

Making Research Relevant: The intersection of disciplines and sectors

Prof. Judith Phillips

Our Future is Aging- Current Research on Knowledge, Practice and Policy,
Halifax, June 2016



Outline

- Interdisciplinary research
- Research - policy - practice interface
- User engagement and participation



Forms of Collaboration Across the Disciplines

“Multidisciplinary”, “cross-disciplinary”, “interdisciplinary”,
“transdisciplinary” (Hennessy and Walker, 2011)

Multidisciplinary
Multiple disciplines
collaborate without
significant cross-
fertilisation of theories,
methods and
epistemologies

Interdisciplinary
Incorporates explicit
integration of disciplinary
perspectives and
methods

Transdisciplinary
A new hybrid field of
inquiry emerges from an
extended period of
collaborative work (e.g.
psychoneuroimmunology)

Why interdisciplinary approaches are important

- Global ageing - societal challenges can only be solved through working together
- Involving multiple or unusual disciplines together can lead to innovation
- Avoids duplication and maximizes funding resource
- Urgency for policy and practice to address demographic change and issues within constrained budgets- so integration of health and social care policy & practice imperative
- Importance of user engagement and participation and relevance of research to older people

Lund Revisited : Tackling Societal Challenges - Priority Actions

- Europe needs clear political commitment to step-up efforts to **align strategies, instruments, resources and actors** at national and European level in order to address the grand societal challenges.
- This commitment needs to be underpinned by an excellent science base, world-class research infrastructures and a new generation of **researchers with the right set of skills; notably, creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation**.
- Europe needs to connect with partners around the world, in advanced, emerging and developing countries to address the grand societal challenges in **partnership** and to attract the world's best researchers and innovators and private sector investment.
- **Greater impacts** on the challenges have to be achieved through involvement of **the public sector and industry** in knowledge creation, with a stronger focus on **open innovation** and the role of end-users.

What is involved in fostering and nurturing interdisciplinary approaches?

- **Common purpose:** Research challenges where a problem focus is unlikely to conform to disciplinary boundaries
- **Time and communication:** regular & early communication to facilitate understanding among the disciplines
- **Leadership** – leaders must be identified early, have the “right touch”, acceptable to collaborators, able to articulate the goals of the project, establish a collaborative culture of trust and sharing in which team members share the credit
- **Shared resources and revenue** – agreements about the expectations and needs of all team members
- **Equal effort across team** – defining clear roles and responsibilities, setting time lines and convening frequent group meetings can help reinforce team functioning

Barriers to Inter-disciplinarity in Research

(Bruun, Hukkinen and Klein 2005)

- **Structural** impediments – the organisation of science and associated (dis)incentives for interdisciplinary work
- **Lack of knowledge** – unfamiliarity with other disciplines and of a vision of their potential contributions, values and language
- **Cultural obstacles** – differing accepted understandings, practices, values and language
- **Epistemological differences** – divergent disciplinary world views
- **Methodological differences** – varying styles of enquiry
- **Psychological** factors – attitudes and disciplinary identity; investment in their own field and community
- **Reluctant reception** – problem of communicating interdisciplinary research to non-scientific audiences, e.g. funders, public

UK approaches to foster inter-disciplinarity within ageing research

- **RCUK – expectations for social and economic impact: EQUAL; NCAR; GO; NDA; LLHW**

UK Research Council Interdisciplinary Initiatives in Research on Ageing

- UK National Collaboration on Ageing Research (2001-2004)
MRC, ESRC, EPSRC, BBSRC
- Strategic Promotion of Ageing Research Capacity (SPARC)
(2005-2009) EPSRC, BBSRC
- The New Dynamics of Ageing (NDA) Programme (2005-2011)
ESRC, EPSRC, MRC BBSRC, AHRC
- Centres and Programmes in Lifelong Health and Wellbeing
(2007-2013) MRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC

MRC Medical Research Council, ESRC Economic and Social RC;
BBSRC :EPSRC Engineering and Physical Sciences

UK approaches to foster inter-disciplinarity within ageing research

- RCUK – expectations for social and economic impact: EQUAL; NCAR; GO; NDA; LLHW
- **Interdisciplinary Research Centres (Newcastle, Sheffield, Cambridge and London)**
- **English Longitudinal Study on Ageing**
- **What Works Centre**

<http://www.ageing-better.org.uk/>

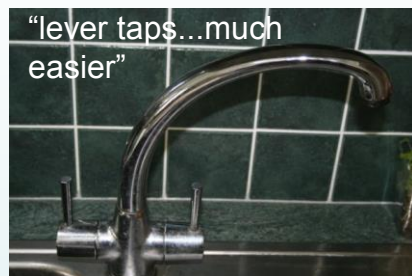
New Dynamics of Ageing Programme

- Largest programme of research on ageing of its kind in the UK (9 years; £20m; 200 researchers)
- 2 substantive research themes: Ageing well across the lifecourse & Ageing and its environments
- Supported innovative interdisciplinary research groups and methods; doctoral training-
collaborative research projects; programme grants; preparatory networks

New Dynamics of Ageing Programme

- Quality of sleep
- Nutrition and ageing **
- IT use
- Working late Strategies to enhance productivity **
- Connectivity of older people in rural areas **
- Healthy ageing across the lifecourse
- Designing a technology enabled garment system
- Migration across the lifecourse in Bangladeshi families
- Tackling ageing incontinence through theory, tools and technologies**
- Ageing and biology **
- Ages and stages: Theatre production – representations and recollections of ageing**
- Life course analysis of longitudinal data
- Cell ageing
- Financial abuse
- Music for life
- Dignity in care
- Mobility and ageing
- Poverty in ageing
- Ageing and Fiction

****Canadian project linked**



nda

new dynamics of ageing

a cross-council research programme

PROGRAMME

OPUS

Older
people's use
of unfamiliar
space

UNIVERSITY of
STIRLING





Design For Ageing Well

Improving quality of life for the ageing population using a technology enabled garment system

Key Outputs

Impact Output 1: Co-Design Methodology New to Clothing Design

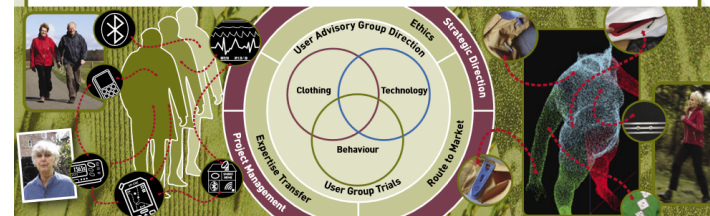
Impact Output 2: ISPO HealthStyle Exhibition



Newsletter for new markets in wearable technology
Issue 2, Summer 2010

Design for Ageing Well

Improving the Quality of life of the Ageing Population Using a Technology Enabled Garment System



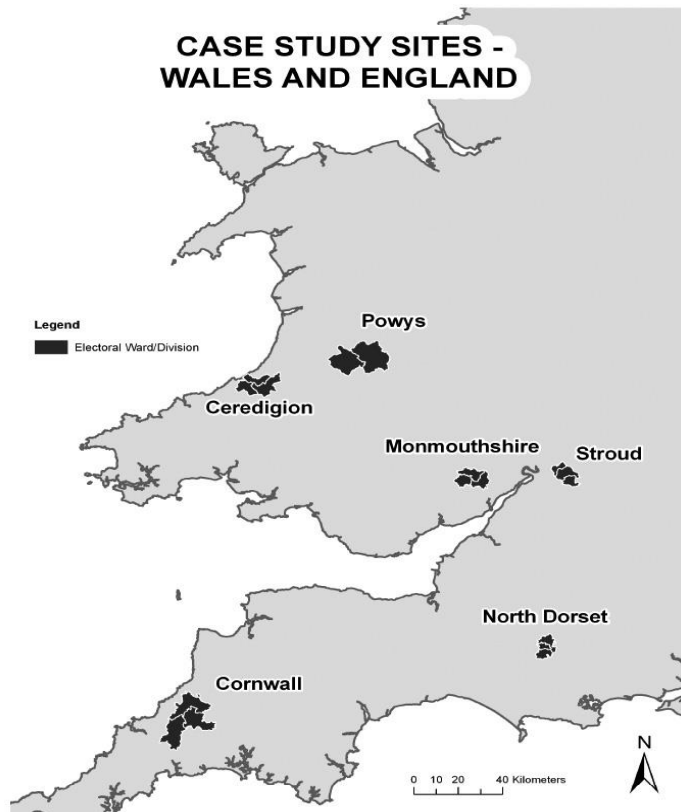
This design-led cross-disciplinary collaborative research project is being carried out by a consortium of universities in the UK and led by Jane McCann at the University of Wales, Newport. This three year initiative is being funded by the UK joint research councils under 'The New Dynamics of Ageing programme'

garment manufacturing techniques and available wearable technologies to what may be seen as the new consumer majority.

The 'Behaviour' work package is led by the University of Westminster, in collaboration with the University of Salford, on the identification of end-user needs and the development of new

Grey and Pleasant Land?:

An interdisciplinary exploration of the connectivity of older people in rural civic society



Travelling through the rural lifecourse (WP3)

OPUS- Key ingredients for success

- Project related
- Investigator specific factors
- External issues

Key ingredients – Project related

- Needs buy in and time commitment from all partners- clear focus and role for everyone.
- Know why and how you are involved and the history of the project (big teams ins and outs)
- Knowledge of the project – its raison d’etre and how disciplines hang together
- Language
- Novel and innovative methodology
- Have a separate work package on interdisciplinarity to look at process and outcome- will help to look at the project as a whole.
- Informal networking- regular team meetings and socials
- Be up front with challenges - Conflict can open up interdisciplinarity
- Team dynamics - Feeling at ease to challenge and be challenged
- Size and hangers on

Key ingredients for success- Investigator specific & External issues and barriers

- Know who you are working with – trust and ability to deliver
- Right person for the team- recruitment difficulties
- Appreciation of diversity of paradigms and perspectives
- Good leadership
- Individuals pet topics considered
- Getting involvement with external stakeholders and partners right – expectations and ways of working within and external to the team
- Coping with under resourcing
- Administrative complexity

Evaluation of the NDA

- Problem solving approach- primary driver of interdisciplinary work
- Older Peoples Reference Group – first of its type set up by a research programme
- Preparatory networks, sandpits and funding
- Involvement of all users; encouragement of champions; supporting researchers at all stages in their careers; transparency in communicating intent, progress and achievements; varied and robust knowledge transfer; understanding the challenges faced by older people themselves(Lansley)
- Good peer review to assess large scale multi disciplinary research
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and international collaboration

Evaluation of the NDA- differing views

- Uneven progress (Lansley, Ageing and Society, 2013)
- Few PIs were mid career so no investment in capacity building and future leadership
- NDA interdisciplinary? Single domains dominated- ESRC. MRC (balance corrected by specific calls)
- Mismatch of the call and quality of the bids that came forward
- Return to home disciplines

Evaluating the impact of the NDA research programme

Instrumental impacts

- Sus-IT influencing national policy on digital inclusion
- Ageing & Poverty in India influencing the introduction of a universal pension in South India
- TACT3 developing a national toilet map and smart underwear
- SomnIA introducing cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia (CBTI) in several NHS Trusts

Conceptual impacts

- Dignity in care helping professionals to think differently about older people with high support needs
- Look at me! challenging ageism and sexism through the use of co-produced images of older women

Evaluating the impact of the NDA research programme

Capacity building impacts

- Design for Ageing Well bringing specialist expertise into small clothing companies and increasing understanding of the needs of older consumers
- Ages and Stages leaving as a legacy a thriving intergenerational theatre company
- The NDA Programme providing support and guidance to projects and researchers on achieving and promoting impact; and developing case studies to demonstrate how to achieve impact from previous research

Inter-sectoral collaborations and connections

Research-Policy

- A New Science of Ageing → 'Active Ageing' as policy approach
- 'Active ageing is a rare policy concept that could unify the interests of all stakeholders: Citizens, NGOs business interests and policy makers'
- 'A partnership between science and policy could transform the experience of ageing and later life'

(Walker, 2014)

Lessons learned- facilitators to intersectoral connections

- Recognizing that information needs of policy makers and researchers are different – findings need adapting for different audiences
- Good case narratives and metaphors; clear messages
- Capture the social media market- ‘time lag’ avoided and many practitioners do not have access to libraries
- NDA programme provided a good synthesis of the projects
- Researchers engaged in the process and understanding of the policy process
- ‘Alliance for Useful Evidence’ Nesta EPPI Centre – what works in terms of uptake
- <http://www.alliance4usefulevidence.org/event/what-works-for-research-uptake/>

Developing Evidence-Enriched Practice in Health and Social Care with Older People – *simple but not simplistic*



Previous experiences of talk in health & social care services

- *‘We are either told off or told what to do.’*
- *‘We have lots of meetings, but we rarely meet in the real sense of the word.’*
- *‘We used to have discussions with managers, now we have policy briefings.’*
- *‘You know what I would like? To be given a free hand for one year. For everyone to get off my back and let me do what I think is right’.*



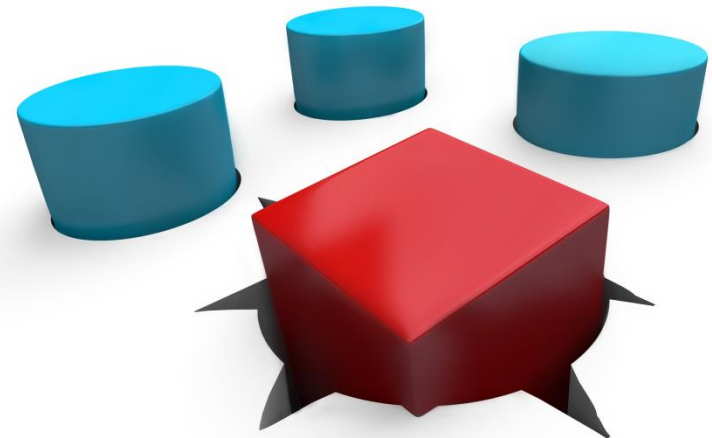
Evidence compared

A Better Life Challenge

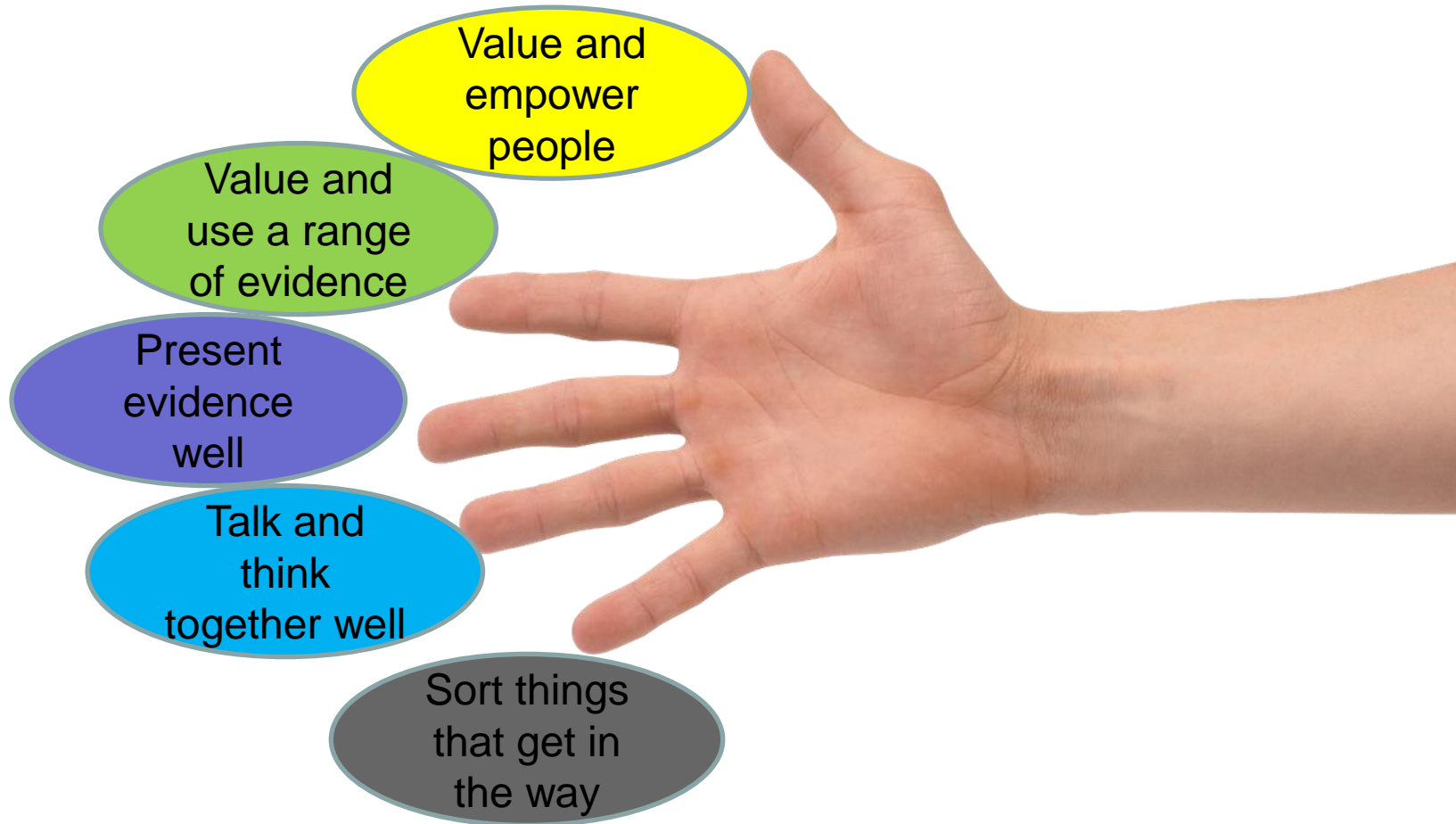
‘Recognise that all support is founded in meaningful and rewarding relationships’

Valuing and talking together about related evidence from:

- Service users
- Frontline staff
- Organisational policy
- Research



The five elements of the Developing Evidence-Enriched Practice (DEEP) approach



The DEEP project in a nutshell

- Appreciative action research...
- In health and social care services...
- Across six sites – five in Wales and one in Scotland...
- Exploring research and other evidence and...
- Using it in service and workforce development...
- To promote a better life and address the seven challenges
- Not imposing research

Areas chosen by participants for development

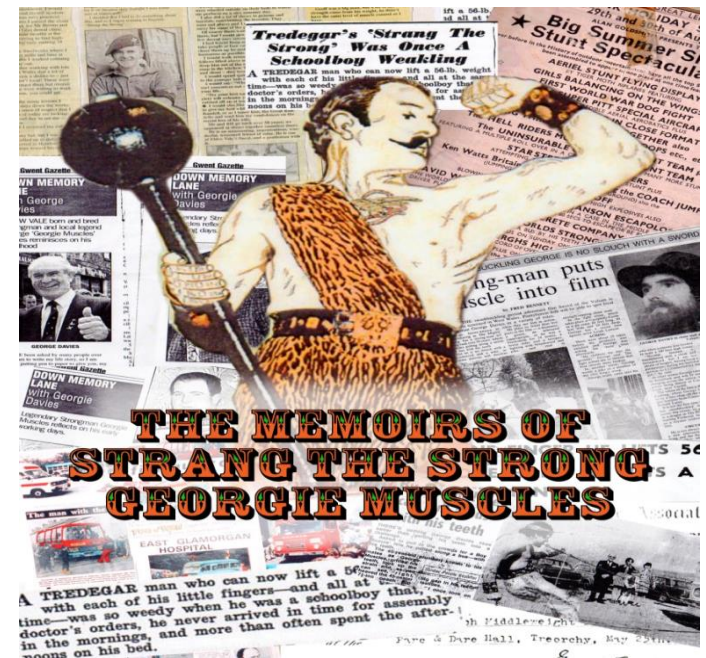
- *Relationship*-centred practice
- Positive and rights based approaches to risk management with people with dementia
- Meaningful activities in care homes and day services
- Supporting caring relationships through the development of meaningful short breaks
- Addressing loneliness and building community links
- Personal outcome focused assessment support planning and review

Did anyone spot the before and after?



***‘Live free and beauty surrounds you
The world still astounds you
Each time you look at a star’***

***‘You do not need to listen to
those that say you are weak’
George Davies***



1. **Securing senior management buy-in and valuing and empowering project participants**

- Appreciation and respect
- Honesty – saying it as it is
- Permission
- Mutual trust
- Celebration



2. Valuing and including a range of evidence

- Research findings, including 'A Better Life'
- Practitioner knowledge
- The voice of service users and carers
- Organisational knowledge, including policy



3. Capturing and presenting relevant evidence in accessible and engaging formats

- Short research summaries
- Stories and quotes
- Good practice examples
- Normative frameworks
- Provocative statement

A graphic of the words "Once upon a time..." in a stylized, calligraphic font. The word "Once" is written in a large, ornate, blackletter-style font, while "upon a time..." is written in a smaller, more flowing script. The "O" in "Once" is particularly large and decorative, featuring intricate floral patterns.

4. Facilitating the exploration and use of evidence

Meaningful conversations:

- Create relationships and contexts
- Support collaborative decision making, e.g. regarding risk
- Facilitates learning

Facilitated serendipity:

- Allows for emergence
- Requires vigilance



5. Recognising and addressing national and local organisational circumstances and obstacles

- Recognising the impact of budget cuts
- Challenging narrow views of 'independence'
- Challenging simplistic rules and regulations, e.g. regarding professional boundaries and risk
- Challenging the burden of poorly designed paperwork
- Challenging tick-box approaches to quality assurance



Impact of talking together

- A richer understanding of the word 'friendship' and what this means in the context of health and social care service provision
- Replacing a Professional Boundaries policy with a Sharing Lives and Professional Boundaries policy
- Different ways of working at the frontline, e.g. A Train to Cardiff
- More dynamic and nurturing team meetings, including sharing of emotions



Copyright Cathy Greenblat. Reproduced with permission

Conclusions

- Evidence informed policy and practice is critical - Research plays a vital part
- Requires an interdisciplinary approach to get at the complexity of older people's lives

‘as science moves closer to application, decision-and policy making problems occur that cannot be confined to narrow disciplines or kept within the borders of specific departments’ (Karlqvist,1999, p379)

- Various literatures and tools on ‘How to do’ this
- Communication and relationship building at the heart if we are to improve the lives of older people

Further information

New Dynamics of Ageing

<http://www.newdynamics.group.shef.ac.uk/>

Alliance for Useful Evidence

<http://www.alliance4usefulevidence.org/event/what-works-for-research-uptake/>

DEEP full report and 4-page summary:

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/developing-evidence-enriched-practice-health-and-social-care-older-people>

DEEP project on-line resource:

<http://deep-resources.chrismog.co.uk>

Thank You

Professor Judith Phillips
Professor of Gerontology
Stirling University
Scotland, UK

[Email: Judith.Phillips@stir.ac.uk](mailto:Judith.Phillips@stir.ac.uk)

Twitter:

@JudithEleri

@judithp75851541