

Renal Arts Group Quarterly Report July – September 2020

Meetings and Members

The group continues to meet monthly via Zoom, which has enabled greater participation from members living outside the Belfast area. We are delighted to welcome Daniel O'Rourke, Paloma Tendero and Ann McGrath to the group as new members. Daniel is from Northern Ireland but is currently living and working in Bristol as a social worker. He has received 2 kidney transplants and credits his passion for music as being hugely beneficial during his renal journey. Paloma is a visual artist from Spain living in the UK, who creates work in photography and sculpture in response to her diagnosis of PKD. Ann is a pre-dialysis patient, former renal nurse and member of the Kidney Care Patient Advisory Group from Omagh.

Research



**Economic
and Social
Research Council**

The ESRC Impact Acceleration funded study *'Development of guidance for sustained implementation of a volunteer led arts programme within regional haemodialysis units'*

is moving forward following a series of productive meetings with staff from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. Due to restrictions imposed by the pandemic, the project will now reflect the need for virtual volunteers in the unit who will support patients following a series of online drawing tutorials created by Arts Care artist-in-residence Helen Sloan.

Helen Noble and Anna Wilson have been awarded £9,991 from the ESRC Rapid Response to programme a series of online art activities for renal patients and their families, to support their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic. This project will build on the success of the online scriptwriting workshop held as part of *'The Starman'* project, and will offer a wider range of arts activities, including drawing with Claire Carswell, music with Ian Walsh, photography with Shaun Greene, creative writing with Shannon Yee and printmaking with Ruth Osborne. The activities will be delivered online, either as live sessions or video tutorials that will be hosted within our website. We will also collaborate with Kidney Care UK and the new



online platform Kidney Beam on this project, who will host the tutorials on their respective platforms and promote widely throughout their networks.

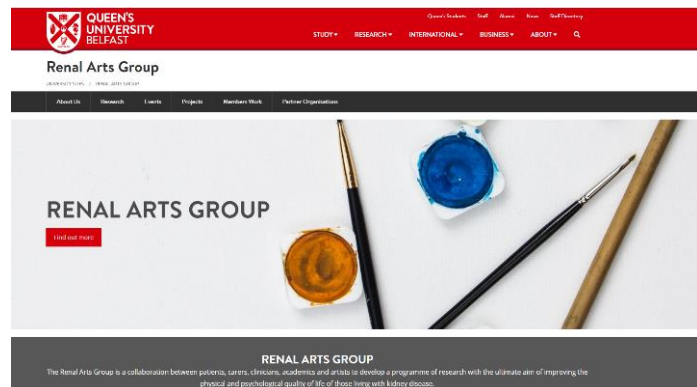


In September Claire Carswell was a finalist in the Vitae Three Minute Thesis competition, an internationally recognised competition for doctoral candidates to present a compelling summary of their thesis in just three minutes. Claire was one of six finalists who made it through the online quarter and semi-final stages to present her thesis *'Using the arts to transform the experience of haemodialysis'* to a national audience. We would like to congratulate Claire on this tremendous

achievement and are delighted to have the opportunity to raise awareness of kidney disease and the use of arts to promote wellbeing.

Projects

After a busy few months, the group launched the new [RAG website](#) on 10th August. The website, designed by Anna Wilson, features information about the group, our projects, partner organisations and research such as the PhD studentship recently completed by Claire Carswell, which saw the successful development and implementation of an arts-based intervention for patients during their haemodialysis treatment. The website also brings together work created by our members, including poetry written by William Johnston, visual art by Paul Sibley and Claire Carswell, and music by RagBone and Daniel O'Rourke. The website also features an engaging and accessible animation created by scientific communication agency Science Animated which explores how the arts can benefit patients living with end-stage kidney disease. We hope that the website will help to promote the benefits of the arts for patients living with ESKD and encourage greater collaboration between the research, arts, and renal communities.





William Johnston continues to develop his script for *'The Starman, The Superheroes and The Wizards'* under the mentorship of Shannon Yee. The script has now evolved to take place across 3 acts, and includes the perspectives of a transplant recipient, a donor family and a transplant surgeon as well as poetry written by William during his dialysis sessions. Due to the ongoing pandemic the play will be performed in March via Zoom with professional actors, which can then be shared online with the

renal and organ donation communities. We hope to be able to stage a performance of the play for a live audience at a later date.

The second of our *'Everyone Has A Story To Tell'* workshops series, led by Shannon Yee, will take place on Saturday 10th October from 1 – 4pm via Zoom.

Helen Noble, Claire Carswell and Anna Wilson were invited to present the work of RAG to the Kidney Care UK Patient and Advocacy Officers in an online presentation in July. Anna provided an overview of the group including past events and upcoming projects, Claire gave a summary of her PhD thesis outlining the development and



implementation of arts interventions for dialysis patients, and Helen discussed the potential benefits of mindfulness for renal patients. The presentation was very well received and the KCUK Advocacy Officers were keen to explore the potential for the arts for renal units within their own regions.

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.