

Renal Arts Group Quarterly Report January – March 2020

Meetings and Members

RAG continues to meet on a monthly basis, with the first of our bi-annual evening meetings held in February. Later meetings allow members who usually work during the day the opportunity to attend and meet some of the other members. In light of the current COVID-19 situation, the group will be holding their monthly meetings via Zoom.

In the Media

Mr Ian Walsh, Clinical Academic and Surgeon, was interviewed for Northern Visions' documentary series 'Behind the Science' to discuss his research exploring the role that arts can have on our healthcare and treatment. You can watch the full interview here: <https://vimeo.com/383045543>



We received fantastic coverage of our ESRC Festival of Social Science event 'The Art of Health and Wellbeing' in the recent issue of Kidney Matters, the quarterly magazine produced by Kidney Care UK. This coverage brings the work of the Renal Arts Group to a much wider audience throughout the UK and will hopefully inspire other kidney patients, clinicians and academics to explore the arts.

Research

In January Claire Carswell travelled to the United States to attend the University of Florida Centre for Arts in Medicine, made possible by her Marcia Mackie Travel Scholarship Award. During the visit she was able to shadow artists in residence who worked with paediatric patients receiving haemodialysis, assist in arts workshops, attend the artist rounds and additionally helped facilitate the Arts in Health Research Intensive.



In March Claire attended the launch of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust's Arts and Wellbeing strategy at the Seamus Heaney Homeplace in Bellaghy and presented the work she conducted with dialysis patients in the renal unit. Claire is currently writing up her thesis with an aim to submit in May of this year.

Claire also applied for and has been awarded a slot at the upcoming TedXQueens event in June to present her research on the experience of providing an arts-based intervention to patients during haemodialysis treatment.

Claire has also had her article 'Complex arts-based interventions for patients receiving haemodialysis: A realist review', published in the current edition of the Arts and Health journal. You can find the article here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17533015.2020.1744173?journalCode=rahe20>



The ESRC Impact Acceleration project to draft guidelines for a volunteer-led arts programme within renal units began in February of this year, with an initial meeting held between Dr Helen

Noble, Claire Carswell, along with Hugh Nelson and Nikki Sturgeon from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust Renal Unit. The meeting outlined the aim of the project and gave an overview of the feasibility study, and existing volunteer frameworks within the Trust were identified. Several members of the Renal Arts Group have expressed an interest in becoming involved in the project. The next meeting will take place via Zoom in order to maintain the momentum of the project while physical meetings are not possible. It will not take place until the COVID-19 emergency has started to resolve.

Projects in Development

The Arts Council NI funded project to develop William Johnston's script for 'The Starman, The Superheroes and The Wizards' began in January, with script development sessions between William and his mentor Shannon Yee. William and Anna Wilson also had the fantastic opportunity to attend Shannon's immersive audio experience 'Reassembled: Slightly Askew' at the Clinical Skills Education Centre at QUB, which allows audiences to experience Shannon's journey of acquired brain injury and subsequent rehabilitation. The group are also holding a series of three scriptwriting workshops for twelve participants led by Shannon, in the Level 11 Seminar Room of the Belfast City Hospital. The first workshop was fully booked, with a range of participants including group members, renal patients and clinicians but is on hold until after the COVID-19 pandemic.

William and Shannon will continue their script development sessions via Skype meetings.

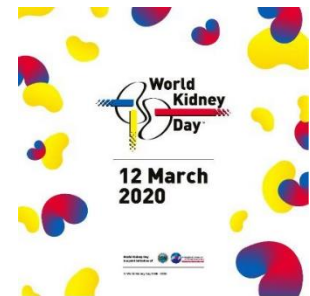


Events



RAG's resident band RAGBONE have been practising together after their brilliant performance for our ESRC event, and were due to perform in The Sunflower Bar on Saturday 18th April along with an exhibition of art by Claire Carswell. Unfortunately, due to the current crisis the gig has been cancelled, but will be rescheduled as soon as it is possible to do so. The band have also recorded a E.P. which they will be working on remotely to finalise the production, and will release a track online.

RAG had planned to take part in World Kidney Day on Thursday 12th March with exhibitions of art created by patients on dialysis during Claire Carswell's PhD study at both the Belfast City Hospital and the Antrim Renal Unit, along with representatives from the Northern Ireland Kidney Patients Association and the Northern Ireland Kidney Research Fund. Unfortunately, these events were cancelled however we hope to exhibit this art for World Kidney Day next year.



Funding



The group have successfully applied to Kidney Care UK for a grant of £500 to fund marketing materials including pop up stands, flyers, display boards along with design work. These materials will allow the group to have a greater presence when attending events, along with informative literature that can be distributed within renal units.

The group applied to the Northern Ireland Kidney Patients Association for annual support of £2000 per year and are delighted to hear that we have been awarded this funding. This support will give the group the resources to take part in a wider range of events throughout the year, as well as the ability to programme creative events for kidney patients and their families.



Acknowledgements

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