professor Michael Barkham, University of Leeds).

Evaluating alternative configurations of acute hospital services

There is currently a wide-ranging debate about how acute hospital services in the NHS should be provided in the future. This debate is influenced by a number of drivers which mean that alternatives to current provision need to be developed. These drivers include the process of change which needs to take place in order to meet national performance targets on, for example, waiting times; technological and medical advances; and the pressures on the medical workforce as a result of the European Working Time Directive.

Many local health communities are discussing how acute hospital services can be redesigned to address these issues and provide high quality care. The Department of Health established a project in 2002 on 'Configuring Hospitals in Health and Social Care Systems'. This project is supporting three pilots which are configuring acute hospital services in different ways. The SDO Programme has been asked by the Department of Health to commission an evaluation of these pilots. This study is at contract stage and is due to start in April 2004.

E-health

Work began on the following two scoping exercises in September 2003:

Literature review and conceptual map of the area of E-health
Lead researcher: Dr Claudia Pagliari, University of Dundee

E-health policy context and consultation with stakeholders in the NHS. A scoping exercise.
Lead researcher: Professor Ray Jones, University of Plymouth

These studies are due to finish in the summer 2004 and will help inform the SDO's future research agenda on E-health.

Nursing and midwifery SDO

A scoping exercise on the nursing, midwifery and health visiting contribution to child health services and a review of the literature on user involvement in the design and delivery of nursing, midwifery and health visiting research are at contract stage and will commence in the spring 2004. Selection of an empirical study will take place in early 2004.

Theme 4: Change management

Professor Trisha Greenhalgh from University College London has completed a literature review on diffusion, spread and sustainability of innovations in health service delivery and organisation. The final report is almost complete and findings will be available in the New Year. Two large studies of change management in the NHS, on leadership and on roles and relationships between managers and clinicians, are currently underway.

Theme 5: Studying health care organisations

Funding for a scoping exercise on organisational factors and performance has been awarded to a team of researchers led by Dr Rod Sheaff at Manchester University. The purpose of this study is to identify topics for further research in this area.

A literature review entitled *Managing across diverse networks of health care providers: Lessons from other sectors* has been completed by Dr Nicholas Goodwin from the Health Services Management Centre at the University of Birmingham. Final clarifications are being sought and findings should be available in the New Year.

Theme 6: Research Methods

A review of the validity and reliability of measures of human resource management, which the SDO Programme is commissioning jointly with the Research Methodology Programme in Birmingham, will be advertised in the near future. It is hoped that this work will begin in late spring 2004.

Research synthesis

The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) and the SDO Programme are commissioning a monograph (or reference book) that may be used by those commissioning research and by researchers to consolidate, synthesise, and/or interpret pieces of evidence from various sources. The guide will illustrate how to assess and present research findings in a useful way for the target audience of managers and policy makers in the health system.

For the first stage of the research, three expert papers have been commissioned on how to complete a comprehensive synthesis for evidence-based management and policy-making in the health system. The papers are:

Methodology paper on using realist methods to produce syntheses of evidence for use by managers and policy makers
Dr Gill Harvey et al.

The review and synthesis of qualitative and quantitative evidence
Professor Nicholas May et al.

Towards syntheses that inform health-care management and health policymaking
Professor John Lavis et al.

The findings of these papers will provide the basis for the monograph.

EVALUATION OF THE SDO COMMISSIONING PROCESSES

The NCCSDO evaluates its commissioning processes on an annual basis. Questionnaires have been sent to all lead researchers who applied for funding in 2003. Comments received will be carefully considered and modifications to the processes made if necessary.

ABOUT THE SDO PROGRAMME

The SDO Programme is a national programme of research established and funded as part of the Department of Health's Research and Development programme.

The SDO Programme has been established to consolidate and develop the evidence base on the organisation, management and delivery of health care services.

The National Co-ordinating Centre for NHS Service Delivery and Organisation Research and Development (NCCSDO), based at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, co-ordinates the SDO Programme.

For further information about the NCCSDO or the SDO Programme visit our website at www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk or contact:

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NCCSDO hope that you find this newsletter interesting and informative. We would be grateful to receive any feedback you may have. Email sdo@lshtm.ac.uk or telephone Helena Paxton on 020 7612 7985.

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The management of the Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) programme has now transferred to the National Institute for Health Research Evaluations, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC) based at the University of Southampton. Prior to April 2009, NETSCC had no involvement in the commissioning or production of this document and therefore we may not be able to comment on the background or technical detail of this document. Should you have any queries please contact sdo@southampton.ac.uk.