

Occupational health Academic Forum – 15th September

In Attendance

Professor Karen Walker Bone - chair, Professor Raymond Agius, Professor Damien McElvenny, Professor Kevin Daniels, Professor Kim Burton, Dr Rob Aitken, Finola Ryan, Dr Gwenllian Wynne-Jones, Professor David Coggan. Elaine Wainwright, Jermaine Ravalier, Professor Anne Harriss, Karen Macdonald, ROSPA, Nick Pahl, Dr Martie Van Tongeren

Apologies – Professor Ewan Macdonald

1 Minutes of last meeting - Agreed

2 Mortality data analysis from Professor Agius

Looked critically at RIDDOR guidance – editorial comment to be published soon; Journal of Occupational Medicine paper on reviewing statutory means of investigating deaths from Covid (via HSE/ Coroner/ RIDDOR). Noted capacity limitations of HSE – which has 100 times as many Covid cases as from all biological diseases.

3 Covid Age tool update from Professor Coggan

Reviews interactions between Age and co-morbidities. Simple calculator in excel being produced (draw back is the model needs to be regularly updated) . Online calculator being produced and fine-tuned too. Scottish Government endorsed the use of covid age for employment – keen to develop a calculator but some delays.

Personal Vulnerability Oxford model being developed looking at risk . Currently looking at geographical component.

Consideration that covid age may underestimate young people and morbidity but all agreed great piece of work to help people back to work, that had been shared internationally.

4 Centre for work and health

MRC taking it forward with bid going in via Comprehensive Spending Review. Business case might be developed in early Jan. Consultation event planned. Comments

- More research councils involved the less easy it gets through..
- MRC build large scale investments around outstanding individuals so really need to have proposal headed up by one or two people with strong track records
- Where it comes down to fluffier areas of science, the MRC has less interest – interest in exposure and environment etc; Possible benefits of link with productivity gains and links with Engineering science and research council
- Genetics interest – would not be useful for mental health

Centre for better ageing cross over - not “competition”. Mentioned cross over with MSK centre.

5 Updates

Gwenllian Wynne-Jones – NIHR/NTA Wave trial around vocational Support via phone / zoom etc. Support GPs coming in for a fit note with stepped care that focuses on obstacles to work and how to overcome them including mental and MSK issues. Involving Dr Ira Madan and Prof Karen Walker Bone. Recruitment mid-November. Aim is to predict work absence and predict those individuals who can go back to work after short period of absence

Damien Mcelvenny – studies of neuro degenerative disease with sports people continuing despite difficulties.

Dr Rob Aitken IOM – looking at Covid transmission in health settings funded by CSO Scotland. Trying to look at occupational risks and guidance. Looking at nano technology boost - EU funded – looking at risk assessment, risks etc. Working with BOHS and Raymond Agius ..

Kevin Daniels – ESRC funded – links between health and wellbeing practices and productivity – looking at data with UEA/RAND and looking at organisational responses to the pandemic,

Professor Anne Harriss – supporting NMC in review of SCPHN register

Dr Finola Ryan - Trainee lead based at Kings – looking at effects of Dermal on dermatitis; Hon Position at UCL on performing arts on hearing of musicians.

Elaine Wainwright – Bath Spa. Looking at projects on people with RA and impact on OH. Linking with MSK Centre Southampton. Topical review proposal with Dr Stephen Bevan and others – “call for arms” in work and pain. Small, funded study mixed methods study with young people and pain. Interested in life span.

Professor Kim Burton – just funded from Innovate UK for knowledge transfer partnership with Swiss – Re – looking at helping people on income protection insurance back into the workplace. 2-year project

Karen McDonnell – ROSPA. Working with Dr Tony Woolf on healthy working conversations with MSK.

Martie Van Tongeren – working on sickness absence in the NHS. Looking at delivery drivers – risk factor for spreading the virus. Review of precarious work, presentateems and risk factors. Involved in national programme looking at environment transmission risk. Looking a non-healthcare risks – one of 6 national programmes HSE is funding trying to fill gaps. THOR reporting scheme - likely continue going forward. Both Manchester and IOM looking at advancing tools in terms of sensors of exposure during working life – shift work, respiratory and how affect how we do health impact assessments.

Germain Ravalier – Reader at Bath University – co creating mental health interventions – one for NHS staff and one for social workers in 7 local authorities. Also longitudinal study of implications of Covid on health and social care. 6-7000- responses from social workers

Prof Coggan – studies on sickness absence in NHS study led by Dr Ira Madan and Paul Cullinan – from 2019. Looking at outcomes will be sickness absence for Covid symptoms for different symptoms. Subset of trusts looking at testing looking a sickness absence data. Denmark – record linkage study linking occupational to hospital admissions for covid – grant application in. Paul Cullinan and Imperial using CPRD data base – identify all patients and re-infection rates

Nick Pahl - Profile of SOM in New Scientist next month; RCGP OH group considered to be set up later this month; Campaign for universal access to OH; £3k for Professor Tar Ching Memorial Fund - to be open shortly; Thanks to all contributors to Journal

Birmingham Course – consideration on next steps to avoid closure welcome

Minimum Data set – comments welcome on attached paper.