Clinical and Health Psychology Research

The University of Edinburgh / NHS Scotland Doctorate in Clinical Psychology is funded by NHS Education Scotland to provide professional training in clinical psychology.

Trainees undertake substantial thesis projects in a range of areas as part of this training. These booklets are intended to facilitate dissemination of findings from these projects, which we hope will also be communicated via presentations and publications. Interested readers are encouraged to contact authors of projects for further details.

We would like to congratulate all trainees who completed their thesis projects and wish them well in their chosen careers.

The DClinPsychol Programme Team

Note: Some abstracts presented in this booklet refer to projects concluded in 2012 that had not been included in previous abstract booklets.
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Background
Assessment of dementia in adults with intellectual disabilities poses specific challenges. Firstly, there is a paucity of validated, standardised and appropriate neuropsychological assessments of memory for adults with intellectual disabilities. Secondly, there are difficulties determining whether performance on neuropsychological assessments are attributable to pre-existing intellectual disabilities, 'normal' ageing or part of a dementing process. A systematic review was therefore carried out to examine if there are memory changes associated with 'normal' ageing in the Down syndrome population. Following this an exploratory empirical research project was undertaken to examine one aspect of construct validity (i.e. convergent validity) of an associative memory test in a sample of adults with intellectual disabilities. This research project is presented as a journal article titled 'Convergent validity of the Visual Association Test (VAT) in adults with intellectual disabilities'.

Methods
40 participants aged between 18-45 years were recruited from Community Learning Disability Teams. Participants completed the VAT and subtests of the modified Cambridge Cognitive Examination (CAMCOG-DS). IQ was assessed using the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV). Correlational analysis of the test variables were carried out. Participants with a diagnosis of dementia were excluded from the study.

Results
Strong and significant correlations were found between quality of life and successful psychosocial development. A regression analysis found that successful resolution of the final stage of psychosocial development was the most significant predictor of quality of life over other psychological and demographic variables. No impact of chronicity was found.

Discussion
The results of the study suggest that psychosocial development is an important factor to consider when working with older people and that a sense of ego-integrity is important to an individual’s perception of quality of life.

Background
The proportion of individuals aged 65 and over is increasing and mental health services need to recognise the resources of these individuals and meet their needs. Quality of life is a widely used outcome variable in mental health policy and clinical research. Subjective factors are consistently found to be more significant than objective factors in determining quality of life. This gives clinicians areas to consider when working to improve an individual’s quality of life. The current research looks at the relationship between successful psychosocial development and quality of life in older people with mental health difficulties. A secondary aim is to consider the impact of chronic mental health difficulties on quality of life.

Methods
Twenty-four older people (mean age 72) who were living in the community and supported by Community Mental Health Teams opted in to the study. Questionnaires, which included the WHOQOL-Old and MEPSI, were administered by the researcher.

Results
Strong and significant correlations were found between quality of life and successful psychosocial development. A regression analysis found that successful resolution of the final stage of psychosocial development was the most significant predictor of quality of life over other psychological and demographic variables. No impact of chronicity was found.

Discussion
The results of the study suggest that psychosocial development is an important factor to consider when working with older people and that a sense of ego-integrity is important to an individual’s perception of quality of life.
Towards an understanding of what changes and how people cope following Bariatric surgery

Clinical supervisor - Kevin Power, Academic supervisor - Paul Morris

Introduction

Bariatric surgery (BS) is currently the most effective treatment for morbid obesity. However, many individuals fail to lose or maintain adequate weight loss. It is a challenge to understand why some individuals can make required changes following BS and some cannot. Evidence suggests that emotional eating (EE) may be associated with poorer outcomes. However, there is yet no conclusive research or review of the research in this area.

Method

A systematic review was conducted with the aim of examining how EE relates to BS outcomes. This review was complimented by a qualitative research project examining the experiences of individuals following weight loss surgery, with a particular focus on what changes and emotional coping.

Results

Systematic review results suggest that EE is associated to poorer weight loss following BS. Six superordinate themes emerged from the qualitative research project; Helped but not fixed, Changing views of self, Coping with emotions, Being judged negatively, Being obese is a barrier to living, and It’s a different addiction.

Discussion

The overall results suggest that EE is an ongoing issue following bariatric surgery. BS seems to initiate a positive cycle of change in behaviour, and cognition, with increased sense of control. However, such changes seem to be attributed to BS, which is suggestive of an underestimation of self-efficacy. Perceptions of obesity being the result of an addiction and emphasis on the difficulties associated with losing weight further highlight the issue of reduced self-efficacy. This study also highlights that for many, having surgery does not cure all difficulties associated with eating. There are possibly underlying difficulties associated with obesity, such as neurocircuitry pathways that increase desire for food, whilst reducing control and attachment difficulties that reduce emotional regulation capacity. However, much work is required to understand such explanations and develop appropriate psychological interventions.

Conclusion

The overall results from this thesis provide support for the view that EE and associated emotional regulation difficulties are related to poorer BS outcomes. What seems clear from this research is that, although BS provides many positive changes, the battle against obesity continues for most and services are currently limited in their resources to intervene.

Factors that impact on adjustment in parents of children with a learning disability and/or autism spectrum disorder

Clinical supervisor - Magnus Cormack, Academic supervisor - David Gillanders

Background

Previous research has shown that parents of children with learning disabilities (LD) and/or autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are more psychologically distressed than parents of neuro-typical children. The literature suggests that there is significant variation in the rates of maladjustment within this population, and the research into factors that influence parental adjustment is developing. This study aims to add to the research into the factors influencing adjustment to parenting a child with LD/ASD.

In particular, relatively under-researched concepts such as parental acceptance, time since diagnosis, and the influence of informational support to understand a child's needs, will be explored.

Method

Two hundred and thirty five parents of children aged 4-19 participated in a questionnaire study, conducted through local additional support needs (ASN) schools and bases. Measures of psychological adjustment were gathered alongside measures of acceptance, positive gains, level of child’s challenging behaviour and demographic information.
Background
Mood disorders and psychological distress are common following stroke, and depression and emotional lability have been studied extensively. There has, however, been little research into difficulties in emotion regulation following stroke and whether this is associated with emotional or cognitive difficulties. The current study investigated emotion regulation difficulties following stroke and their relationship with quality of life, executive functions, anxiety and depression.

Methods
Fifty participants who had suffered a stroke and forty-five age matched controls completed the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale, the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale, the World Health Organization Quality of Life assessment – Brief version and the National Adult Reading Test. In addition individuals with stroke completed four measures of executive functioning – Color Trails Test, Verbal Fluency, Brixton Spatial Anticipation Test and the Hayling Sentence Completion Test.

Results
Individuals with stroke had significantly greater difficulties in emotion regulation compared to age matched controls and this was significantly associated with lower self-reported quality of life and increased levels of both anxiety and depression. No significant associations were found between emotion regulation and executive functions or between executive dysfunction and lower self-reported quality of life.

Discussion
The current study found evidence that individuals who have suffered a stroke have more difficulties in emotion regulation than an age matched control group. This is clinically important as emotion regulation difficulties are found in mood disorders and it may be that such difficulties precipitate and/or maintain depression following stroke. The absence of an association between difficulties in emotion regulation and executive functioning suggests that other factors may influence such difficulties, such as the trauma of having a stroke. Future research should explore emotion regulation difficulties further following stroke, particularly investigating whether the course of these difficulties changes over time and if they are linked to type of stroke or lesion location.

Mhairi Yule
Emotion regulation, executive functioning and quality of life following stroke: a research portfolio
Clinical supervisor - Jackie Hamilton, Academic supervisor - Paul Morris

“It’s just you’re battling with yourself”: How pain-related imagery impacts on functioning in chronic pain
Clinical supervisor - Rachel Atherton, Academic supervisor - David Gillanders

Background
Psychological research has consistently demonstrated the importance of cognitions in the form of thoughts and images on an individual’s wellbeing. Having pain-related verbal cognitions has been shown to lead to poorer outcomes for patients (McCracken & Turk, 2002). Research in other conditions has shown mental images have a more powerful impact on emotion than verbal cognitions (Holmes & Matthews, 2005). To date however, little work has explored the role of mental imagery in adjustment to chronic pain.

Methods
Fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals with chronic pain. Interview transcripts were analysed according to grounded theory methods to construct a substantive theory of the impact spontaneously-invoked images of pain have on functioning.

Results
Eight participants reported pain-related imagery and three reported mental images associated with related symptoms. In line with previous findings (Gillanders et al., 2012; Gosden, 2008) the frequency and intensity of pain-related images influenced the degree of distress experienced. There was a distinction made between intrusive mental images and visual descriptions or metaphors of pain. The former being conceptualised as a visual cognition and playing a role in the aetiology and maintenance of distress in chronic pain and therefore an adverse impact on functioning.

Conclusion
Enhancing our understanding of pain related imagery and its impact on functioning could inform the design of interventions in clinical practice. Working systematically with patients’ idiosyncratic pain related images and the beliefs that are associated with them could be a helpful specific target for therapy.
Background
Type 1 diabetes is a condition which affects the lives of thousands of young people throughout the UK. Existing research has recognised the difficulties that adolescents have in managing their diabetes, and a large amount of research has focused on glycaemic control, and influential factors. This project attempted to establish what is known about young people’s experiences of living with type 1 diabetes, and to further develop this knowledge pertaining particularly to the school environment through qualitative research.

Methods
A systematic review of the literature in relation to young people’s views of their life with type 1 diabetes was conducted and a synthesising thematic analysis was carried out involving 7 adolescents aged 13-16 years who had a diagnosis of type 1 diabetes. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the focus being on the young people’s experiences of living with type 1 diabetes, and to further develop this knowledge pertaining particularly to the school environment through qualitative research.

Results
Five themes emerged from the systematic review: Analysis of the studies led to the emerging themes of: Normalcy was important, and the strict routine and activities of diabetes management impacted upon their ability to achieve it. The support of friends and family was valued, but could at times become overwhelming and educational and health professionals made a difference to their ability to successfully fit diabetes into their lives. The suggestions made by individuals within the studies were generally consistent, and have implications for healthcare providers, friends and families, and schools in relation to facilitating successful diabetic management. Many of the young people taking part in the present research study had encountered negative experiences within the school environment in relation to both peers and staff. However, they described elements of helpful practice and made suggestions for improvements that could be made within school to facilitate a more positive experience.

Discussion
Systematic review of the articles revealed that the experiences of adolescents varied, and were frequently dependent upon the actions of others. A sense of normalcy was important, and the strict routine and activities of diabetes management impacted upon their ability to achieve it. The support of friends and family was valued, but could at times become overwhelming and educational and health professionals made a difference to their ability to successfully fit diabetes into their lives. The suggestions made by individuals within the studies were generally consistent, and have implications for healthcare providers, friends and families, and schools in relation to facilitating successful diabetic management. Many of the young people taking part in the present research study had encountered negative experiences within the school environment in relation to both peers and staff. However, they described elements of helpful practice and made suggestions for improvements that could be made within school to facilitate a more positive experience.

Aims
A review of the literature on non-pharmacological interventions for post-stroke depression (PSD) was completed with the aim of examining issues regarding the design and methodology of trials for non-pharmacological interventions for PSD. The empirical research study used a constructivist Grounded Theory approach to explore specialist stroke professionals’ conceptualisations of post-stroke emotional lability (PSEL). The author also aimed to examine how staff experienced, understood, and identified PSEL in clinical practice, and particularly how they differentiated it from PSD.

Method
A systematic review of RCT and non-RCT studies was conducted to address the first aim. In relation to the second aim, a qualitative investigation of specialist professionals’ conceptualisations of PSEL was conducted using Charmaz’s (2006) version of constructivist Grounded Theory.
Introduction
This thesis investigates the psychological impact of the internet on adolescents with Additional Support Needs (ASN). Benefits and risks related to internet use have been evidenced in the general population. Little research has considered these factors with young people with ASN.

Methodology
Due to limited research having been completed with the ASN population with regards to the impact of internet use, a systematic review was conducted considering the long-term psychological impact of cyberbullying on children and adolescents in the mainstream population. In addition, an empirical study was conducted with a total of 36 young people with ASN (aged 13-18) who participated in one of six focus groups. Group discussions were recorded, transcribed and analysed using Framework Analysis.

Results
Findings of the systematic review showed that a range of difficulties (including depression, quality of life outcomes, substance use and aggression) were considered to be linked to the experience of cyberbullying in the general child and adolescent population. Although variation between studies existed, the review does show a tentative trend that cyberbullying is linked to long-term negative psychological outcomes. The empirical study using Focus Group data identified two main themes: Identity and Connectedness and Issues relating to Risk. Theme one indicated that young people with ASN were making use of the internet to develop their own identity, competence and sense of social connectedness; suggesting that internet use for this group can have a positive impact on their psychological well-being. Some potential barriers to this were also identified. With regards to the second theme, it was shown that young people with ASN do experience risk on the internet. It was highlighted that young people with ASN are aware of a range of risks online, are able to make use of some risk management strategies to stay safe but also experience particular difficulties which can negatively impact on their ability to protect themselves against potential psychological harm as a result of internet use. Considered together it was therefore found that the internet may provide important opportunities for young people with ASN with the potential of having a positive psychological impact. This must be considered however in the context of risks present to this group when online and their ability to manage these effectively.

Discussion
Findings were discussed in relation to the relevant literature considering the specific advantages and risks relating to internet use by children and adolescents with ASN. Clinical implications and areas for future research were highlighted as well as the strengths and limitations of the current study.

Conclusion
This thesis demonstrates that young people with ASN are making use of the internet and able to benefit from it in the same way as other children and adolescents. However, this population has also been shown to be at risk online and may be more vulnerable due to their impaired ability in particular areas of functioning, when compared to young people without ASN. Additional research into this area is required to ensure that this group are being adequately supported to remain safe online whilst taking full advantage of what the internet has to offer.
Jane Billett

‘Balancing Complexity, Resources and Demand’. A grounded theory of clinical decision making in psychological therapy for older people with posttraumatic stress symptoms

Clinical supervisor - Andrew MacDougall, Academic supervisors - Mick Power, Ethel Quayle

Introduction
The evidence regarding posttraumatic stress symptomology in older people is limited and conflicting, leaving clinicians largely reliant on their expertise to make clinical decisions.

Methods
Grounded theory methodology was utilised to investigate clinical decision making in relation to posttraumatic stress symptomatology in older people. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight clinical psychologists with experience of this work.

Results and Conclusions
‘Balancing complexity, resources and demand’ emerged as the main theoretical category, comprised of seven further subcategories. The model is broadly consistent with extant literature pertaining to the adaptation of psychological therapy for older people, offering further detail on implementation and the influence of treatment non-specific factors.

Holly Jones

An exploration of predictors, moderators and mediators of change in parent skills training programmes for externalising behaviour problems in children – who benefits most and how do they work?

Clinical supervisor - Brenda Renz, Academic supervisor - Matthias Schwannauer

Objectives
Finding further variables that influence parent skills training outcomes will explain who benefits most, and how change occurs. This will ensure that families receive appropriate treatments, and services deliver interventions efficiently and effectively.

Methods
79 parents attending 15 Incredible Years programmes in a CAMHS setting completed pre-treatment questionnaires measuring attachment style, parenting attributions, parenting self-efficacy and problem child behaviour. 52 parents completed the same battery post-treatment, and missing data was carried forward in an intent to treat analysis. Data was analysed using multiple regression, multiple mediation and moderated mediation.

Results
Increases in parenting self-efficacy, and reductions in dysfunctional parenting attributions and problem child behaviour were reported post-treatment, with a significant number of children displaying sub-clinical levels of problem behaviour. Baseline child-responsible attributions and self-efficacy accounted for up to 40% of the variance in baseline child behaviour, with insecure attachment style moderating parent-causal attributions in the model. Self-efficacy and child-responsible attributions had partial effects on post-treatment behaviour, and attachment-avoidance exerted a direct effect on outcome which did not exist pre-treatment. The indirect effect of parental attributions on child behaviour through self-efficacy was moderated by attachment which reduced the significance of the direct and indirect paths.

Conclusions
An evidence based parent training programme achieved clinically significant results in a ‘real world’ setting. Dysfunctional parent attributions and parenting self-efficacy appear related to pre- and post-treatment levels of child behaviour, which could be screened for in the referral process. The direct and indirect role of attachment style on parent training outcomes adds a new candidate variable to the literature that warrants further exploration.
The Role of Adult Attachment Style in Psychosis: A Research Portfolio

Aims

A systematic literature review was conducted investigating the current research findings regarding adult attachment style in psychosis and clinical correlates of this. An empirical study used a cross sectional design to investigate the role of adult attachment style in clinical recovery in psychosis. It was hypothesised that attachment insecurity would be associated with higher levels of emotional distress and difficulties in affect regulation commonly associated with psychosis.

Method

Individuals with psychosis (n= 70) completed self-report measures of adult attachment style, interpersonal problems and emotion regulation. Clinician rated measures of depression and symptom related distress were also completed.

Results

The literature review revealed that adult attachment style is of relevance in psychosis as consistent findings of greater attachment insecurity in psychosis compared with non-clinical populations have been reported. Adult attachment insecurity has been associated with a number of clinical outcomes in exploratory research. The empirical study found support for hypothesised associations between attachment insecurity and greater emotional distress. Predicted relationships were also supported between attachment insecurity and higher rates of interpersonal problems and more use of expressive suppression as an emotion regulation strategy. Interpersonal problems significantly mediated the relationship between attachment insecurity and emotional distress. The hypothesised mediating role of emotion regulation was not supported.

Conclusions

Findings of the empirical study suggest that insecurity in adult attachment style is an important variable in understanding emotional distress in individuals with psychosis and that difficulties in interpersonal functioning, as a mediating factor in this relationship, may represent a useful focus in clinical work.

Background

Attachment theory represents a developmental framework which proposes that early relationships with primary caregivers have an enduring effect on interpersonal relationships, affect regulation and psychological functioning throughout the lifespan. It has been suggested that this occurs via the influence of internal representations regarding the self, others and relationships, which form the basis of an attachment style in adulthood. Attachment has been conceptualised as a constructive theoretical basis from which to consider psychological mechanisms underlying the emotional distress, interpersonal problems and difficulties in affect regulation commonly associated with psychosis.

Background

Attitudes to ageing are becoming more widely measured in older adults, particularly with the ageing population but also due the recent development of the Attitudes to Ageing Questionnaire. There is growing evidence to suggest a relationship between attitudes to ageing and mental health status in older adults. However, no study has explored the association between attitudes to ageing and quality of life in older adults, incorporating the Attitudes to Ageing Questionnaire and the World Health Organisation Quality of Life measures.

Systematic Review

Firstly a systematic search of studies exploring the relationship between attitudes to ageing and mental health in older adults (≥65 years) was undertaken. All potentially relevant studies were screened against inclusion and exclusion criteria for the systematic review. Twelve papers met inclusion criteria for the systematic review. Twelve papers met inclusion criteria for the systematic review. The setting, culture and measures incorporated varied across the studies. A negative attitude to ageing was associated with poorer mental health status in older adults across all 12 studies. Correlation and regression analyses explored the relationship between attitudes to ageing and QOL and investigated the impact of socio-demographic variables, depression and attitudes to ageing on two quality of life measures. The two constructs were positively related; a more positive attitude to ageing was associated with a better quality of life. A further, positive attitude to ageing was a significant predictor of a better QOL. The sample was then divided into two age groups (57-79 years and 80+ years) and attitudes to ageing and quality of life ratings were compared. Results revealed more negative ratings in attitudes to ageing and quality of life in the over 80 year old age group. Correlation and regression analyses were then explored across both age groups. More positive attitudes to ageing was a significant predictor of better quality of life across both age groups.

Conclusions

Overall, the two studies in this thesis portfolio highlight the need to better recognise and target older adults’ negative attitudes to ageing. Appropriate psychological interventions could be provided to challenge negative attitudes and promote attitude change in an attempt to improve mental health difficulties and quality of life in older adults. Continued use of the Attitudes to Ageing Questionnaire and quality of life psychometric measures in clinical practice and research is encouraged.
Experiences of living with incurable haematological malignancy: A research portfolio

Clinical supervisors - Beate Riedel, Belinda Hacking, Academic supervisor - David Gillanders

Aims
Despite advances in cancer treatments, many types of haematological malignancy remain incurable. The aims of this research portfolio are: Firstly to review the published qualitative literature pertaining to the experience of living with any form of incurable haematological malignancy; and secondly, to research the experience of living with a low-grade malignancy, follicular lymphoma, while being maintained under observation without active treatment.

Method
A systematic review and meta-synthesis of the literature was carried out. The methodology employed strict inclusion criteria and resulted in the identification of eight qualitative studies for inclusion in the review. For the research study, adults (n=9) diagnosed with follicular lymphoma were interviewed about their experiences of living with the condition. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to analyse the data.

Results
The review highlighted the paucity of research in this area; with the majority focusing on people diagnosed with myeloma, while being maintained under observation without active treatment. The review highlighted the paucity of research in this area; with the majority focusing on people diagnosed with myeloma, while being maintained under observation without active treatment.

and adjustment and integration. The empirical study found an overarching theme of adjustment, encompassing three subthemes: Making sense of the condition in the context of existing and evolving knowledge and experiences; intrapersonal and interpersonal coping strategies; and incorporating the condition into the life narrative.

Conclusion
Patients with incurable haematological malignancies in general, and an indolent form of such malignancy in particular, have unique challenges to overcome in making sense of, coping with and integrating the condition into their life narrative and world view. There are subtle and easily missed barriers for understanding and coping with these conditions which healthcare teams must address using an individualised, holistic approach.

Psychological treatment for anorexia nervosa: a neuropsychological perspective

Clinical supervisor - Alison Livingstone, Academic supervisor - Emily Newman

Objective
AN (anorexia nervosa) is a serious psychiatric disorder with a poor prognosis. An enhanced understanding of the potential maintaining factors of the illness and the identification of efficacious forms of treatment are crucial in order to improve the clinical outcome for this patient population. Three aims were outlined for this thesis: (1) to review the efficacy of psychological therapies for bulimia nervosa (BN) and anorexia nervosa (AN) in outpatient settings; (2) to compare set shifting ability in inpatients with AN (IAN) and outpatients with AN (OAN) on a battery of specific neuropsychological tests and to examine the effect of body mass index (BMI) and medication on performance; (3) to investigate the differential change in the response profile of neuropsychological measures and eating psychopathology measures across a direct comparison of Cognitive Remediation Therapy (CRT) versus Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

Method
Firstly, a systematic review of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) investigating the efficacy of individually delivered psychological therapies for adults with AN and BN was conducted. Secondly, the main empirical study compared 25 IAN with 20 OAN on neuropsychological measures of set-shifting ability. Thirdly, a pilot randomised controlled trial was conducted. 11 participants were randomly allocated to receive 6 sessions of either CRT or CBT. Pre and post treatment assessments of set-shifting ability and eating psychopathology were conducted.

Results
CBT and IPT were found to be the optimal individually delivered psychological interventions in inpatient settings for the BN population. An optimal form of psychological intervention for the AN population was unable to be identified due to the small number of published studies. The main empirical study found that IAN and OAN demonstrated impaired set-shifting ability on all of the set-shifting tasks. No significant differences between IAN and OAN were found on any of the set-shifting tasks and neither BMI nor psychotropic medication was related to performance on these measures. The pilot RCT provided tentative evidence to support the efficacy of CRT in AN.

Discussion
The systematic review highlighted the need for further research investigating the efficacy of psychological treatments in AN utilising robust methodology. The main empirical study found that clinical severity and the use of psychotropic medication are unable to account for the set-shifting deficit demonstrated in AN. The set-shifting impairment demonstrated by both IAN and OAN indicates that both patient populations may benefit from receiving psychological treatment to enhance set-shifting ability. The results from the pilot CRT may be an efficacious form of treatment for OAN and warrant further investigation in a larger scale study. Sufficient power would enable more conclusive findings regarding the efficacy of CRT in this patient population.
An exploration of friendship experiences in adolescent eating disorders

Clinical supervisor - Fiona Duffy, Academic supervisor - Emily Taylor

Aims
Friendship plays an important and central role in adolescent life. This thesis was conducted in two parts to address two broad aims relating to friendship in adolescence. The first aim was to establish what is currently known about the impact of perfectionism on adolescent interpersonal relationships. Specifically, it was of interest to determine whether perfectionism exerts a negative influence on adolescent friendships. The second aim was to explore the friendship experiences of adolescents diagnosed with an eating disorder in order to address a significant gap in the current literature.

Results
The systematic review highlighted an absence of research on interpersonal functioning and perfectionism in adolescence, with only seven studies identified that met the inclusion criteria. The results were further complicated by inconsistencies in the conceptualisation of perfectionism in the identified studies. The empirical study uncovered the efforts that adolescents go to achieve acceptance in their friendships. It also revealed that the development of an ED is experienced as creating distance in adolescent friendships. This affects both the actual amount of time that young people spend with their friends as well as the emotional connection that they are able to feel in their friendships.

Conclusions
There is a need to reconsider the conceptualization of perfectionism in future research with a consistent acknowledgement of the interpersonal dimensions of the concept. It is important to acknowledge the significant impact that ED development can have on adolescent relationships. Young people may require support to address these difficulties and preserve their friendships to avoid long term negative consequences.
Parent’s intentions to provide a healthy diet for children with a learning disability: The application of a revised Theory of Planned Behaviour

Academic supervisors - Karen McKenzie, Emily Newman

Background
Globally, childhood overweight and obesity, which impact negatively on an individual’s physical and emotional health, are increasing in prevalence. Children and young people who have a learning disability (CYPID) have a higher incidence of obesity, overweight and underweight than typically developing children, and so weight related health problems add to their already more complex health needs. In Scotland, Heat Targets have been set to increase availability of childhood weight management interventions. Effective non-medical weight management interventions are available for typically developing children, addressing diet and including parents in treatment. There is a recognised need to develop evidence based weight management interventions for children and young people (CYP) who have a Learning Disability (LD).

Aims
This thesis has two parts. The first is a systematic review journal article which aims to answer the questions: ‘How effectively do single- and multi-component, systemic and direct, non-medical diet and exercise interventions promote optimal weight, amongst CYPID?’ The second part, an empirical research project, aims to find whether both the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model in an original form, and an extended form which includes self-efficacy (SE), provide a statistically significant fit when applied to parents’ encouragement of healthy eating by CYPID.

Methods
For the systematic review, five databases were searched. Included studies were required to have CYPID as participants, who were receiving a non-medical weight management, diet or exercise intervention, evaluated using weight or diet or exercise outcomes. Data from six articles were extracted and critically appraised using two tools.

For the empirical research, participants (N = 190) completed two online questionnaires one month apart, providing data relevant to both the original and expanded TPB models.

Results
The systematic review demonstrated evidence of some short-term impact on weight or improved fitness, following intervention. However, the studies were of mixed methodological quality. Limitations were poor study design, not adhering to recommended interventions or outcome measures or goals for treatment, and inclusion of underweight participants. The empirical study showed that both TPB models were a good fit with present data, and fit indices showed the original to be better than the extended model. Significant predictors of intention were not identified by either model.

Discussion
It was difficult to draw firm conclusions about effectiveness from the systematic review due to a lack of well-designed studies. However, multi-component, systemic interventions with adaptations to suit the needs of CYPID showed promise. The original TPB model was most suitable for informing practice in relation to parents’ intentions and encouragement of healthy eating by CYPID. Interventions that target parent’s attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and self-efficacy, would not be recommended for this population. However, developers of interventions should consider special diets and mobility difficulties, and the clinical need to address weight and weight-related challenging behaviour amongst CYPID, as well as to support parent’s in developing SE in managing these behaviours. Further research could develop improved measures for use with this population, and to identify alternative factors to predict parent’s encouragement of healthy eating by CYPID.

Conclusion
Literature and some policies highlight a clinical need to address weight amongst CYPID, and yet to date, effective interventions have not been adequately researched or developed for this population. The present research goes some way to establishing what is known already, indicating that a multi-component, systemic, adapted approach may be effective for this group. The TPB model is suited to researching parental encouragement of healthy diet by CYPID, although predictor variables have not yet been identified or recommended as targets for future interventions.
Aims
The aims of this thesis were two-fold. First, to review the literature related to parental perceptions regarding their child’s Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and its effect on behavioural or emotional outcomes. Second, an empirical study aimed to explore parental beliefs about their child’s Asperger’s Syndrome (AS) through the application of Q methodology.

Method
A systematic review of the literature was carried out to address the first aim. The review included 7 studies; 5 quantitative and 2 mixed methodology studies. For the second aim, Q methodology was used to examine parental beliefs among a purposeful sample of 21 main caregivers of a child with AS. This methodology is based on two techniques: the q-sorting process and q-factor analysis, and aims to explore the understandings those caregivers’ have of their child’s AS. A set of 51 statements, representing a diverse range of opinions and perspectives on AS, was developed from a variety of sources, including bibliographic databases and online parent forums. The Q sorting process involved caregivers’ arranging the statements on a quasi-normal distribution grid based upon their agreement with them.

Results
Preliminary conclusions were drawn from a synthesis of papers included in the systematic review: parental beliefs regarding their child’s ASD affects their behaviour regarding treatment options and future immunisations, as well as their experience of depression, anxiety and self-efficacy. The empirical study revealed four narratives or factors from completed Q sorts: (1) AS in a positive light, (2) AS-as the default diagnosis, (3) AS- what now? and (4) AS as society’s problem.

Conclusions
The results from the systematic review and empirical study highlight a variety of beliefs held by parents of children with ASD. Although the implications of such beliefs were not explored in the empirical study, the results of the systematic review suggest that parental beliefs can have a significant impact on behavioural and psychological outcomes. Parental beliefs may, therefore, be an important target for clinical intervention within child and family services. It is acknowledged that further research is required to confirm and develop these findings.

Background
Despite evidence that caring for a spouse or partner with dementia may continue over a number of years, our understanding of how the care’s experience unfolds over time is still in its infancy. In addition, the emotional experience of spousal dementia carers has been incompletely understood in research and clinical practice with a predominant focus upon negative emotional consequences. There is a need to contextualise the emotional experience of carers within a framework that enables understanding of positive aspects of the care experience.

Objective
This thesis is in two parts. Part one uses systematic review to critically evaluate evidence from published longitudinal studies that assess the impact of care transition (caring for spouse at home and placed spouse in care home) on the well-being of spousal dementia carers. Part two is an empirical study examining emotion regulation and positive growth in spouses who care for their partner with a diagnosis of dementia.

Methods
Systematic review of longitudinal studies that assess the impact of care transition on spousal carer well-being. The empirical study comprised a cross-sectional design comparing positive growth and emotion regulation in three carer groups (caring for spouse at home, placed spouse in care home or experienced death of spouse). 183 carers were recruited through a postal survey which comprised the following self-report measures: Post Traumatic Growth Inventory; Basic Emotions Scale; and Regulation of Emotions Questionnaire.

Systematic Review Results
Despite poorer psychological and physical well-being over time compared with non-carers, symptoms of depression, perceived burden and stress are stable over time for those who continue to care for their spouse at home. Mixed results are obtained for carer well-being when examining transition to permanent placement in care home and impede definitive conclusions.

Empirical Study Results
Spousal carers report more frequent feelings of fear and frustration compared to other basic emotions. Gender and care transition impact upon the experience and regulation of emotion and positive growth. Internalising emotion regulation strategies (for example, rumination) are associated with greater fear and frustration, sadness and guilt while strategies comprising social support seeking are associated with feelings of happiness in carers. Spouses report positive growth since taking on the role of carer and this is predicted in part by social support seeking emotion regulation strategies but not by emotion regulation strategies.
A systematic review was completed via a comprehensive literature search for comparative studies examining CBT-based interventions for NCCP including a measure of anxiety. In the empirical study, participants completed the study and ITT analyses were completed on 119. There were no significant differences between groups in terms of reduced anxiety or self-reported belief in personal control of symptoms. The intervention booklet was evaluated largely positively by those who reported reading it.

Conclusions
CBT based self-help appears to be an acceptable intervention for those diagnosed with NCCP. Further research is needed to identify those who are most likely to benefit from such self-help intervention.

The systematic review indicated that there is some support for the positive impact of attachment based interventions, particularly with young children (0-6 years) in foster/adoptive care. There are significant limitations of the research in this area and further research is required to establish the efficacy of such interventions. Foster carer self-efficacy emerged as a significant predictor of placement quality. Due to a number of measurement and statistical issues, this finding requires replication. Agreement between foster carers and social workers regarding placement quality was slight to fair, indicating the presence of some discrepancies.

Conclusions
The results are discussed in relation to previous research with this population of children/young people. Findings from the systematic review suggest the importance of further intervention studies and the results from the empirical study highlight possible areas for intervention, namely foster carer self-efficacy. A number of issues in relation to future research are raised, specifically the development of a standardized measure of placement quality and the impact of systemic issues, such as foster carer/social worker communication on children and young people’s outcomes.

Aims
Children who experience abuse and neglect prior to being fostered and/or adopted are a particularly vulnerable group within society and more research is required to better understand the outcomes for these young people. In relation to this population, this thesis had three aims: to review the impact of attachment based interventions, to evaluate the role of foster carer factors in the provision of quality placements and to assess foster carer and social worker agreement on ratings of placement quality.

Methods
A systematic review of attachment based interventions is presented in journal article 1. The findings from a quantitative cross sectional study involving foster carers (n=91) and social workers (n=87) are presented in journal articles 2 and 3. Correlation and multiple regression analyses explore the relationship between foster carer self-efficacy, coping, attributions and placement quality. The weighted kappa statistic is used to explore the agreement between ratings of placement quality within foster carer/social worker dyads.

Results
The results are discussed in relation to previous research with this population of children/young people. Findings from the systematic review suggest the importance of further intervention studies and the results from the empirical study highlight possible areas for intervention, namely foster carer self-efficacy. A number of issues in relation to future research are raised, specifically the development of a standardized measure of placement quality and the impact of systemic issues, such as foster carer/social worker communication on children and young people’s outcomes.

Aims
Foster carer self-efficacy and the role of attributions and coping in the quality of foster placements

Methods
A systematic review of attachment based interventions is presented in journal article 1. The findings from a quantitative cross sectional study involving foster carers (n=91) and social workers (n=87) are presented in journal articles 2 and 3. Correlation and multiple regression analyses explore the relationship between foster carer self-efficacy, coping, attributions and placement quality. The weighted kappa statistic is used to explore the agreement between ratings of placement quality within foster carer/social worker dyads.

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Relational pathways to substance misuse and offending in women: the role of trauma, insecure attachment and shame

Clinical supervisor - Kirsty Gillings, Academic supervisor - Matthias Schwannauer

Background
Close interpersonal relationships are highlighted as an important dynamic risk factor for reoffending in women that may mediate the association between their substance misuse and offending. However, research in this area is scarce. Evidence for an association between close relationships and recidivism in women was systematically reviewed. Findings were inconsistent and inconclusive, but they suggested that relationship factors may be relevant to women’s reoffending when interacting with other complex problems. Research is needed that explores these interaction effects and the underlying psychological processes involved.

Aims
To explore experiences of close relationships and the underlying psychological processes impacting on women’s substance misuse and offending, and explore adult attachment style in relation to emergent themes.

Method: A qualitative study was conducted using a social constructivist version of grounded theory. Seven women ex-offenders from community drug treatment services were interviewed about their experiences of close relationships in relation to their substance misuse and offending. Adult attachment style was measured with the Relationship Styles Questionnaire.

Results
A model was constructed of the complex interconnection between substance misuse, offending, family disconnection, dysfunctional intimate partner relationships, and loss of children, driven by unresolved trauma, insecure attachment and shame.

Conclusion
Formulations and interventions should consider the potential role of unresolved trauma, insecure attachment, and shame to substance misuse and offending in women to adequately address dynamic risk factors for recidivism.

“Need more for to get your treatment done. Years.” A qualitative analysis of the views of men with learning disabilities about a sex offender treatment programme

Clinical supervisor - Lesley Steptoe, Academic supervisor - Ethel Quayle

Background
Evidence for the effectiveness of psychological treatments for sex offenders with learning disabilities is far from overwhelming. Qualitative studies can augment quantitative research by providing insight into the experiences of those who receive such treatment. There are a number of qualitative studies of the views of offenders but few that focus on the views of those with learning disabilities.

Method
A systematic review was carried out of qualitative studies of the views of sex offenders, with and without learning disabilities, about their experiences of treatment. An empirical study, using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, explored the views of men with mild learning disabilities about one particular group treatment.

Results
The review identified that a supportive atmosphere, good therapeutic relationship, trust and positive peer interactions were highly valued. Some elements of treatment, such as offence disclosure, were seen as both difficult and helpful. In the empirical study, themes regarding offence disclosure and trust were also identified. In addition, treatment was characterised as being about giving and receiving advice. Participants struggled with some of the other concepts used in treatment but described gains including becoming a mentor and developing a sense of mastery. Most strikingly, participants described needing extensive time in treatment in order to gain benefit. Over time they moved from feeling anxious and angry about treatment to feeling positive, supported and trusting.

Conclusion
Sex offenders with learning disabilities may need long-term treatment programmes in order to effect change. Treatment providers should be sensitive to offenders’ feelings of initial anxiety and anger.
Feeling the same or feeling different? An exploratory analysis of the experience of young people in foster care

Background
There are competing claims in the literature regarding the relationship between self-esteem and being ‘looked-after’, and the implicated ethical and clinical issues.

Systematic Review
In a systematic review of the literature ten articles met inclusion criteria for review. The majority of studies made a limited contribution to the review due to poor study quality, and the ethical, clinical and research implications of this are discussed. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that young people in care do not want to be made to feel different to others but there appears to be an absence of empirical research confirming this.

Empirical study
Methods
Interviews were carried out with nine 12-16 year olds currently residing in foster care to explore their representations of ‘feeling the same or feeling different’. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) guided how data was analysed, and resulting super-ordinate themes were identified.

Results
The research paper reports on one of these themes: ‘difference’, which is explored through four sub-ordinate themes. These relate to participants not wanting others to know they were in care, feeling alienated due to their foster care status, perceiving that others viewed them differently and, at times, noticing differences themselves. A second sub-ordinate theme: ‘making sense’ is presented in the ‘extended results’ which is explored through five sub-ordinate themes. Representations involved participants making sense of why their birth parents could not care for them, conflicting feelings towards both birth parents and foster parents, and a desire to feel a sense of agency in their lives.

Discussion
Findings are considered in relation to the extant literature on foster care and identity development and practice and research implications are discussed.

Feeling the same or feeling different? An exploratory analysis of the experience of young people in foster care

Clinical supervisor - Kate Paton, Academic supervisors - Ethel Quayle, Jill Cossar

Traumatic Imagery after Life-threatening Cardiac Events

Aims
There is a growing body of evidence that some individuals are at risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after life-threatening cardiac events, such as myocardial infarction (MI) or cardiac arrest, which can result in distress, dysfunction and increased risk of mortality. In relation to this population, this thesis had two aims: to review the evidence regarding whether pain during MI predicts post-traumatic stress symptoms; and to explore the characteristics and impact of traumatic imagery experienced by individuals who develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress subsequent to MI or cardiac arrest.

Methods
A review of the evidence relating to pain as a potential risk factor for PTSD subsequent to MI is presented in the systematic review. The findings from a qualitative study investigating the characteristics of traumatic imagery and associated behaviours experienced by individuals who have symptoms of post-traumatic stress subsequent to MI or cardiac arrest, are presented in the journal article. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to identify themes in the data.

Results
The systematic review indicated that there are mixed findings for pain as a risk factor for PTSD subsequent to MI. The limited number of studies in this area and significant methodological limitations within the existing evidence make it difficult to draw any firm conclusions with regard to the relationship between pain and PTSD post-MI. With regard to the qualitative study, the majority of imagery related to flashbacks of the event and were focused mainly on external experiences. Themes arising from the distressing flashback imagery included: loss of control; realisation of threat; negative impact on others; physical sensations; and actions of others. Imaginary elements and distortions were a feature of some traumatic imagery experienced, and non-flashback imagery connected with mortality was also experienced. Imagery was associated with avoidance behaviour and affected behaviour within relationships.

Conclusions
Findings from the systematic review indicate that further studies are warranted in this area to establish the link between pain and PTSD post-MI. These studies should seek to address methodological limitations of the current evidence by using a standardised pain measurement tool; adopting a prospective design; using a diagnostic tool to measure PTSD; ensuring PTSD is measured at least one month after the MI; assessing prior PTSD of non-cardiac origin; including a sufficient sample size and the implicated ethical and clinical issues.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) guided how data was analysed, and resulting super-ordinate themes involved representations of ‘feeling the same or feeling different’.

Background
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The research paper reports on one of these themes: ‘difference’, which is explored through four sub-ordinate themes. These relate to participants not wanting others to know they were in care, feeling alienated due to their foster care status, perceiving that others viewed them differently and, at times, noticing differences themselves. A second sub-ordinate theme: ‘making sense’ is presented in the ‘extended results’ which is explored through five sub-ordinate themes. Representations involved participants making sense of why their birth parents could not care for them, conflicting feelings towards both birth parents and foster parents, and a desire to feel a sense of agency in their lives.

Discussion
Findings are considered in relation to the extant literature on foster care and identity development and practice and research implications are discussed.
The role of emotional intelligence on psychological wellbeing and early maladaptive schema in adolescents

Clinical supervisor - Emma Burton, Academic supervisor - Jill Cossar

Background
The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has received much attention in research, with trait EI having been shown to be particularly associated with mental health. However, there is little explanation of the aetiology of this construct; with mixed findings as to whether gender differences exist in EI. A recent study has shown a possible link between EI and early maladaptive schema, based on the idea that EI is developed through early experiences and influenced by parental socialisation. However little research has been conducted in support of this hypothesis.

Methods
This research portfolio begins with a systematic review of the literature on gender and trait emotional intelligence (EI), in order to synthesise literature on gender differences in self-reported EI (Part I). It continues with an empirical study of an adolescent population (Part II) which aims to investigate the hypothesised relationships between EI and early maladaptive schema, based on the idea that EI is developed through early experiences and influenced by parental socialisation. However little research has been conducted in support of this hypothesis.

Results
Synthesis of cross-sectional literature examining gender differences in EI suggests mixed findings, with the majority of studies reporting no gender differences found in overall trait EI. Analysis of individual EI dimensions showed that females are likely to exhibit greater intrapersonal skills, whilst males show greater interpersonal skills. Results of this empirical study differed in part from these findings. This study demonstrated that EI, EMS and depression are significant predictors of adolescent well-being, although EI did not appear to moderate the relationship between EMS and PWB.

Discussion
Findings contribute to the growing body of self-reported EI research in relation to mental health and gender research, and highlight the need for greater awareness of EI in clinical practice. Implications for psychological theory and intervention are discussed.

Guilt, dysfunctional thought processes and depression in caregivers of people with dementia

Clinical supervisor - Kathryn Quinn, Academic supervisors - Ken Laidlaw, David Gillanders

Background
Leading researchers have called for more sophisticated research designs in caregiver intervention research; by using theoretically grounded interventions, considering the likely mechanism of action and using appropriate outcome measures. This thesis comprises a systematic review which evaluates the match between psychosocial interventions for dementia caregiver burden and the burden measure used to evaluate them and an empirical study which tests the psychometric properties of two caregiving outcome measures developed in Spain (Caregiver Guilt Questionnaire - CGQ and Dysfunctional Thoughts about Caregiving Questionnaire - DTACQ). The empirical study also considers the role of guilt and cognition (conceptualized as dysfunctional thoughts in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and cognitive fusion in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) in predicting depression in dementia caregivers.

Methods
221 informal familial dementia caregivers completed a cross sectional postal questionnaire survey.

Results
Using exploratory factor analysis, the factor structures of the CGQ and DTACQ identified in the Spanish development studies were replicated in this study. Adequate internal consistencies were found for both scales. Convergent validity was established for the CGQ with the measures of guilt and depression. The DTACQ correlated positively with general dysfunctional attitudes and negatively with amount of support received as predicted, but did not correlate significantly with depression. A multiple regression analysis identified caregiver guilt and cognitive fusion, but not dysfunctional attitudes as significant predictors of depression in dementia caregivers.

Conclusion
The CGQ appears to be a reliable and valid measure of caregiver guilt in a British population of dementia caregivers, although further research is recommended to develop the DTACQ. The relative strength of cognitive fusion as a predictor of caregiver depression suggests that the way in which an individual relates to their thoughts should be tested as a mechanism of change in dementia caregiver interventions.
Experiences of staff working in services for adults with Intellectual Disabilities

Academic supervisor - Karen McKenzie

Background
As a result of the changes in support for adults with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) and the increasing emphasis on independent living within the community, individuals commonly live in their own homes with support provided by voluntary or private services. As a result, support staff play a huge role in the lives of adults with ID and are often the mediators of interventions aimed at reducing distress or the occurrence of challenging behaviour. Issues relating to the well-being of support staff and how they manage behaviours that challenge services are central to the quality of the lives of adults with ID.

Method
A systematic review was carried out regarding interventions aimed at reducing stress felt by staff supporting adults with ID, with the aim of informing the clinical practice of professionals that work with such staff groups. An empirical study employing the qualitative methodology of Grounded Theory was also conducted to explore the experiences of staff working with professionals.

Results
Findings from the systematic review highlighted the lack of high quality intervention studies aimed at reducing stress in staff. Some tentative support was found for interventions based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and those taking a more practical problem-solving approach. The empirical study resulted in a tentative model within which the role of expectations was highlighted as key to staff’s experiences of working with professionals.

Conclusions
Further research is required in order to identify the most effective ways to reduce stress experienced by staff working with adults with ID. The constructed theoretical model suggests ways in which professionals can understand the experience of staff and has implications for their practice.

Couples’ Experiences after Cancer Treatment: A Systematic Review and Qualitative Study

Clinical supervisor - Margaret Mclean, Academic supervisor - Emily Newman

Background
The incidence of cancer is increasing alongside a fall in mortality rates. This has resulted in a growing number of cancer survivors overall, including for colorectal (bowel) cancer. For healthcare services to effectively support recovery and adjustment for survivors and their caregivers there is a need to develop an understanding of couples’ experiences after treatment.

Objectives
The systematic review aimed to identify qualitative research on partners’ experiences of cancer caregiving after treatment, and to synthesise findings on partners’ psychological adjustment. The primary qualitative study aimed to explore couples’ experiences of colorectal cancer services from the perspectives of patients and their partners, focusing on the transition period after treatment.

Methods
For the systematic review, 10 qualitative studies were purposefully sampled to focus on partners’ psychological adjustment post-treatment. Findings from these studies were analysed and synthesised using the Framework approach. For the empirical study, semi-structured interviews were conducted separately with a purposeful sample of 10 participants, comprising five patient-partner dyads. Data were analysed using the Framework approach, incorporating dyadic analysis to compare narratives within and between couples.

Results
The synthesis highlighted the importance of considering the patient-caregiver relationship across the cancer trajectory and within the wider context. Specific barriers and facilitators of partners’ adjustment related to communication and cohesion, transitions and gradual changes, as well as healthcare and cultural belief systems. The empirical study identified three overarching themes: the process of recovery, the impact of relationship dynamics, and mixed experiences of healthcare services.

Conclusions
Recovery and adjustment after cancer can be facilitated by a proactive and systemic approach to healthcare. The findings illustrate the significant impact that patients and partners can have on each other and underscore the need for consistency in good clinical practice throughout the recovery process.
Joy Ross

Treatments and predictors of violent behaviour: the role of fantasy and schizotypal personality traits

Clinical supervisor - Louise Tansey, Academic supervisors - Emily Newman, Ethel Quayle

Aims
This research project primarily investigated the relationship between fantasy, schizotypal personality traits, psychological distress, criminal thinking styles and violent offending behaviour. A number of studies have explored the relationship between fantasy life and sexual offending, but few have investigated this in relation to non-sexual violence. This is the first of its kind to do so with a forensic sample, where violent behaviour is corroborated, rather than self-reported.

Methods
Firstly a systematic review of the literature around the impact of psychological therapies on reducing violent behaviour was completed. Ten papers were identified and critically reviewed. The second part of the research project was a survey of 138 male prisoners which investigated the relationships between psychological distress, schizotypal personality traits and criminal thinking styles. In addition, differences in fantasy styles: negative, positive and narcissistic, and schizotypal personality according to level of violent behaviour were explored, as were differences in fantasy styles between criminal thinking style groups.

Results
The resulting synthesis of the reviewed studies indicated that psychological intervention, at least in the short term, can reduce violent behaviour. However, there was little evidence of a long-term impact of psychological therapies on reducing violent behaviour. In the empirical study Kendall’s Tau-b correlation analyses, Kruskal-Wallis test and post hoc specific comparison tests indicated no significant differences in fantasy style scores between the violent behaviour groups or thinking style categories, but revealed that many of the variables explored were strongly correlated.

Discussion
The findings differed from those of a previous general population study, by finding that fantasy style did not differ according to level of violence, but provided new findings in terms of relationships between criminal thinking styles and fantasy style. In an area with little existing research this warrants further exploration.

Helen Bates

The views and experiences of typically-developing students about Inclusive Education (Support for Learning)

Clinical supervisor - Aileen McCafferty, Academic supervisors - Karen McKenzie, Ethel Quayle

Background
Inclusive Education (‘Support for Learning’ in the UK) is now a mandatory educational policy across the European Union. And yet, we understand remarkably little about its psychosocial impact on students. Scant research has been conducted in this area, particularly with respect to typically-developing students. Findings from existing studies are difficult to extrapolate from, due to methodological flaws and/or contradictory results.

Method
A systematic review was carried out of international qualitative research in this area, to summarise and critique findings. An empirical study was also conducted with typically-developing Scottish adolescents, to explore their views of Support for Learning using a robust qualitative methodology.

Results
Findings from the systematic review showed that existing qualitative studies are mostly of poor to medium methodological quality; that typically-developing students tend not to understand Inclusive Education; and that the majority regard it with fearful antipathy. The empirical study mirrored these themes, and provided new insights into how students perceive the benefits and dangers of Inclusive Education, as well as barriers to understanding it.

Conclusion
Schools urgently need to inform students about the principles and practices of Inclusive Education, and professional working with adolescents need to be mindful of its perceived psychosocial dangers, in order to challenge prejudicial attitudes.
“Violence and aggression although not acceptable will happen, can happen and does happen”: a study of staffs’ experience of violence in child and family services

Clinical supervisor - George Murray, Academic supervisors - Ethel Quayle, Jill Cossar

Background
Since the 1980’s incidents of workplace violence have been recognised as a serious problem within social care. It has been found to be particularly rife within residential settings and children’s homes in particular have been found to be one of the most violence-prone settings. And yet, there is a lack of literature on the prevalence and psychosocial impact of workplace violence on staff in residential units for Looked After and Accommodated Children (LAAC).

Method
Given the limited literature on residential childcare workers a systematic review was conducted on research of violence towards social workers in child and family services to achieve a better understanding of violence within child and family social care generally. An empirical study was also conducted with staff of Local authority residential units within Central Scotland. The aim of the empirical study was to firstly survey the incidence of violence towards residential staff by LAAC and then further explore, using the qualitative methodology of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), staffs’ experience of workplace violence perpetrated by LAAC.

Results
The systematic review showed that studies were mostly of medium methodological quality; verbal aggression towards social workers in child and family services were common place; physical violence was comparatively rare; and that all forms of violence impacted on wellbeing and practice. The empirical study had similar findings, but also provided new insight into how staff copes with workplace violence, particularly in the context of young peoples’ life experiences.

Conclusion
Violence perpetrated by LAAC in residential units appeared to be lessening and a move towards more behaviour management was aiding staff to better understand the roots of violence. This in turn was found to help staff cope better with the emotional impact of violence. Management need to be mindful of the impact violence has on staff and continue providing training programs to better equip staff to understand violence and support LAAC to manage their aggression.

Beliefs about emotions and mindfulness: Impact on the relationship between stressors and somatic symptoms in a school population

Clinical supervisor - Donna Paxton, Academic supervisor - Paul Morris

Background
Mindfulness based interventions are becoming increasingly popular for use with children and adolescents, particularly within the school context.

Objectives
the aim of the systematic review was to examine the effectiveness of school-based mindfulness interventions with particular reference to mental health and wellbeing. The empirical study aimed to determine if beliefs about emotions and mindfulness moderated the relationship between stressors and somatic symptoms in an adolescent population.

Methods
The literature was systematically searched for mindfulness interventions carried out with children and adolescents within the school context. A cross-sectional survey was carried out in a rural sample of 489 high school students to examine specific a priori anticipated relationships amongst beliefs about emotions, mindfulness, stressors, and somatic symptoms.

Results
Systematic review - Six studies met the criteria for inclusion. The study demonstrated that school-based mindfulness interventions produce some evidence of effective outcomes for mental health and wellbeing.

in children and adolescents. Factors associated with improvements included that the intervention was delivered by an experienced mindfulness trainer, and that home practice formed part of the intervention. Empirical study - Somatic symptoms were significantly correlated with beliefs about emotions and were significantly inversely correlated with dispositional mindfulness. Lower levels of mindfulness were associated with stronger beliefs about the unacceptability of expressing or experiencing negative emotions. Beliefs about emotions and mindfulness did not significantly moderate the relationship between somatic symptoms and stressors within an adolescent population.

Conclusion
Further research is necessary to determine if mindfulness as a construct or an intervention is effective in enhancing adolescents’ resilience to stressors by improving mental health and wellbeing.
Systematic Review

Neurological conditions common in late life include dementia, stroke and Parkinson’s disease (PD). Depression in these conditions is common and can have significant adverse effects quality of life. Psychological therapies such as CBT are effective for late life depression, however, there is a lack of empirical evidence for CBT based therapies in the treatment of depression in neurological conditions. The current systematic review was therefore carried out to evaluate the evidence for cognitive and behavioural therapies in the treatment of depression in dementia, stroke and PD. A total of 19 studies were included in the review. It was concluded that there is currently insufficient high quality evidence examining CBT based therapies in people with these conditions. There are, however, promising preliminary results which need to be examined further using high quality research designs including long term follow up data.

Empirical Research Study

Depression in older people can have a detrimental effect on morbidity and quality of life. Unfortunately it is often unrecognised and untreated. Given the challenges associated with ageing, such as losses and physical health problems, people may consider depression as ‘understandable’ and an inevitable consequence of ageing. The current study aimed to explore older people’s attitudes towards their own ageing and the effect of clinical depression. Twenty eight participants over the age of 60 with clinical depression were compared with a control sample of non depressed participants. Groups were compared on measures including: Attitudes to Ageing Questionnaire, Geriatric Depression Questionnaire, quality of life, satisfaction with health and various demographic variables. The clinically depressed sample also completed the Geriatric Anxiety Scale, Beck Hopelessness Scale, Prospective and Retrospective Memory Questionnaire and the Understandability Questionnaire. Results showed significant differences in attitudes to ageing relating to psychosocial loss, with the depressed population reporting more negative attitudes. Depression was found to be a significant predictor of negative attitudes and factors including increased hopelessness and reduced quality of life were also associated with negative attitudes. This study highlights the importance of assessing attitudes to ageing in older people with depression as this may have implications for psychological treatments for late life depression.

Introduction

The evidence-base for the effectiveness of music on people with dementia is unclear, yet music is frequently used in the care of people with dementia. Little is known about formal dementia caregivers’ views on the use of music in their ward. The aim of this study was to investigate the attitudes of formal dementia caregivers towards the use of music in people with dementia through the development of a new attitudes scale, and to investigate if these attitudes may be related to staff attitudes to people with dementia and burnout.

Method

101 formal caregivers from NHS wards which accommodate people with dementia completed a survey consisting of the Staff Attitudes to Music questionnaire–Dementia version (SAM-D), translated and validated for the purposes of this study, the Approaches to Dementia Questionnaire and the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Data were analysed using exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis and a series of correlational and multiple regression analyses.

Results

The SAM-D is a useful measure of formal caregiver attitudes to the use of music for their patients, with three subscales, ‘Positive effects’, ‘Organisational facilitation’ and ‘Negative effects’. Most participants had positive attitudes to the use of music as a non-pharmacological intervention. Attitudes to dementia is a significant predictor of attitudes to the use of music, whereas burnout is not related to attitudes to music.

Discussion

Alongside the evidence-base for music, staff attitudes should also be investigated, although development of an attitudes scale can be challenging. There are furthermore clinical implications for the use of music in people with dementia and caregiver attitudes. Future research may help assess the SAM-D’s psychometric properties further and investigate differences in attitudes of different professionals in various settings.
New innovations in dementia research: From a new assessment of premorbid functioning to a review of the evidence base for post-diagnostic Cognitive Rehabilitation

Clinical supervisor - Sandy McAfee, Academic supervisor - Suzanne O’Rourke

Background
Dementia is a national priority for Scotland, and as such, fast and accurate diagnosis plus responsive and well-evidenced interventions post-diagnosis are key. Accurately estimating an individual’s level of premorbid functioning can be a crucial part of establishing that cognitive decline has taken place, enabling clinicians to be more confident and accurate in their diagnosis. Measures that assess premorbid ability should be able to 1) capture current ability in healthy controls and 2) resist the effects of cognitive decline when used in individuals with dementia. At the post-diagnostic stage, there is a growing evidence base for non-pharmacological, tailored interventions for individuals with dementia. However, the evidence base is limited, particularly so for Cognitive Rehabilitation.

Objectives
An empirical study was conducted in order to assess whether a newly developed measure that aims to capture lifelong cognitive reserve (the brain’s ability to withstand pathological change), the Cognitive Reserve Index Questionnaire (CRIq), can capture premorbid ability. Three research questions were addressed: 1) does the CRIq capture current ability in healthy controls? 2) is it resistant to cognitive decline when used with a patient group with dementia? and 3) how does the CRIq compare to a traditional measure of premorbid ability, the WAIS-IV Perceptual Reasoning Index. For the systematic review of Cognitive Rehabilitation the CDCIG Specialised Register, ALOIS, was searched in order to identify relevant studies. In addition, previous reviews were searched to identify studies excluded on the basis that they were not an RCT.

Methods
For the empirical study N=20 healthy older controls and N=13 patients with dementia were recruited. In order to appropriately address the three research questions both groups were assessed using the NART, the CRIq and the MOCA (Montreal Cognitive Assessment). In addition, the control group were assessed on a measure of current ability, the WAIS-IV Perceptual Reasoning Index. For the systematic review of Cognitive Rehabilitation the CDCIG Specialised Register, ALOIS, was searched in order to identify relevant studies. In addition, previous reviews were searched to identify studies excluded on the basis that they were not an RCT.

Results
Results for the empirical study show both CRIq and NART were strongly correlated to current ability (performance on WAIS-IV FRI) in controls, although both significantly overestimated ability. CRIq performance was not affected by the presence of dementia whereas NART predicted premorbid ability was. CRIq and NART showed a different pattern of results between controls and patients, indicating that CRIq may more resistant to the effects of cognitive decline. Ten studies were identified for the systematic review; five RCT and five non-RCT. Study quality was assessed using a well-validated quality assessment tool, and indicated large variability. Eight of the ten studies reported a positive effect of Cognitive Rehabilitation. However, several studies were of poor quality and included aspects of other approaches in their intervention (e.g. Cognitive Training, Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy).

Conclusions
The empirical study found that CRIq over-estimated current ability in controls, but was resistant to cognitive decline in patients. The over-estimation of current ability may be accounted for by the CRIq being normed on an Italian population, thus not reflecting UK cultural norms (e.g. for length of schooling). When the NART and the CRIq were directly compared, the two measures were found to be related, but yet produced significantly different estimates of premorbid ability. This suggests that they may capture different facets of premorbid functioning, with the NART being primarily a verbal performance-based measure, and the CRIq capturing aspects of global cognitive functioning. Clinical implications include the potential utility of the CRIq for patients with language impairment. However the study conclusions are limited by a low N, and therefore have restricted generalisability. In the systematic review, the literature was exhaustively searched and evidence was found for the effectiveness of Cognitive Rehabilitation for mild-moderate Alzheimer disease and mixed dementia. Methodological limitations of the included studies are discussed, and clinical implications are identified. Both the empirical study and the systematic review highlight the need for greater research and development of methods by which dementia care is supported; through more effective methods of diagnosis, to a better evidence base for post-diagnostic interventions.
Qualitative Exploration of Cognition in Intimate Partner Violence Offenders and Intimate Partner Violence Sex Offenders

Clinical supervisor - Bruce Kidd, Academic supervisor - Ethel Quayle

Aims
Recently, empirical literature exploring cognitive characteristics of intimate partner violence offenders has received considerable attention with both theory and practice historically focusing on victims of the abuse. Qualitative exploration has proposed implicit theories (ITs), that is distinct sets of schemas that offenders hold in relation to themselves, the world and others. In relation to cognition in intimate partner violence offenders, this thesis had two aims: to systematically analyse qualitative literature exploring cognition in intimate partner violence offenders and to implement interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore cognition in intimate partner violence sex offenders.

Methods
Aims are addressed separately in two journal articles. A systematic review of qualitative literature exploring cognition in intimate partner violence offenders is presented in journal article 1. Journal article 2 utilises interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore cognition in intimate partner violence sex offenders.

Results
In relation to journal article 1, systematic searches of bibliographic databases in addition to hand-searches of various articles in the domain of intimate partner violence were conducted to identify eight empirical papers qualitatively exploring cognition in intimate partner violence offenders. Synthesis of the papers resulted in 10 themes being extrapolated thought to be representative of cognition in intimate partner violence males: “violence is normal”; “policing partner”; “women are provoking”; “need for control”; “grievance/revenge”; “external factors responsible”; “rejection/abandonment”; “minimalisation/denial”; “entitlement” and “remorse”. Journal article two utilised interpretative phenomenological analysis of 11 transcripts of IPV offenders. This revealed five superordinate and 14 subthemes which are proposed as implicit theories present in this specific offender group. These are: “violence is acceptable”; “grievance/revenge”; “dangerous world”; “need for control”; “real man”; “entitlement/women are objects”; “male sex drive/policing partner”; “women are provoking”; “rejection/abandonment”; “women are supportive”; “uncontrollability”; “nature of harm”; “the new me” and “I’m not like them”.

Conclusions
Cognitions identified from the systematic review are discussed in addition to limitations of the synthesis and clinical and empirical utility. The implicit theories identified in journal article 2 are discussed in relation to other offending behaviour groups in addition to their clinical implications in the development of effective interventions and risk assessment tools.

The therapeutic attachment dyad: Outcomes, engagement and coping in psychological therapy

Clinical supervisor - Richard Cosway, Academic supervisor - Matthias Schwannauer

Background
The relevance of attachment theory in clinical practice was posited by Bowlby in his seminal work on Attachment and Loss. He likened the role of the therapist to that of an attachment figure and proposed that the course and outcome of therapy would be affected by the internal working models (IWMs) of both the patient and the therapist. A small number of studies have explored the dyadic nature of attachment patterns within the therapeutic process although findings are inconclusive.

Objective
The current study aimed to extend previous empirical evidence by exploring the application of attachment theory within a naturalistic clinical setting. Both patient and therapist attachment patterns were considered individually and as a therapeutic attachment dyad in relation to clinical outcomes following psychological therapy. It was hypothesized that patients reporting higher levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance would experience greater levels of psychological distress, less symptomatic relief and greater difficulty engaging with therapy. It was also hypothesized that patient and therapist attachment patterns would interact to moderate the trajectory of psychological therapy. A secondary aim of the study was to test the relationship between attachment and dimensions and dispositional coping style within a clinical psychology population. A systematic review of the literature exploring attachment style and coping styles was also conducted.

Results
Findings of the systematic review were suggestive of a relationship between attachment style and coping style which were consistent with theoretically derived assumptions. The results of the current empirical study lend support to the role of individual attachment patterns in coping and clinical outcomes, as well as supporting the idea that therapist attachment can affect clinical outcomes through therapeutic engagement.

Conclusion
The clinical application of attachment theory provides an interesting perspective on how services can best adapt to meet those most in need, although further research is required.
Social Cognition and Behaviour in Dementia of the Alzheimer Type

**Clinical supervisors** - Kevin Power, Fiona MacLeod. **Academic supervisors** - Ken Laidlaw

**Background**

Behaviour changes including apathy, disinhibition, irritability or social skills difficulties are commonly reported in individuals following an acquired brain injury (ABI) or presence of a neurodegenerative condition. In addition, there is evidence that these behaviour changes are related to increased caregiver burden and early nursing home and hospital admissions. Yet, very little is known about possible factors relating to behaviour change in ABI or neurodegeneration. Social cognition difficulties have been proposed as possible predictors of behaviour change in ABI or neurodegeneration. However, the evidence for the existence of a link between behaviour and social cognition remains weak.

**Aims and Methods**

The aims of the current thesis were twofold; firstly, it aimed to systematically examine the current evidence on the link between social cognition and behaviour change in ABI or neurodegeneration. Secondly, the thesis aimed to assess the relationship between social cognition and behaviour change in the context of relationship quality in a sample of 27 individuals with a diagnosis of Dementia of the Alzheimer Type (DAT) or mixed DAT and vascular dementia and their co-residing partners.

**Results**

A review of the current literature showed a discrepancy in the evidence for an association between behaviour change and social cognition. The evidence for the existence of this association further in individuals with DAT/mixed dementia is also present in one study focusing on DAT.

Following this from review, the present thesis examined the existence of this association further in individuals with DAT/mixed dementia. The study used partners’ reports on behaviour and relationship quality and examined their associations with individuals with DAT/mixed dementia’s performance on a social cognition task. Although the DAT/ mixed dementia group showed an impaired performance on a social cognition task compared to their partners, there were no significant relationships between reported behaviour changes, relationship quality and social cognition performance in individuals with DAT/mixed dementia.

**Conclusions**

These findings suggest that despite previous literature indicating a link between behaviour change and social cognition in DAT or mixed dementia, this relationship is yet to be fully established in this population and further research is needed to inform current practice and models of behaviour change in neurodegeneration. The present findings are also discussed with regards to implications for clinical practice and adaptations in psychotherapy for people with DAT or mixed dementia and their partners.

An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the experiences of autism and perceptions of parenting in parents with a child with autism

**Clinical supervisor** - Jenny Low. **Academic supervisors** - Karen McKenzie, Ethel Quayle

**Background**

Research has highlighted that parenting a child with autism can be challenging and stressful. However, many parents successfully cope with the challenges posed by autism. A systematic review investigated parental psychological predictors of positive adjustment and coping in parents with a child with autism. Although a range of potential predictor variables were examined, including social support, coping styles and religious beliefs, the results of the review were inconclusive due to the conceptual overlap of predictor variables, and inconsistent use of outcome indicators of positive adjustment. However, parental perceptions of their situation and themselves as parents were represented across a number of variables, and were thought to be of relevance in understanding processes of adjustment. Therefore, qualitative research was undertaken to explore this further.

**Method**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight parents of children with autism on their experiences of being a parent, and their perceptions of influences on their sense of self. The data were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

**Results**

The following five super-ordinate themes emerged from the study: ‘experiencing autism as hard to know’, ‘experiencing autism as all-consuming and extreme’, ‘diagnosis giving understanding and confidence’, ‘parenting in the eyes of others’, and ‘dilemma of acceptance’. The meaning of these themes for parents and how they related to their sense of self and belief in their ability was discussed. For example, the ambiguity and difficulty in understanding autism, and the overwhelming nature of the condition related to feelings of self-doubt in parents. On the other hand, confidence increased when the diagnosis was identified, and when parenting skills and the child’s progress were recognised by others.

**Discussion**

This research has provided a richer understanding of self-perceptions of parenting and the impact of these experiences on a parent’s sense of self. It has contributed to a broader literature on positive adjustment in families with a child with autism. This understanding will be useful to those seeking to engage and support families with a child with autism, and assist parents with coping and adjustment.
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Feedback on the Abstract Booklet

Thank you to everyone who has provided feedback on previous abstract booklets. We were pleased to hear that many trainees and practitioners found the booklets useful. Any thoughts or suggestions regarding the booklets are welcome and can be sent to Nuno Ferreira at Nuno.Ferreira@ed.ac.uk.