Hello and welcome to the second Postgraduate Newsletter, designed to introduce you to your new faculty, department and programme.

This month’s newsletter will introduce you to our Ageing and Dementia Studies programmes, including the expert academic that lead them, our research in these areas and alumni profiles.

Find out more

You can find out more about the Faculty of Health and Medicine and your new division on our website.

Fees and funding information is available on the University website.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

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If you are joining our MSc or PhD in Ageing and PhD in Dementia Studies you will become a member of Lancaster University’s prestigious **Centre for Ageing Research (C4AR)**. The high quality, interdisciplinary research and research-led teaching conducted within C4AR establishes Lancaster University as a leading regional, national and international centre of excellence for ageing research and teaching.

With the increasing older population and rising numbers of the “oldest old”, much of C4AR research focuses on how we can ensure older people experience an active and healthy older age and how we can “compress morbidity” so that periods of poor health in later life start later. In this way, our healthy lifespan becomes closer to our actual lifespan. This will have significant impacts on us all as individuals as we age, but also on those who care for us and the costs for our health and social care systems.

You will have the opportunity to engage with the activities of the Centre and will become a member of the supportive C4AR students’ forum where you’ll meet other students from different disciplines studying different aspects of ageing.

**A message from the Director of C4AR:**

Hi, I’m Professor Carol Holland and I’m really pleased you have applied to study with us. The C4AR community will support you every step of the way, helping you to grow your skills and make valuable contributions to your chosen field.
Meet the team

Each member of the supervision team for the MSc and PhD in Ageing and PhD in Dementia Studies are active researchers, making a real difference in the world.

**Dr Qian Xiong**
MSc and PhD Ageing Admissions Tutor

Dr Qian Xiong is the Admissions Tutor for our MSc in Ageing and PhD in Ageing. She is also a lecturer in Ageing at our Centre for Ageing Research and she teaches foundation quantitative statistical methods for the data analysis module of the blended learning programmes. Qian currently supervises seven students across ageing and public health, with current and previous projects exploring: informal caregiving for people with dementia, early life experience and loneliness, COVID transmissions among healthcare workers and patients, smoking and health outcomes in older population, the use of internet and chronic illnesses and social care needs of older people.

Qian’s research interests include: global ageing issues and cross-country studies researching on active ageing and welfare state; non-pharmacological care for patients with dementia; determinants of health and wellbeing in later life from the life course perspective; the carers’ experience of caring for older adults with dementia in different cultures; integrated health and social care delivery for supporting older people living independently at home; residential segregation, urbanisation and migration.

**Dr Caroline Swarbrick**
PhD Dementia Admissions Tutor

Dr Caroline Swarbrick is a Senior Lecturer in Ageing at Lancaster’s Division of Health Research, the Director of Studies for our taught programmes and the Admissions Tutor for the PhD in Dementia Studies. Outside of her roles at the university, Caroline is a Senior Qualitative Methods Lead in the NIHR Research Design Service (Lancashire and South Cumbria) and she also sits on the editorial board for Dementia: the international journal of social research and practice.

Caroline is a qualitative social scientist by background and has many years of research experience, particularly in the field of dementia. A lot of her work utilises a participatory action research approach favouring creative and arts-based methods from a social constructionist perspective. Currently, Caroline supervises PhDs exploring: the use of anti-psychotics in care homes, the experiences of mental health staff in implementing the Mental Capacity Act and the adoption and acceptance of technology by self-isolated older adults during a global pandemic.
Dr Hazel Morbey

Dr Hazel Morbey is involved in ageing research at Lancaster and acts as a supervisor for PhDs. Hazel has a professional background as a registered mental health nurse and mental health social worker. Her health and social care research is largely in the areas of later life and care of older people and her research has principally involved vulnerable and underserved groups of people, and sensitive areas including elder abuse, older homelessness, dementia care, end of life, family carers, and older people living in residential care.

She has special interests in inclusive, participatory research approaches and public involvement in research. She predominately works with qualitative methodologies, with experience of large national funded evaluations of health and social care services (with Age UK, ESRC and NIHR, EU FP7, Help the Hospices, Marie Curie Cancer Care), with mixed methods approaches.

Professor Jane Simpson

Professor Jane Simpson teaches on generic modules across the Faculty of Health and Medicine's blended learning PhDs and offers specific support to individuals on the Ageing and Dementia programmes.

Jane is a Professor in the Psychology of Neurodegenerative Conditions and has conducted extensive research on exploring the lives of individuals with conditions such as Parkinson’s disease, Huntington’s disease and dementia. Her research looks at living with these conditions from a psychological perspective and I use psychological theories on illness cognitions and coping, for example, to help explain the challenges of living well with a chronic condition. She is also interested in conducting studies looking at the effectiveness of psychological therapies, such as mindfulness, to help individuals who are feeling sad or anxious. Alongside this, Jane is currently involved in research into the effects of COVID restrictions on the lives of people with Parkinson’s and their family supporters.

"The training I received on Lancaster's PhD Dementia Studies programme has supported my career progression within the NHS. It first helped me to be successful in being employed on a research secondment (SENSE-Cog) within my trust. This is an international project examining links between hearing and vision impairments and dementia. It has also enabled me in terms of other research activity such as developing the Allied Health Practitioners (AHP) Innovation and Research Forum. I have recently in achieved a band 8 Allied Health Professional (AHP) Consultant Therapist (Advanced Clinical Practice) post. I don’t think I'd be where I am today without my time at Lancaster."

Alison Holden,
Occupational Therapist working in Dementia care
**Dr Yakubu Salifu**

Dr. Yakubu Salifu is a lecturer in Palliative Care at Lancaster’s International Observatory on Life of Life Care. and he is the Admissions Tutor for the PhD in Palliative Care. Yakubu is a PhD supervisor and contributes to the PhD in Dementia Studies module on ‘dying well with dementia’, which introduces students to the cardinal issues in end of life care for people with dementia in terms of the timing of conversations about dying and the public health approach to dying.

Alongside his roles at Lancaster, Yakubu is an educationist and registered nurse in Ghana and the UK. His professional experience includes clinical nursing care, health education and screening specifically for HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B, and Tuberculosis treatment supporter. As well as experience in nurse leadership governance as well as classroom teaching. He is also the founder of a Non-Governmental Organisation in Ghana known as Prostate Cancer Support Heritage (Pro CaSH) that aims to mobilise practical and technical support for men living with prostate cancer and their significant others.

Yakubu’s research focuses on the palliative and end of life care experience of patients and their family caregivers, especially those from a resource-poor context.

**Dr Sandra Varey**

Dr Sandra Varey is a Lecturer in Health Research in the Division of Health Research at Lancaster University and a PhD supervisor. Her research interests encompass a wide-range of issues relating to ageing and palliative care, with a focus on qualitative research methodologies. Sandra has a number of years’ experience of working with adults of varying ages, both as a researcher and educator, and has worked with family carers and people living with a range of health conditions including cancer, COPD, dementia, diabetes and heart failure. She is interested in issues of ageing and wellbeing, including the relationships between older adults, family carers and healthcare professionals.

**Dr Andrew Harding**

Dr Andrew Harding is a social scientist and Senior Research Associate at Lancaster University. His main research interest is information-giving practices of formal health and social services relating to ageing. Andrew’s research experience has mostly involved qualitative and mixed methods approaches with older people.

The work he has been a part of is published and cited across social/health policy, medical journals and policy reports/working papers. He has also presented at national and international conferences and is an active reviewer for journals and funding agencies.
Hi Elizabeth, please could you tell us about why you chose to do a PhD in Dementia Studies?

I previously cared for my mother with dementia and have worked in pharmaceuticals so I have a personal and professional interest in this research field.

What did your PhD research explore?

I conducted a study that explored how care home staff manage behaviours associated with dementia, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Residents with dementia exhibit behaviours including aggression and agitation. Psychotropic drugs are often used to manage these behaviours, however, evidence shows their use is associated with an increased rate of strokes and death.

My study aimed to identify the barriers and facilitators to taking a non-pharmacological approach to support residents. I conducted a systematic review followed by a qualitative study that involved interviewing care home staff from care homes across Ireland to understand how staff managed behaviours associated with dementia. I developed recommendations for dementia policy and practice to address the barriers to taking a non-pharmacological approach to behaviour management. The recommendations will be sent to the National Dementia Office in Ireland to assist in the development of the Irish National Dementia Strategy, particularly Clinical Guideline No. 21 due for review in 2022. It is anticipated that the findings will also have an impact internationally.

Did you feel well supported at Lancaster?

I have received excellent support, training and advice from my supervisors and staff at the Centre for Ageing Research, Lancaster University. The taught modules were particularly beneficial in ensuring I had the key research skills to conduct the study. These skills will also be essential for conducting postdoctoral research.

Has doing the PhD opened up opportunities for you?

Absolutely. I have presented my PhD research at International Conferences, and I have been awarded the Sterling Prize Award at the British Society of Gerontology Conference (BSG) in 2021. I have also received awards from the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland.

I have just submitted my PhD and have been offered a position as Regulatory Research Officer with the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) in Ireland, responsible for regulating care of people in long-term residential care. This is such a great opportunity to put what I have learned into practice and hopefully have a real impact for people living with dementia.