Welcome to the 40th Anniversary edition of HERU's Newsletter

Celebrating 40 Years of Health Economics at the University of Aberdeen by highlighting some of our achievements over this period. Health economics was initiated at the University of Aberdeen in 1974, with the first formally funded health economics project in Scotland. This project, the vision of Roy Weir, brought together Roy, Elizabeth Russell and Gavin Mooney and laid the foundations for the establishment of the Health Economics Research Unit (HERU) in 1977. HERU was the first Unit in the UK, and in Europe, to focus research on health economics.

The core funding for the unit was from the Chief Scientist Office (CSO) of the Scottish Home and Health Department (now the Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorate). This continues to be a main source of funding for HERU almost 40 years later, together with core support from the University of Aberdeen.

The success of HERU would not have been possible without the many researchers who have worked in HERU over the past 40 years, as well as our many collaborators. I would like to thank each and every one of you for your contributions to HERU over the past 40 years. I hope you enjoy our trip down memory lane.

Professor Mandy Ryan
Director, HERU

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Celebrating 40 Years of Health Economics at the University of Aberdeen
A Tribute to Professor Gavin Mooney

On October 21st 2014 the Health Economics Research Unit (HERU) hosts an event to celebrate 40 years of Health Economics at the University of Aberdeen. This event will also celebrate Professor Gavin Mooney’s contribution to health economics.

Gavin Mooney was an External Adviser to HERU from 1999 – 2000...
1989

John Cairns joins HERU from the Economics Department

We are pleased to announce the appointment of John Cairns to the position of Senior Research Fellow at HERU. John joins us from the Economics Department at the University of Aberdeen...

1991

HERU launches their 3-day Workshop

In September 2013 HERU moved from two Programmes to three. The new Theme structure reflects the research areas in which HERU have established a reputation for research excellence and where we can make the most effective contribution to the delivery of improved health services.

2001

HERU funds work on the development of Free Personal Care in Scotland

Dr Sally Stearns’ work on the potential demand for personal care and the likely substitution effects that might arise following the introduction of free care has informed the implementation of personal care for older people in Scotland. Professor Paul McNamara has since assessed the impact of free personal care on health economics to health service staff.

2012

Towards improved policies on public sector pay

Researchers at the University of Aberdeen’s Health Economic Research Unit have developed a theoretical model of the causes of local pay variations in the competitiveness of pay in the public sector. This research has changed the way funding is distributed to Primary Care Trusts in England and Wales; the adjustment for excess costs in resource allocation for health services in Scotland, and regional pay for doctors in the UK.

2013

HERU’s Remit

1. Research economic approaches to health and health care at standards of international excellence.
2. Make available to the health service a body of expertise in health economics.
3. Develop and apply economic techniques to improve health care and population health in Scotland.
4. Build and sustain capacity in the economics of health.

2014

Student Internship Launched in HERU

This year we introduced a new way of developing research capacity in health economics. HERU is offering three summer internships to economics students who are interested in learning how health economics research is done and how it can be applied to health policy.

In 2014 we offered this for the sixth year running...

25th Anniversary Conference

On April 1st 2002 HERU was 25 years old. To celebrate a quarter century of promoting excellence in health economics the Unit hosted a conference entitled

What can health economics do for the NHS in Scotland?

Following a message from the Principal, the Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care, Hugh Henry, attended a day showing the valuable contribution of health economics to health care decision making in attendance to open the first session was the Scottish Government’s Chief Scientist, Professor Roland Jung.

Resurrecting Programme Budgeting and Marginal Analysis (PBMA) in HERU’s Correspondence Course

The results of a review of our Correspondence Course in Health Economics indicate that students want more information on the Programme and Marginal Analysis (PBMA) approach to managing scarce resources at a local level. Our course now reflects this, with our joint work with Greater Glasgow, Grampian, Highland and Tayside Health Boards highlighted. 20 years later PBMA is used in over 150 health organisations worldwide.

EU funding

Having produced the first ever attempt to use willingness to pay (WTP) to establish relative priorities across health programmes, Cam Donaldson, with Jan Abel Olsen, has been awarded European Commission funding to develop the method of valuing willingness to pay for assessment of community preferences for health care. The ‘EuroWill’ project will interview 2000 people across 6 European countries.

2004

HERU work informs Smokefree Legislation

Anne Ludbrook leads research on the economic case for smokefree public places and modelling of the cost and benefits for Scotland which informed the decision to introduce legislation – leading the way in the UK.

2005

A Successful Review...

The Chief Scientist Office completed their quadrennial Review of HERU. The Review was conducted in two stages. At the first stage, in November 2004, the Chief Scientist Committee evaluated the strategic case for continued funding of health economics. In May 2005, the second stage was undertaken when a panel of leading health economists, health service researchers, and senior NHS Scotland personnel met under the chairmanship of the Chief Scientist to conduct the Scientific Review of the Unit’s research. The Review agreed a further period of funding for HERU.

2009

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2015

 Munros

Professor Bob Elliott and Professor Christine Drummond have just completed a study of the economic case for smokefree public places which will inform the Scottish Government’s decision to introduce legislation – leading the way in the UK.

2016

New MSc Economics of Health Care

HERU together with the Department of Economics launched a new MSc in the Economics of Health at the University of Aberdeen, commencing in the 2012/13 academic year.

This MSc programme is aimed at students who wish to pursue a career as a professional Health Economist or who wish to undertake a PhD. Health economics is typically applied in multidisciplinary settings. This is reflected within the course providing students with health economics skills alongside generic economic and health service research skills.

This new is an integral part of our capacity building strategy and is the only MSc in Health Economics within Scotland. With this course we hope to relieve some of the shortage of Health Economists across academia, NHS and government.

For further information please contact Marjon van der Pal at m.vanderpal@abdn.ac.uk