**PROJECT DETAILS**

**Project Title**

Can a combined midwifery and chiropractic intervention clinic enhance student education and improve breastfeeding rates?

**Project Summary**

Suboptimal breastfeeding is a recognised problem amongst mothers and healthcare professionals worldwide [1]. According to UK statistics in 2010, 81% of mothers initiated breastfeeding, and yet exclusive breastfeeding rates plummeted to 46% at one week, 23% at six weeks and 1% at six months [2]. Statistics at one year represent the lowest breastfeeding rates globally [1]. Extensive evidence demonstrates how important breastfeeding is for all women and children. Even in high-income countries, it prevents infant morbidity from respiratory and inner ear infections, diarrhoea, reduces infant mortality from necrotising enterocolitis and sudden infant death syndrome and reduces incidence of maternal morbidity and mortality from breast cancer, diabetes and ovarian cancer [1].

Breastfeeding also increases the educational potential of children which could result in higher incomes as adults [1]. High quality evidence has consistently proposed significant economic savings with breastfeeding [3] [4] suggesting that supporting women to continue breastfeeding to four months could result in the NHS saving £11 million annually [4]. The latest evidence estimates the total savings from increased breastfeeding to be billions rather than millions [5].

With most mothers wanting to breastfeed for longer, it is often distressing when they encounter problems and then give up, which in turn increases their risk of postnatal depression [6] [7]. The Lancet series highlighted the need for investment in interventions that are tailored to respond to patterns of suboptimal breastfeeding within individual locations, delivered at a scale to benefit all mothers and children, with monitoring of feeding patterns to evaluate outcomes [5].

The Anglo-European College of Chiropractic (AECC) has an established self-referral clinic to treat newborn infants with biomechanical related difficulties affecting feeding but was unable to offer practical breastfeeding support for the mother. BU has an established record in the art and science of breastfeeding support having gained UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation for the midwifery programme and having conducted pioneering research in breastfeeding [8] [9]. A collaborating student-led infant feeding clinic was set up offering a holistic approach to support to improve breastfeeding outcomes and to provide an enhanced environment for interprofessional learning for students.

**Aim:** to evaluate the working and outcomes of the joint BU-AECC breastfeeding clinic in terms of perceptions of effectiveness among service users (women and their partners), practitioners and students.

**Method:** Mixed methods study comprising face-to-face interviews with service-users and practitioners/students as well as a questionnaire study of all service users over a six–eight month period.

**Outcome:** The outcome are three-fold: views and perceptions of staff and students of the intervention; views and perceptions of service users of the intervention and their perceptions of effectiveness of the intervention e.g. perceived ease of breastfeeding; prevalence of breastfeeding pre-intervention and at six-weeks and six months. These outcome data will act as pilot data and enable us to apply for a larger funded grant.

**References:**

4) Renfrew MJ. et al.
PhD Project Description


Academic Impact

The project is part of a programme of work between the Anglo European Chiropractic College (AECC) and Bournemouth University that builds research expertise in the clinical area. Several papers have already been published highlighting the work of this unique clinic (see publication list) and earlier this year seed-corn funding was secured to analyse pre-collected data regarding the effectiveness of the clinic in terms of women continuing to breastfeed and their experiences. The project team have already reported back to FHSS and have an article written for submission to Journal of Clinical Case Reports. FHSS has a growing reputation regarding the innovative practice of healthcare students leading clinics (Marsh et al. 2014), which will support the research aim related to the learning environment, views and perceptions of the student.

The PhD student will benefit from existing multiprofessional research and education collaborations between AECC and BU, particularly in midwifery, chiropractic and physiotherapy where BU has another PhD student studying pain, perception and function in patients with chronic low back pain. AECC has an international reputation attracting 50% of their students from outside of the UK. AECC has a strategic vision to be a global leader in chiropractic and allied health care and this collaboration will support this vision, alongside the vision of BU to create a stimulating, world class learning community. Outcome data will act as pilot data and enable us to apply for a larger funded grant.

We anticipate a minimum of three academic papers for submission to leading midwifery journals, e.g. BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth (IF 2.83); obstetric journals, e.g. British Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology (IF 3.760) and Chiropractic journals e.g. Journal of Manipulative & Physiological Therapeutics (IF 1.647). The project will build on and enhance BU’s reputation for multi-professional, collaborative research.

Societal Impact

The newborn infant feeding clinic was developed in response to a clinical need and is a priority government area in terms of impact in improving public health outcomes. This project, as well as addressing national concerns, evaluating the effectiveness of the clinic will add to the international body of knowledge. The impact of suboptimal breastfeeding significantly increases maternal and infant morbidity and is an international issue being explored by research in high, middle and low-income countries (Lancet Series 2016). The clinic has already received a successful CEL bid to raise its awareness to the public by putting on a conference, Supporting breastfeeding: It takes a whole community (BU Research Blog 29.7.14).

Societal impact will be seen in terms of improved outcomes for women and babies: 1) reduction in infant diseases associated with suboptimal breastfeeding, 2) reduced admission to hospital and GP consultation resulting in substantial cost savings to the NHS 3) reduction in the incidence of maternal morbidity such as breast cancer and postnatal depression and, 4) increase maternal satisfaction and wellbeing of women.

Training Opportunities

The training programme, directed by the primary applicant Professor van Teijlingen and co-supervisors Dr Taylor and Dr Way, will have the following objectives:

Formal training in: 1) Qualitative interviewing provided through BU’s Centre for Qualitative Research (CQR). CQR is internationally recognised in the field of qualitative health and social care research; 2) Evaluation methods will be provided through Bournemouth University Clinical Research Unit (BUCRU). This unit provides training and support for researchers in improving the quality, quantity and efficiency of research across BU and local NHS Trusts. In addition, Professor van Teijlingen has substantial experience and expertise in conducting interviews and programme evaluation.
**Transferable skills**

1. Networking, communication and change management – developed through the process of establishing an advisory group and working to draw up a strategy in response to study findings. Guidance and support from PhD supervisors will ensure that the student is able to develop in these areas.

2. Communication and presentation. The student will develop these skills through seminars and conference presentations, and in preparing and submitting peer reviewed publications.

**SUPERVISORY TEAM**

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<th>First Supervisor</th>
<th>Professor Edwin van Teijlingen</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Supervisors</strong></td>
<td>Dr Susan Way</td>
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<td>Dr Alison Taylor</td>
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<td>Dr Joyce Miller (AECC)</td>
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**Recent publications by supervisors relevant to this project**


**INFORMAL ENQUIRIES**

To discuss this opportunity further, please contact Professor Edwin van Teijlingen via email: evteijlingen@bournemouth.ac.uk

**ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

All candidates must satisfy the University’s minimum doctoral entry criteria for studentships of an honours degree at Upper Second Class (2:1) and/or an appropriate Masters degree. An IELTS (Academic) score of 6.5 minimum (or equivalent) is essential for candidates for whom English is not their first language.
### Additional Eligibility

Due to the nature of the research taking place within a specific clinical environment the applicant should have a good understanding of UK midwifery and/or chiropractic practice. A UK registered midwife or chiropractic would be desirable.

### HOW TO APPLY

Please complete the online application form by **15 December 2016**. Interviews will take place w/c 19 December 2016. Further information on the application process can be found at: [www.bournemouth.ac.uk/studentships](http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/studentships)