



Faculty of Public Health and Policy

The mission of the Faculty of Public Health and Policy is to improve health globally through research, teaching and the provision of advice in the areas of health policy, health systems and services, and individual, social and environmental influences on health. In all these areas, the Faculty has internationally recognized expertise, with a critical mass of the necessary disciplines and substantial, continuing programme and project funding for research especially in Europe, Africa and Asia. This has been an especially successful year, with the winning of two DFID Research Programme Consortia and two Department of Health Policy Research Units, the appointment of Professor Mark Petticrew as the Director of the Department of Health's Public Health Research Consortium, and the move of Sigma Research to the Faculty.

DEPARTMENT OF GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Department conducts novel, policy-relevant research and training on global health issues, predominantly from the perspective of low- and middle-income countries. It comprises some 98 staff and 89 research degree students, with total grants funding of over £M34, split across four groups.

The **Anthropology, History and Sociology Group** has focused on two broad ethnographic themes: medical research and experimental interventions in African health care settings; and infectious disease, therapeutic care, and health systems in Africa and Asia. Concerned with understanding the political economy and social value of medical markets and of transnational enterprises in health care and research, the Group's work is taking into account the continued salience of past and longstanding interventions on current experiences of health care locally, nationally and globally. This work has attracted funding from DFID, the Leverhulme Trust, the Wellcome Trust, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the British Academy, and most recently, a three-year grant from the ESRC, entitled, *Memorials and remains of medical research in Africa: an anthropology of scientific landscapes, ruins and artefacts*, in collaboration with French and Dutch partners.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the publication in 1985 of *Good Health at Low Cost*, an influential report published by the Rockefeller Foundation, members of the **Health Economics and Systems Analysis Group**, together with partner institutions from Bangladesh,

India, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan and Thailand, returned to the original research question posed: how can countries with relatively low incomes achieve maternal and child health outcomes that put some countries with a similar level of economic resources to shame? A book based on this work has now been published¹. This year also saw the start of a new DFID-funded research consortium RESYST (Resilient and Responsive Health Systems), which will generate new knowledge on health financing, human resources and health system governance and management in a range of low- and middle-income countries.

Members of the **Politics and Policy Group** are involved in the new five-year cross-Faculty 'IDEAS' study, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to provide evidence to help decision making about maternal and newborn health programmes in north-east Nigeria, Ethiopia and Uttar Pradesh in India. A study of Asia and global health diplomacy generated much-needed empirical evidence of how such diplomacy works and to what ends, with workshops in London and Singapore for scholars, diplomats and public health practitioners. Building on a decade of innovation in research and teaching at the School on global health, a new MSc Global Health Policy course will be launched in October 2011. This is the first distance learning Master's level degree in global health.

Highlights this year from the **Social and Mathematical Epidemiology Group** include the publication of a detailed impact analysis of the Avahan Programme, an initiative to scale up HIV prevention interventions for high-risk groups in southern India. The analysis found significant reductions in HIV infections, and concluded that Avahan's programmes were highly cost-effective. In another project, analyses to explore the potential efficiency of the integrated delivery of HIV and sexual and reproductive health services in Kenya and Swaziland found significant variations in the cost, scope and extent of two models of integration (HIV/STI into family planning services and integration of HIV/STI into post-natal services) across facilities, suggesting the potential for gains in efficiency. A new DFID-funded Research Programme Consortium on Addressing the Structural Drivers of HIV/AIDS was also awarded, which consolidates existing research partnerships in India, South Africa, Tanzania and the USA, and helps link the group's research on poverty, gender inequality and violence with our HIV research.

¹ Balabanova D, McKee M and Mills A (eds). 'Good health at low cost' 25 years on. *What makes a successful health system?* London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, 2011. Also available at <http://gblc.lshtm.ac.uk>

Patients waiting in a Kenyan health facility.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH AND POLICY

The Department's research is targeted at improving the quality, organization and management of health services and systems. It includes policy analysis and sociological and ethnographic studies that provide a better understanding of how health services and systems behave; methodological research; and applied work that addresses questions about what care should be provided and how services can be improved. The Department is part of the School's European Centre on Health of Societies in Transition, which, in turn, is a major partner in the WHO-funded European Observatory of Health Systems and Policies. Other key collaborations include those with the Royal Colleges of Surgeons and of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre.

The Department this year became the base for two new Department of Health Policy Research Units: on Policy Innovation Research (PIRU), directed by Nicholas Mays (Professor of Health Policy); and on Commissioning and Health Systems (PRUComm), directed by Stephen Peckham (Reader in Health Policy).

PIRU aims to produce research evidence to inform the

early stages of policy innovation in England. Current work includes: the evaluation of the Government's Public Health Responsibility Deal; advice on the drug recovery 'payment by results' pilots; a review of non-pharmacological alternatives to anti-psychotic medication for people with dementia; investigation of novel methods for the identification of comparison groups for quasi-experimental studies; use of data linkage of administrative datasets for rapid policy evaluation; and an analysis of evaluations of national pilot programmes.

PRUComm aims to provide evidence to inform the development of policy on commissioning. It investigates how commissioning operates and how it can improve services and access, increase effectiveness and respond better to patient needs. The Unit is a national resource, holding evidence and research on commissioning. Current work includes a literature review focusing on primary care-led commissioning and purchasing. A major research programme evaluates the development, organization and functioning of new commissioning groups in England.

A major concern for economic evaluations that use data from observational studies on the outcomes of health-

Three young researchers in the Department of Social and Environmental Health Research were awarded prestigious Fellowships this year. (From left): Magdalena Harris was awarded an NIHR Post-Doctoral Fellowship to carry out a prospective longitudinal study addressing patient, provider and system perspectives in relation to hepatitis C virus treatment. Pippa Grenfell was awarded an MRC Pre-Doctoral Fellowship to carry out an investigation of how structural factors affect risk and vulnerability among sex workers in Peru. Antonio Gasparrini was awarded a Methodological Research Fellowship with the MRC. His research project focuses on meta-analytical techniques for complex associations.



emphasis on those minority groups most affected. In the last decade the team has pioneered community-based sexual health survey methods, using innovative collaborations and techniques. Sigma Research was one of the first teams globally to recruit and administer anonymous surveys online, an approach they recently extended to gay men in 38 countries across Europe. They are currently piloting the use of Skype in face-to-face interviews, and have recently completed a qualitative study using African peer interviewers.

The Department's Centre for Research on Drugs and Health Behaviour continues its research focus on the broader social determinants of adverse health outcomes of drug use and the need for structural interventions to address them. For example WHO and EC-supported research in multiple European sites has drawn attention to structural factors influencing access to treatments for HIV, hepatitis C and heroin addiction. Research in Russia funded by WHO is focusing on difficulties of access to HIV treatment among people who inject drugs and the consequences for treatment of delay, and work has begun on an NIHR-funded study assessing the contribution of pragmatic efforts to address concerns relating to injecting drug use, such as vein care and drug withdrawal, to longer-term risk reduction of hepatitis C infection.

Researchers in the Department have begun a three-year programme of research funded by ESRC, DFID and

HTA, adopting a comparative perspective in studying the experiences of growing up with HIV amongst young people in Uganda, UK and Zimbabwe. The research focus is on young people's increasing responsibility for their treatment and care, disclosure of HIV status to peers, and expectations and experiences of sexual behaviour – a challenging area of research given the levels of stigma, secrecy and emotional sensitivity involved.

Work continues on the third National Study of Sexual Attitudes and

Lifestyles (Natsal 3), a national probability survey of 15,000 people aged 16-74 and resident in Britain carried out by a collaboration of scientists from UCL, LSHTM, NatCen and the HPA, with fieldwork to be completed by the end of 2012. Other sexual health projects under way include a study of the clustering of risk behaviours – drug and alcohol use and unsafe sex – in collaboration with the Institute for Child Health at UCL, and a pilot study (Carmen) led by St George's Hospital Medical School examining the feasibility of a peer-mentoring scheme aimed at reducing risk behaviours among girls in care. A particularly taxing study, given the difficulty of recruiting a general population sample of men who have sex with men, was one commissioned by the Department of Health to assess the possible impact of a revision of the existing lifetime ban on blood donation by such men. Its findings were used by the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs to draft a recommendation to UK Health Ministers.

The work of the Department's History Centre also raises issues round sensitivity. Historians who work on contemporary history are dealing with issues which are still sensitive and live. The specific technique of oral history, used within contemporary history, needs to be carefully handled. In addition areas such as drug policy, a particular interest of the group, have their own sensitivity, adding another dimension to research and writing on the contemporary history of health.