

Renal Arts Group Quarterly Report October – December 2020

Meetings and Members

The Renal Arts Group continues to meet monthly via Zoom, which has provided the opportunity to reach many more members across the UK and Ireland. We have recently welcomed several new members to the group who have experience of kidney disease and a strong interest in the arts. Louise Illingworth is a transplant patient with a passion for drama and is currently undertaking a performing arts degree, Amy Parkes is a young kidney patient with a love of art and Jack Bartley is a Peer Supporter for the Young Adults Kidney Group, a partnership with Kidney Care UK.

Research



Economic
and Social
Research Council

The advisory group for the ESRC Impact Acceleration funded study '*Development of guidance for sustained implementation of a volunteer led arts programme within regional haemodialysis units*' continue to meet monthly to develop the guidelines for the project. We have scheduled a workshop to further refine the guidelines for **Tuesday 26th January from 10am to 12noon** and are in the process of recruiting participants to attend. If you are interested in attending the workshop please contact anna.wilson@qub.ac.uk. The project has been granted an extension until end of April 2021, and the research team have applied to the QUB Engaged Research for funding to develop an infographic and animation with research communication agency Science Animated that will summarise the guidelines in an accessible and engaging manner.

Dr Helen Noble and a team of researchers including several members of RAG are applying to Kidney Care UK to support the project *A pre and post, mixed-methods study of the Compassionate Mindful Resilience (CMR) programme for individuals with Kidney Disease*. This study aims to adapt the Compassionate Mindful Resilience (CMR) programme developed by Mindfulness UK, and to explore its effectiveness for patients who have kidney disease.



NIHR

Dr Claire Carswell and Dr Helen Noble are developing an application for the National Institute for Health Research to conduct a cluster randomised control trial to evaluate the impact of an arts-based intervention, developed as part of Claire's PhD work, on the mental wellbeing of patients receiving haemodialysis.

Dr Claire Carswell has recently had her article *A mixed-methods feasibility study of an arts-based intervention for patients receiving maintenance haemodialysis* published in the BMC Nephrology Journal. This article details the results of her PhD work that highlighted a number of potential benefits that the arts may have for patients receiving haemodialysis, including improved self-esteem, increased social interaction and a sense of purpose. You can read Claire's article [here](#).



William Johnston recently had a 'Patients Perspective' article published in the Journal of Kidney Care, discussing the challenges for the renal arts movement during the Covid pandemic. His article, *COVID-19 and the UK lockdown: new challenges for the renal arts movement in Northern Ireland*, discussed the development of the RAG website, our online arts activity programme and 'The Starman' script development project. You can read William's article [here](#).

Projects

The ESRC *Create and Connect* online arts project launched in October, with the first video tutorials providing an [introduction to printmaking with Ruth Osborne](#). In November the second tutorial, an [introduction to drawing with Claire Carswell](#), went live along with successful drawing workshop led by Claire on 2nd



December. [Ian Walsh's introduction to blues guitar tutorial](#) came online in December. We have received very positive feedback to this project so far, and all tutorials are available on our own website, as well as on Kidney Care UK's website and the Kidney Beam platform. Our final two arts activities, song-writing with Daniel O'Rourke and creative writing with Shannon Yee, will be available in the New Year.



Our Arts Council of Northern Ireland funded project to develop William Johnston's script for *'The Starman, The Superhero and The Wizards'* is now in the final stage of the writing process, and the first readthrough of the full script was held on 23rd November. Shannon Yee has engaged a cast of talented actors to play the roles, and their performance of the script really brought the words

to life. William will continue to work with Shannon and use the feedback from this session to make any changes necessary. An innovative online performance of the script will be produced under the directorship of Richard Lavery from Accidental Theatre Company, which can be shared with the renal community.

The second of our *'Everyone Has A Story to Tell'* scriptwriting workshops with Shannon Yee was held on 10th October, with the final session for participants taking place in March next year.



Earlier this year the group received funding from Kidney Care UK to develop marketing materials to promote our work at conferences, workshops and festivals. We worked closely with Kaizen Design to create these business cards, A5 flyers and 2 pop up stands and we hope these colourful designs will help us to stand out at events. The designs feature our rainbow kidney logo, which is based on the painting created by group member Paul Sibley.

Dr Helen Noble, Anna Wilson and William Johnston were recently asked to present the *ESRC Create and Connect* project at a webinar for the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action, to discuss how QUB researchers and voluntary organisations are working together to tackle the impact of the Covid pandemic. The team presented the rationale behind the initiative, how the project builds on the research carried out within the group and how moving arts activities online have allowed us to reach more patients who are shielding due to the pandemic.



The group were also asked to present their work at the Northern Ireland Kidney Patient Association Annual General Meeting on 11th October. Anna Wilson led a presentation outlining how RAG was formed, research carried out by the group, our current projects and how patients can get involved with the group. The AGM was a great opportunity to connect with members of the renal community and encourage more patients and carers to engage with the arts.

Acknowledgements

The financial support from the Northern Ireland Kidney Research Fund in supporting our Administrator role has been integral to the ongoing development of the group. We are also grateful to NIKPA and Kidney Care UK for their continued support and assistance.