Welcome to the first of a series of newsletters from the Health Economics and Decision Science section at the University of Sheffield. We are aiming to communicate with many people - colleagues and collaborators, clients and research funding bodies, potential and previous students. Everyone we know will be added to our mailing list, and if you’ve received the newsletter second-hand you can contact us to join the list by sending your details to: heds.newsletter@sheffield.ac.uk

The HEDS section brings together a range of disciplines with a single focus: making better decisions concerning health and healthcare.

Our aim, in terms of research, is to undertake excellent health economics and decision science research, publishable in high quality journals, that makes a difference in the world. If you think that we could work together to further that endeavour, then we would like to hear from you.

With changes in healthcare organisational structures, service delivery, health technologies and markets happening throughout the world, the need for research, consultancy, teaching and training in our area has never been greater.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter. Please do get in touch if you wish to work with us on these issues.

Alan Brennan

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**HEDS VACANCIES**

**Chair/Readership in Health Economics**

**Ref:** R3976 - **Closing Date:** 19.12.06

The School of Health and Related Research (ScHARR) wishes to fill a Chair/Readership post in the Section of Health Economics and Decision Science (HEDS). Applications would be welcomed from leading researchers in any areas of health economics, which are either part of or complementary to the key areas of HEDS research, including measurement of health and well-being, equity and economic evaluation.

HEDS is an internationally leading group of over 40 researchers in the field of health economics located in a dynamic school which reflects the full range of academic disciplines involved in health services research . . .

For full details please visit: [www.shef.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.shef.ac.uk/jobs)

Informal enquiries to:

Professor John Brazier
j.e.brazier@sheffield.ac.uk
+ 44 (0)114 222 0726 or

Professor Jennifer Roberts
j.r.roberts@sheffield.ac.uk
+ 44 (0)114 222 3403

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**STOP PRESS!**

*Measuring and Valuing Health Benefits for Economic Evaluation*

John Brazier, Julie Ratcliffe, Aki Tsuchiya and Joshua Salomon

**Price:** £27.50 (Paperback)


Estimated publication date: January 2007

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**HEDS NEWSLETTER Winter 2006 Vol 1.1**
SCHARR TECHNOLOGY APPRAISAL GROUP

ScHARR-TAG is a group within HEDS which undertakes reviews of the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of healthcare interventions for the NHS R&D Health Technology Assessment Programme on behalf of a range of policy makers, including the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). It has been involved in the development of the new NICE Single Technology Appraisal (STA) process and has recently completed two STAs: docetaxel for the adjuvant treatment of early node-positive breast cancer, and trastuzumab for the treatment of primary breast cancer in HER2 positive women.

ScHARR-TAG also continues to work on NICE Multiple Technology Appraisals. Current topics include ezetimibe for the treatment of hypercholesterolaemia, and thrombophilia testing in patient populations at high risk of thrombotic events. Recently completed appraisals have included hormonal therapies for early breast cancer, and bevacizumab and cetuximab as advanced therapy in colorectal cancer.

ScHARR-TAG is also currently involved in work for the National Coordinating Centre for Health Technology Assessment (NCCHTA) on topics which include: Long-term effects of bisphosphonates - a feasibility study; Predicting prognosis for prostate cancer; Aspirin in the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease; Docetaxel and paclitaxel for adjuvant treatment of early breast cancer.

More information can be found at the ScHARR-TAG website: http://www.shef.ac.uk/scharr/sections/heds/collaborations/scharr-tag

HEDS WORKING WITH MEDICARE

The Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act (MMA), introduced on 1 January 2006, brought some of the most substantial changes to the Medicare program since its inception in 1965. One of these changes was to mandate the Medicare Replacement Drug Demonstration (MRDD). As part of this demonstration project, researchers in HEDS have been working with the US Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services to provide cost effectiveness analyses in the areas of rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis - the only two studies within the Demonstration Program to be commissioned outside the USA.

Dr Allan Wailoo and Alan Brennan have led a study assessing the cost-effectiveness of biological drugs (etanercept, adalimumab and anakinra), compared to the previously covered infliximab, for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. The cost-effectiveness model looks at both single uses of these drugs and sequences of biologics, using evidence from the US National Databank for Rheumatic Diseases as well as synthesis of RCT data. Collaborators are Nick Bansback (University of British Columbia), Dr Richard Nixon (MRC Biostatistics unit, Cambridge), Dr Fred Wolfe and Kaleb Michaud (National Databank for Rheumatic Diseases).

Professor Chris McCabe and Paul Tappenden have led a project building on previous work on the cost-effectiveness of interferon beta and glatiramer acetate for the management of multiple sclerosis. This involves a detailed assessment of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of disease-modifying therapies compared to best supportive care in the Medicare MS population. The study has unique access to the Sonya Slifka dataset on health care resource use in the Medicare MS population, as well as unpublished evidence on the relationship between disability and health-related quality of life from a study undertaken by the Multiple Sclerosis Research Unit at the University of Dalhousie, Canada.

Both reports are nearing the end of an extensive peer review process and will be available shortly.

RECENT GRANTS

John Brazier and Aki Tsuchiya have just won a £150,000 grant from the prestigious MRC Methodology and Implementation Programme for a 2-year project to develop a preference-based method for mapping between (preference-based) measures of health and quality of life (such as EQ-5D, HUI3, SF-6D, etc.) to facilitate the synthesis of evidence on cost effectiveness. Specific objectives are:

• To examine the feasibility of using ranking as a task for eliciting preferences over health states defined by different instruments
• To estimate values from the rank data for 15 health states defined by each instrument
• To estimate mapping functions between the values for the 15 health states generated from the rank data and their value using the instruments’ current scoring procedure.

A collaborative project between John Brazier and Julie Ratcliffe of HEDS and Dr Madeleine King and colleagues at the Centre for Health Economics Research and Evaluation (CHERE), University of Technology Sydney, Australia, has won funding of A$433,750 from the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia. The project, entitled ‘Application of discrete choice experiments to value multi-attribute health states for use in economic evaluation’, will develop discrete choice experiment (DCE) methods to model and measure utility weights for two generic measures of health status, the EQ-5D and the SF-6D. Theoretical and statistical comparisons of DCEs with the main existing approaches to utility measurement, time trade-off and standard gamble in terms of modelling methods, parameter estimates and performance of the preference elicitation task will be conducted. The project will also generate a set of “Australian population specific” utility weights for the EQ-5D and the SF-6D.

Hazel Pilgrim, Simon Eggington and Richard Hadwin have won a grant of £8,800 from the NHS Cancer Screening Programme to amend the colposcopy capacity model in order to make it available for use by any colposcopy clinic in England.
HEDS PUBLICATIONS AND TEACHING

DISCUSSION PAPERS

HEDS publishes a series of discussion papers intended to promote discussion and provide information about work in progress. The most recent papers are:

- 06/10 Tappenden P, Brazier J, Ratcliffe J. Does the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence take account of factors such as uncertainty and equity as well as incremental cost-effectiveness in commissioning health care services? A binary choice experiment.
- 06/05 Brazier J. Modelling covariates for the SF-6D standard gamble health state preference data using a nonparametric Bayesian method.
- 06/04 Kharrouchi SA, Brazier JE, Roberts J, O’Hagan A. Modelling SF-6D health state preference data using a nonparametric Bayesian method.

These, and earlier discussion papers, can be downloaded from: http://www.shef.ac.uk/scharr/sections/heds/discussion.html

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

A searchable database of all publications by members of HEDS will shortly be available. In the meantime, here are some recent publications by members of HEDS:

- Surgery versus primary endocrine therapy for operable primary breast cancer in elderly women (70 years plus). Hind D, Wyld L, Beverley CB, Reed MW. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews CD004272.
- Comparison of valuation methods used to generate the EQ5D and the SF6D value sets in the UK. Tsuchiya A, Brazier J, Roberts J. Journal of Health Economics 2006;25(2):334-46.

POSTGRADUATE STUDIES IN HEDS

HEDS is one of the UK’s foremost establishments for research into health care resource allocation decisions. The department has an international reputation through applied and theoretical research. HEDS employs about 50 multidisciplinary staff and attracts in excess of £1 million per year in external research grants.

We offer expert teaching and supervision in a wide range of areas. Whether your goal is an MSc, MPhil or a PhD, HEDS offers the expertise and teaching that is right for you. We welcome applicants from the UK and overseas. We offer Master’s degrees in Health Economics and Management, Economics & Health Economics (jointly with the department of Economics), and Medical and Health Sciences.

We also offer supervision leading to an MPhil degree or a PhD degree. This is offered in a wide range of areas of health services research, health economics and decision science, both theoretical and applied. Full-time or part-time study is possible. The PhD programme extends over a minimum of three years full-time and the MPhil over two years. Candidates for either degree are normally registered initially for the MPhil, and may then if they wish transfer to PhD after one year (with backdating of registration) subject to satisfactory progress.

Informal enquiries about any aspect of the department’s PhD/MPhil programme are welcome at any time and should be directed to:

Admissions for PhD and MPhil

Dr Richard Edlin,
PhD Admissions Tutor
Health Economics and Decision Science
email: redlin@shef.ac.uk

MRC STUDENTSHIPS FOR THE MSC ECONOMICS & HEALTH ECONOMICS

The MSc Economics & Health Economics, taught jointly by the Department of Economics and the School of Health and Related Research (ScHARR), is a one-year Master’s level degree in health economics, aimed at those who wish to pursue careers as applied economists in the health sector and at those who wish to continue with academic research.

The Medical Research Council (MRC) under the Advanced Course Masters programme has funded two full-time studentships to study on this degree course every year for the next three years. The MSc Economics & Health Economics at the University of Sheffield is the only postgraduate course with “health economics” in the title that currently receives the MRC Advanced Course Masters studentships. It also has formal postgraduate training recognition from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Candidates must have a strong background in undergraduate level economics.

Further details of the degree are available at:
http://www.shef.ac.uk/economics/masters/health_economics

Details of the full range of Master’s programmes available in ScHARR may be found at:
http://www.shef.ac.uk/scharr/prospective_pg/masters
Feedback
HEDS would appreciate your feedback, so if you have any comments, advice or requests regarding this newsletter, or indeed any future editions, please email: heds.newsletter@shef.ac.uk
We look forward to hearing from you.

NEW ADDITIONS TO HEDS

Alejandra Duenas

Alejandra graduated with a PhD in Automatic Control and Systems Engineering from the University of Sheffield in 2003. She then worked as a Senior Research Assistant at Coventry University, joining HEDS in August 2006. Her main activity is modelling in healthcare. She is currently working on an evaluation of ezetimibe for the treatment of hypercholesterolaemia and on modelling the cost effectiveness of Vildagliptin for the treatment of Type 2 diabetes.

Silvia Hummel

Silvia has recently returned to ScHARR after a few years working in Canada. She has also worked at the York Health Economics Consortium and has led technology assessments for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, as well as industry funded projects. Her interests are modelling in healthcare, in particular the economic evaluation of cancer treatments.

Cristina Molina Hall

Cristina joined the department as PA to Professor John Brazier in May 2006. Originally from Rome, Italy, she moved to Sheffield 4 years ago. Cristina provides secretarial support to the MRC-HSRC Sheffield based unit as well as providing dedicated PA support to John Brazier, Professor of Health Economics.

Donna Rowen

Donna is working with John Brazier, Aki Tsuchiya and Monica Hernandez of the Economics department on their MRC-funded project on developing a preference-based method for mapping between (preference-based) measures of health and quality of life. Donna is also working on other projects, including estimating experienced utility and comparing different preference-based measures of health and quality of life.

Robert Williams

Rob has joined ScHARR on a placement year from Wolverhampton University where he has just completed the second year of a BSc Mathematical Business Analysis degree.

John Stevens

John has assumed the position of Deputy Director of the Centre for Bayesian Statistics in Health Economics (CHEBS). More information to follow in the Spring issue.

AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Professor Jenny Roberts has been appointed Deputy Director of Research for the Social Science Faculty.

Jill Carlton has won a Department of Health Researcher Development Award (RDA) to develop a paediatric disease-specific measure of health-related quality of life (HRQoL) in amblyopia. The project, which will form Jill’s PhD, will run for 3 years from December 2006. It will be undertaken in collaboration with the Ophthalmology Department at Sheffield Hallamshire Hospital and Sheffield Children’s Hospital, and will link with other work being undertaken by Katherine Stevens in HEDS on paediatric health-related quality of life.

HEDS CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND POSTERS

ISOQOL
11-14 October 2006 - Lisbon, Portugal
John Brazier, Clara Mukuria, Yaling Yang and Yu-Hung Chang presented papers at the above ISOQOL conference.

Society for Medical Decision Making
14-18 October 2006 - Cambridge, USA
Alan Brennan, Jason Madan and Matt Stevenson attended the SMDM conference, at which Alan and Matt presented posters.

Qualitative Research and Systematic Reviews Workshop
20-21 October - Oxford, UK
Myfanwy Lloyd Jones presented a paper at the above workshop.

Cochrane Collaboration Colloquium
23-26 October - Dublin, Ireland
Danny Hind, Roy Jones and Paul Sutcliffe attended the Cochrane Collaboration Colloquium in Dublin, at which Danny presented a poster.

All the posters, abstracts and presentations mentioned above are available for download in pdf format by visiting: http://www.shef.ac.uk/scharr/sections/heds/news.html

British Thoracic Society winter meeting
6-8 December - London, UK
Yemi Oluboyede will attend the BTS winter meeting where she will make a presentation in the form of a poster and a 2-minute oral presentation followed by 5 minutes of questions.

http://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/page 291.html