Health Humanities Medal 2018

Showcasing the arts and humanities as a route towards better health

Tuesday 11 September
The Health Humanities Medal highlights the distinctive value of arts and humanities research in helping to improve the health and wellbeing of the population. It also helps to promote and showcase just what we can achieve when we work across the borders between subject areas.

Through their collaborations with colleagues in medicine and various other disciplines, groups and organisations, the researchers shortlisted for the award have shown the value of these synergies in so many ways. Sometimes they’ve shown how medical or scientific literacy supplies insights in core areas of research in the humanities. Sometimes it’s been the reverse, proving the value of the arts and humanities to healthcare and beyond – perhaps especially where conditions have a cultural “cause” requiring a cultural solution. Or where knowledge of social, religious and historical context can help deal with sensitive issues in hard-to-reach communities.

Arts and humanities researchers have also shown how they can help other professionals understand the real life complexity of experiencing an illness, and contribute to a deeper understanding of its causes.

Tonight we celebrate their pioneering spirit and the strength of purpose that comes from fruitful collaboration – let’s use their success as a springboard to seize the opportunities ahead.

Andrew

@ahrcpress#HealthHumanitiesMedal
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PROGRAMME

4.00pm  Guests arrive
4.30pm  Welcome speech by Justin Tomlinson MP
4.35pm  Opening remarks by Professor Andrew Thompson, Chief Executive, AHRC
4.40pm  The Awards
         - Best Doctoral or Early Career Research
         - Best Research
         - Inspiration Award
         - Best International Research
         - Leadership Award
         - Health Humanities Medal winner
5.00pm  Closing speech by Sir Mark Walport, Chief Executive, UK Research and Innovation
5.10pm  High tea is served
A SHADOW NHS

The arts and humanities are “the public’s greatest route towards health and wellbeing”, says the world’s first Professor of Health Humanities.

Professor Paul Crawford from Nottingham University is known as the ‘founding father’ of this rapidly developing, global discipline, and currently leads various Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded research projects applying the arts and humanities to inform and transform healthcare, health and wellbeing.

“Initially I set up research groups to study the language that is used in healthcare and went on to examine how mental illness is represented in fiction,” he says. “But I soon wanted to incorporate the rich, creative work across the arts and humanities more broadly; I decided that I wanted to set up a new field to focus research within this area.

“I felt that up until this point, medical humanities work was rather limited to medical perspectives on the arts and humanities, and more geared towards training doctors and sometimes nurses than anything else. It was focused on the history of medicine, the philosophy of medicine, anatomical drawing etc. It seemed like a closed shop for a particular or specific professional population.”

Instead, Professor Crawford felt research should be more focused on the needs of the general public and their sense of what does them good.

“We began to develop a more inclusive and applied approach,” he says. “And, with the help of the AHRC, who immediately recognised the value of this, we forged ahead!”

Among other projects, the AHRC funded the International Health Humanities Network which has influenced the rapid growth of research units and courses in health humanities worldwide.
Not everything for health and wellbeing comes from professionals, from dedicated therapists,” says Professor Crawford. “Members of the general public can make themselves and others better through many different creative actions and activities. The health humanities are a shadow NHS. They are the public’s greatest route towards health and wellbeing. They are not there to replace healthcare but to give everyone a better shot at a happier life. We see now a much more democratised recognition that the arts and humanities are as important as blood tests, injections or pills for our wellbeing. You don’t need a prescription to go to an arts or drumming group or join a choir and yet this can bring huge benefits.”

But no patient is an island, and Professor Crawford’s research has also demonstrated people with health problems, family carers and health, social care and education professionals can improve health and wellbeing together through creative activities – using creative practice as mutual recovery.

Through the International Health Humanities Network there is now a substantial body of work looking at how communities can recover through collective artistic practice.

“We all depend on many resources,” says Professor Crawford. “We need medical resources, of course. But not everything in our society that brings us health and wellbeing needs to be directed by medics. Not everything needs a medical model or a medical explanation. Whether you are a doctor, a nurse, an occupational therapist, a patient, a friend or family carer – the arts and humanities are available to you. For example, if you have low to moderate depression, reading groups can help. This is just one of many examples.”

But while it might be tempting for some to dismiss “empowering patients” as part of a cost-cutting exercise within a struggling NHS, Professor Crawford is quick to dismiss this argument.

“This isn’t about saying ‘we’ve got less resources, so you need to sort yourselves out and leave the medics alone,’” he says. “It’s about saying that there are wonderful resources – resources beyond what medical professionals can provide – and you don’t need ‘official’ permission to access them. We need to get off the hook that medical, scientific knowledge is the only game in town.”

“What would happen to public wellbeing overnight if people couldn’t read, share stories or tell jokes? Or if they couldn’t watch films, enjoy theatre, dance, visit museums and galleries? Or sing, play, listen or dance to music? Or engage with the many other crafts, creative sports and activities going on across the land? I can’t imagine that world. Without the arts and humanities – aka health humanities – we would be in a really, really bad place.”
It’s vital that we nurture awards like this and recognise the excellent work in the arts and humanities making a difference to health and wellbeing, says one of the judges, Dr Catherine Stones, Associate Professor in Graphic Design at the University of Leeds.

It was a privilege to take part in the judging process and to be able to reflect on so many diverse and exciting projects. The commitment shown by researchers and practitioners to improve the health of others through the arts and humanities was very impressive, and at times quite humbling to learn about. It was particularly exciting to see the large number of projects directly engaging with specific international communities in much need of health improvement.

The research articulated in these nominations was of excellent quality with some astonishing achievements evident for early career researchers in particular. The Leadership category also shone out for me. These nominations clearly highlighted how some amazing individuals have shaped the discipline of medical and health humanities and continue to inspire the next generation of researchers and practitioners.

We had many nominations of excellent quality for each category to examine, discuss and evaluate. The shortlisting process was exhausting but intellectually stimulating as we weighed up the strengths and weaknesses of each nomination (over 80 in total) against the criteria. It’s vital that we nurture awards like this to continually recognise the excellent work in the arts and humanities that really makes a difference to health and wellbeing.
Dr Brian Lobel, Reader in Theatre at the University of Chichester and Health Humanities Medal 2018 judge, was astounded by the remarkable collection of research projects which demonstrates some incredible work, that is becoming more and more vital every day.

Being on a shortlisting committee is both an honour and a heartbreaking chore, particularly on an award like this which honours a field in which researchers across the UK are engaged and excelling at in so many different ways. Above all, our group of assessors were overwhelmed by the broad range of communities actively involved in research, and the range of innovative methodologies used to answer or explore questions that are urgent, challenging, and impactful.

Against a backdrop of a challenging environment in the NHS and a devaluation of the individuals whose lives are impacted by illness, disability and other health needs, it is more urgent than ever for our Universities and researchers to advocate for the dignity and care of all people in both the UK and abroad. We must also ensure that our research is another articulation of how the UK is, and can be, a place where care for all communities, and their various needs, is paramount.
The Nominees

Each of the following have been shortlisted for the Arts & Humanities Research Council and Wellcome Trust’s Health Humanities Medal 2018.

This new national award has been created to celebrate the contribution of the arts and humanities to improving healthcare, health and wellbeing.

The shortlisted projects represent the rich, creative work now being done in this area across the UK.

Best Doctoral or Early Career Research nominations

Music and psychoneuroimmunology

**Dr Daisy Fancourt, University College London**

Throughout her PhD Daisy explored the impact of music on the endocrine and immune systems and her first paper in *Brain, Behaviour and Immunity* was the first systematic review in this area.

She has used her research to demonstrate that some previous theories on music and biology were incorrect. She has used her discovery to create a new model of music and biological response which has been cited over 75 times. Daisy has explored how music affects stress hormones and cytokines in the immune system, and her research includes community interventions such as a two year drumming programme showing how drumming can reduce anxiety, depression and inflammation.

The cultural politics and history of madness and mental health

**Dr Anna Harpin, University of Warwick**

Anna’s work has focused on cultural politics and history of madness and mental health; specifically the intersections between arts and healthcare and what clinical lessons might be gleaned from artistic practices.

Throughout her career she has sought a better understanding of how artists have intervened in our cultural attitudes and responses to non-normative psychological experiences. Her work has been committed to using arts as a means to develop and promote vital new theories and practices of care.
The impact of age-related disease on medieval writers

*Dr Deborah Thorpe, Trinity College Dublin/University of York*

Deborah has been involved in interdisciplinary health humanities research since 2014 when she was awarded a 'Discipline hopping internship' by the Centre for Chronic Diseases and Disorders (C2D2).

This enabled her to pursue novel research looking at the impact of age-related diseases and disorders on the experiences of medieval writers, and build on research conducted for her PhD looking into the handwriting and writing careers of medieval scholars.

Further funding allowed her to expand her interdisciplinary work, collaborating with an electronic engineer, a medieval palaeographer and a consultant neurologist.

Historically-driven enquiry into the medical humanities

*Dr James Stark, University of Leeds*

James’ interdisciplinary work has brought together academics from a wide range of institutions and backgrounds, and he has a particular interest in connecting historical research with present-day challenges, including antimicrobial resistance and ageing. His Wellcome Seed Award *Pasts, Presents and Futures of Medical Regeneration* led on to an AHRC Leadership Fellow award that enabled him to develop the first academic history of rejuvenation in the 20th century and supervise a postdoctoral Engagement Fellow dedicated to the programme.

The history of health and medicine and its interactions with the criminal justice system

*Dr Rachel Bennett, University of Warwick*

Rachel has established an enviable publishing record in the history of health and medicine and its interactions with the criminal justice system. Within three years of completing her PhD she had published an open access book, *Harnessing the Power of the Criminal Corpse*, and wrote two chapters for interdisciplinary edited volumes.

She has established her scholarship in this new area of medical humanities research, recently focusing on prisoners, medical care and entitlement to health in Britain and Ireland 1850-2000, thanks to a Wellcome Investigator Award.
Museums on Prescription: Exploring the role and value of cultural heritage in social prescribing

Professor Helen Chatterjee, University College London

Museums on Prescription was a three-year AHRC research project exploring the value of museum-based social prescribing programmes for lonely older adults at risk of social isolation. Vulnerable and at risk adults were identified and referred by social and psychological services, and local third sector and community organisations.

Quantitative analysis of the project found significant improvements in psychological wellbeing that were sustained beyond the end of the programme. Qualitative analysis revealed a sense of belonging, improved quality of life, renewed interest in learning, increased creativity and social activity, and continued visits to museums.

Using design-led research to address the global challenge of antimicrobial resistance

Professor Alastair S Macdonald, Glasgow School of Art

Alastair’s research focuses on the interface between design, health and care practice, and people’s experiences of products and services, using an evidence-based participative co-design approach to develop new interventions. This design-led approach creates the space and means for those who don’t usually have much of a voice in healthcare matters to input their essential insights and experience into the research and development process.

He has worked collaboratively with colleagues from other disciplines and a range of health workers. The principles and methods embodied in this approach have led to a proof-of-concept tablet-based IPC training tool for health professionals.

Life of Breath

Professor Jane Macnaughton, Durham University and Professor Havi Carel, University of Bristol

Life of Breath (LoB) explores breathlessness from a health humanities perspective.

The project takes a critically engaged approach to breathlessness, seeking to interact with those affected in their own communities rather than in clinical spaces, to reveal the authentic stories of these ‘invisible’ lives.

LoB is an interdisciplinary collaboration of scholars and practitioners across clinical medicine, physiotherapy, neuroscience, philosophy, anthropology, history, literary and cultural studies, and the visual and performing arts.
Essex Autonomy Project

Professor Wayne Martin, University of Essex

The Essex Autonomy Project is funded by grants from the AHRC and Wellcome, and focuses on the ideal of self-determination (autonomy) in social-care and mental-healthcare settings.

Among Martin’s most important research contributions have been a series of collaborative interdisciplinary clinical studies of decision-making in the context of serious mental disorder.

These studies make use of a ground-breaking research technique (“second-person phenomenology”) developed by Martin in collaboration with psychiatrist Gareth Owen, marrying approaches from philosophical phenomenology with techniques of the psychiatric interview in order to shed new light on the experience of decision-making among persons with serious mental illness.

Hearing the Voice

Professor Charles Fernyhough and Dr Angela Woods, Durham University

Hearing the Voice (HtV) is a large interdisciplinary research project that is changing the way people understand the experience of hearing voices. The project sustains an international network of researchers (from fields as diverse as medieval literary studies and cognitive neuroscience), mental health professionals, activists and people with lived experience.

The project examines voice-hearing from a range of different perspectives and has produced the world’s first major exhibition on hearing voices, three short films exploring lived experience of psychosis, a radio play, anthologies of poetry and short fiction.
Inspiration Award nominations

**Life of Breath**
*Professor Havi Carel, University of Bristol and Professor Jane Macnaughton, Durham University*

Also nominated for the ‘Best Research’ category, the Life of Breath (LoB) project is jointly directed by Jane Macnaughton, Professor of Medical Humanities at Durham University and Professor Havi Carel, a Philosopher at the University of Bristol and is funded by a Senior Investigator Award from Wellcome.

Currently in its fourth year of five, the project’s outcomes will include contributing to the sparse literature on the cultural story of breath and breathlessness; and to offer new approaches to management. In essence, this project will help make breathlessness more visible and better understood.

**Healthy Conservatoires**
*Professor Aaron Williamon, Royal College of Music*

Musicians have long called for better prevention, treatment and support for playing-related physical and psychological disorders. Yet, tangible change is not seen by those on the ground.

This situation led to a successful £1 million AHRC bid for Musical Impact, a project investigating the physical and mental demands of making music with the aim of enhancing musicians’ health and wellbeing and enabling them to build sustainable careers.

The project was the first-ever research collaboration among CUK institutions and brings together stakeholders from across the wider performing arts community to assist in supporting health promotion and occupational wellbeing.

**Stories2Connect**
*Dr Candice Satchwell, University of Central Lancashire*

Stories2Connect is a participatory community-led project funded by the AHRC. A multi-disciplinary research team worked with a core group of 13 ‘young researchers’ associated with Barnardo’s, who had disabilities and/or experience of the care system.

The research team used narrative and arts-based methods to collect and create stories with disabled/disadvantaged young people, resulting in around 100 transcribed interviews, many peer-to-peer, which were then turned into various multimedia outputs. 48 authentic yet uplifting stories have been produced as books and audio-videos, which also provide resources for professionals and practitioners who work with children and young people.
TR14ers dance group

David Aynsley, TR14ers Community Dance Charity

TR14ers is a peer-led dance group that demonstrates how creativity and engagement can create the conditions for health and wellbeing for young people.

The underpinning research which supported the development of TR14ers was carried out by a transdisciplinary group of academics from the University of Exeter.

Based in an economically disadvantaged town in England, where anti-social behaviour was rife, the police set up free dance workshops for children in Camborne.

The workshops have been attributed to a 90% reduction in truancy, a 50% increase in educational attainment and a significant decrease in anti-social behaviour.

Hearing Aids for Music

Dr Alinka Greasley, University of Leeds and Dr Harriet Crook, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

By 2031 20% of the UK population will have a hearing loss. It is estimated that the socio-economic costs of this could be as much as £30.13 billion per year.

Hearing Aids for Music is the first project of its kind to look at music and hearing aid use across England.

The aim has been to keep hearing aid users at its heart and improve access to music through research that has practical and immediate day-to-day application for hearing aid users and audiologists.
Best International Research nominations

Rwandan Stories of Change

Professor Nicki Hitchcott, University of St Andrews

Working in partnership since 2015 with the Genocide Archive of Rwanda and the Aegis Trust, the AHRC-funded Rwandan Stories of Change project has been analysing the ways in which individual Rwandans have reconstructed their identities in positive ways, demonstrating what is known as “post-traumatic growth”.

In a selection of testimonies from survivors and perpetrators stored in the Genocide Archive of Rwanda, this project investigates the ways in which individual Rwandan people have adjusted and reconstructed their identity in the years since the genocide. By identifying indicators of positive psychological change in individuals’ stories, the project shows how Rwandan people become agents of their own wellbeing.

Distress, resilience and wellbeing

Dr Ross White, University of Liverpool

Ross is an Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Liverpool who has worked for a decade in often challenging international contexts exploring the effects of trauma in relation to post-conflict situations, genocide and gender-related violence.

Research has been conducted in Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Uganda. Ross has current research collaborations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, investigating the efficacy of psychosocial interventions for reducing distress experienced by refugee populations. Collaborators have reported that Ross’s linguistically and culturally sensitive focus on distress, resilience and wellbeing has brought a qualitative change to those being treated, not least in terms of self-confidence and self-regard.

Understanding the cultural contexts of migration, mental health and wellbeing

Dr Felicity Thomas, University of Exeter

Felicity’s research uses insights from the humanities and arts to develop new, applied and policy-relevant understandings of the cultural contexts of health and wellbeing.

Felicity’s work includes the development of a toolkit on intercultural competence and diversity sensitivity which is now the focus of a session at the annual WHO Summer School on Migration (held in Italy) for healthcare practitioners, civil society groups and health-related policy makers. She is also developing work to strengthen understandings of the cultural contexts of mental health and mental health care in Central and Eastern Europe.
Duty of Care: The Medical Rights and Wellbeing of Palestinian Prisoners

Professor Caroline Rooney, University of Kent

Through her play production, The Keepers of Infinite Space (Park Theatre, 2014), based on interviews with young Palestinian former prisoners, Caroline was invited by William Parry to co-direct a film on the healthcare of Palestinian prisoners. This collaboration resulted in Breaking the Generations: Palestinian Prisoners and Medical Rights, an original advocacy documentary that grew out of over 80 hours of filmed footage of interviews with former Palestinian prisoners and their families and with leading NGO experts and Palestinian doctors.

The importance of the film form is that it is able to communicate, in a vivid and humanising manner, inadequately reported crises around healthcare to international audiences for remedial intervention.
Leadership Award nominations

Professor Helen Chatterjee
*University College London*

In 2008 Helen was awarded the first ever research grant to investigate the impact of a museum intervention on psychosocial health. This research established a new field of interdisciplinary research focused on museums and health, and received a Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) Award for Research Excellence.

Helen’s key strength is developing partnerships with national, regional and local museums, third sector, health and social care organisations, alongside the use of mixed (quantitative and qualitative) methods, including co-produced research.

In 2015, Helen secured funding from Arts Council England to establish the National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing. She is an advisor to the APPG for Arts and Health and was awarded an MBE for Services to Higher Education and Culture.

Professor Mark Jackson
*University of Exeter*

Mark has worked in the medical humanities for over three decades and his exceptional leadership encompasses: world-leading research; outstanding supervision and academic mentoring; dynamic leadership of the Centre for Medical History at Exeter since 2003; creative public engagement; and national and international impacts on healthcare practice and policy. Mark chairs the WHO Europe External Advisory Group on the Cultural Contexts of Health and is a member of the European Advisory Committee on Health Research.

In 2017, he led a successful bid to establish a Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments of Health at Exeter, funded by a £4.1 million grant from the Trust matched by £3 million from the University.

Professor Julian Savulescu
*University of Oxford*

The Uehiro Professor in Practical Ethics at the University of Oxford since 2002, Julian has established a world-leading ethics programme at Oxford and has brought over £23 million in donations and grants.

With more than 400 publications, an h-index of 58 and over 12,500 citations, and over 1000 TV, radio and print appearances to his credit, Julian has initiated new areas of academic debate and new methodologies in medical humanities, and built a culture of engagement at Oxford.
Professor Hilary Marland  
*University of Warwick*

Hilary is Professor of History at the University of Warwick and founding Director of its Centre for the History of Medicine (CHM), which over the last two decades has evolved into one of the flagships for the discipline in Britain and internationally, with a particularly large early career community.

Over the last 20 years, she has generated substantial research income for the CHM and her own research projects, totalling around £3.5 million. She has supported the careers of a new generation of scholars and she has developed innovative approaches to public engagement entailing collaborations with a range of arts, policy and cultural organisations, with impact on diverse and sometimes hard to reach audiences.

Professor Alan Bleakley  
*University of Plymouth*

Alan has been active in the fields of medical and health humanities for over 20 years, during which time he has developed a national and international reputation as a leader and innovator in the field. Among his achievements he has set up networks for arts in health, culminating in the appointment of a funded ‘Arts for Health Co-ordinator’ position at the Royal Cornwall Hospital, Truro, and been an Advisory Board member for BMJ ‘Medical Humanities’. Alan was instrumental in setting up an innovative medical humanities core curriculum at Peninsula Medical School (Universities of Exeter and Plymouth) and has been invited to several medical schools to help with curriculum innovation.
WHO WE ARE

The Arts & Humanities Research Council
The Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funds world-class, independent researchers in a wide range of subjects: archaeology, area studies, the creative and performing arts, design, digital content, heritage, history, languages, philosophy and much more. This financial year we will spend approximately £98 million on research and postgraduate training in collaboration with a number of partners. The quality and range of research supported by this investment of public funds not only provides economic, social and cultural benefits to the UK, but contributes to the culture and welfare of societies around the globe.

The AHRC is part of UK Research and Innovation, a new body that works in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities, and government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish. Operating across the whole of the UK with a combined budget of more than £6 billion, UK Research and Innovation brings together the seven Research Councils, Innovate UK and a new organisation, Research England.

Wellcome Trust
Wellcome exists to improve health for everyone by helping great ideas to thrive. We’re a global charitable foundation, both politically and financially independent. We support scientists and researchers, take on big problems, fuel imaginations, and spark debate.

Our funding supports over 14,000 people in more than 70 countries. In the next five years, we aim to spend up to £5 billion helping thousands of curious, passionate people all over the world explore ideas in science, population health, medical innovation, the humanities and social sciences and public engagement.
The Venue

The Thames Pavilion is an intimate event venue at the House of Commons sited out on the Commons’ Terrace. Situated on the lower ground floor, this newly renovated marquee boasts light wooden flooring, neutral decor and access out onto the Terrace.

We are delighted to be able to hold the first ever Health Humanities Medal at such a fantastic venue, and would like to thank Justin Tomlinson MP for sponsoring this evening’s parliamentary reception.