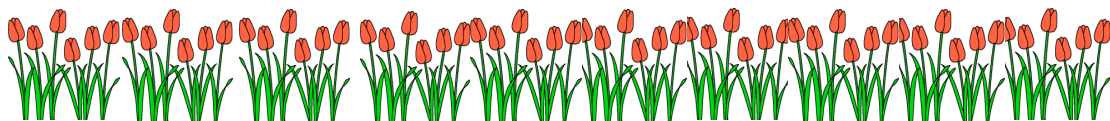


Issue Seven

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Tackling Ageing Continence Through Theory, Tools And Technology

The Great British Public Toilet Map

By: Gail Knight

The Great British Public Toilet Map will be a public participation project to improve information about the UK's public toilets. This idea is one of the main outcomes of the Challenging Environmental Barriers work package.



An illustration of the proposed website. This idea was the runner-up in the recent OpenUp awards organised by The Stationery Office (TSO).

Where are the toilets?

Public toilet provision is incredibly fragmented. Over 300 councils provide toilets, as well as parks, stations, shopping centres etc.

A complete map will require the participation of all of these local councils. They need to provide reliable up-to-date data that includes the toilet's location, facilities, access restrictions and opening hours. This is useful information for most people, but essential for those with continence concerns, to improve their quality of life.

Our map will show where this data exists and where it does not. Where it does exist, people can use the map to find out information on nearby toilets. Where it does not, the website will help the public to write to the council to ask them to participate in the project.

Currently the only way to find out about local facilities is through each council's website (and the quality varies a lot!) The Toilet Map's data, once available, will be free for anyone to reuse to incorporate into local area maps, web sites and smart-phone applications, or could be combined with other datasets to provide more useful services.

Australia have already achieved such a project (though it was driven by the government, not the public!). You can see their map at <http://www.toiletmap.gov.au>.

The Smart Underwear is Now Being Tested

The preliminary testing of the smart underwear has been completed. Results show that most participants found the product discreet, comfortable and easy to wash.

Some of the participant comments include: *“Very comfortable, easy to launder”*; *“Very useful, was able to change most of the time. It’s a brilliant invention.”*; *“Gave me more confidence, felt ‘in control’ knew that ‘wet patches’ would not happen. Overall felt happier”*.

No major problems were found during the preliminary testing. Some changes were made to the design of the main study and the colour of the sensor was changed from grey to white to make it more aesthetically pleasing.



Cheryle Gartley (Left Photo) the President of The Simon Foundation was also happy with the design and features of the smart underwear. The Simon Foundation, one of the partners of the TACT3 Project is a non-profit organisation based in the USA. It is an educational organisation dedicated to providing assistance and support to those suffering from urinary incontinence and their families. In addition, the Foundation promotes public awareness, reviews relevant legislation, and encourages the medical profession's interest in continence issues.

For the main study, Bristol Urological Institute will recruit 71 participants to evaluate the smart underwear for function and for the effect the use of the underwear has on quality of life and wellbeing.

For those who would like to test the underwear and be part of this cutting-edge research, you may contact Maryann.Slack@nbt.nhs.uk or phone: 0117 323 5188

Improving Continence Across Continents



Dr Cara Tannenbaum developed workshops in Canada which have shown that finding out more about the bladder, how it works and what can be done when there are problems, can help women improve their health. The aim of this project is to show that women in the UK can also benefit from these workshops.

So far, 260 women have attended workshops hosted by different women's organisations across the UK (Stornoway, London, Surrey, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, West Yorkshire, Devon and Cornwall). To help reach our target of 1000 women, Astellas, a pharmaceutical company, have provided extra funding for a researcher from the Bristol Urological Institute, North Bristol NHS Trust, to assist Rona Agnew in recruiting more women and delivering workshops throughout the UK.

If your organisation would like to know more information about the project and would like to host a health promotion workshop for women over 60s, **please contact Rona Agnew at 07 725 176 201 email: womenshealth@brunel.ac.uk**

The Improving Continence across Continents project is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) in partnership with the UK's New Dynamics of Ageing (NDA) Programme funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Conferences Attended

Eleanor van den Heuvel and Felicity Jowitt attended the Innovating for Continence: The Engineering Challenge, 2011 in April held in Chicago, Illinois, USA. They reported the progress of the assistive devices-smart underwear and odour detector through poster and oral presentations.



Adele Long presented a poster regarding the progress of the smart underwear during the UK Continence Society 18th Annual Scientific Meeting 2011 held in Bristol in April. There was quite a lot of interest from delegates and they were keen to see a product for men and children.

Examining Patients' Experiences with Continence Care Services

Sheffield **NHS**
Primary Care Trust



One of the aims of the improving continence interventions and services work package is to examine the views and experiences of continence care service users (including patients and carers). So far, 47 participants from Barnsley Hospital and Sheffield Primary Care Trust have been recruited into the study.

It is envisaged that based on the findings of the project, new guidelines for clinical continence care for older people who uses the services will be produced. New health promotion guidelines in overcoming barriers when seeking appropriate medical help and support will also be produced.

Desperate need for public loos (originally printed in The Independent on 12 February 2011)

The loss of public lavatories inconveniences everyone, but for some it will have wider harmful consequences. People with ageing bladders, or whose medication requires them to use the lavatory more frequently, will stop leaving the house, potentially leading to isolation and depression.

People with disabilities and chronic health conditions will purposely self-dehydrate. Parents with young children will desert the city and town centres in favour of out-of-town shopping centres. People who have survived bladder and bowel cancer will find managing their condition when away from home harder, and many people will have their movements effectively curtailed by lack of public toilets.

Schemes whereby the council pays shops and services to allow non-customers to use their toilets are innovative, but not a suitable replacement. Not all women feel comfortable entering pubs alone, and for others, whose faith prohibits alcohol, pubs are not an option. Tourist spots and parks require more traditional toilet facilities, and a reliable infrastructure is required for non-office based workers, such as taxi, van and lorry drivers.

The closure of public conveniences may seem like a financial saving but there are wider, potentially harmful, effects: increased expenditure on continence management failing bladders and bowels is likely, as is increased demand for mental-health and home-care services to combat the stigma of incontinence and the depression of not being able to leave the house.

Public toilets are an integral part of our society. We need to be improving provision, not taking it away.

By: Jo-Anne Bichard and Gail Knight

If you would like to receive further copies of the tact³news and/or future ones please let us know. Also comments on the content and design of the tact³news would be welcome.

Final Advisory Committee Meeting

On the 10th of May 2011, the TACT3 Project held its Final Advisory Committee Meeting. It was hosted by the Age UK London and was chaired by Professor Alan Cottenden. TACT3 project collaborators presented the outcomes and progress of their work packages.

The TACT3 Project would like to thank our partners: Gillian Kemp of the IBS Network, Phil Wormald of Age Concern Barnsley, Margit Physant of Age UK, Helen Carter of Centre for Accessible Environments and Mr Harbhajan Singh of the NDA Older People's Reference Group.



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TACT³ gratefully acknowledge our Partners

Age UK • Age Concern Barnsley • The Centre for Accessible Environments • Devices for Dignity
Technology Sourcing • The British Toilet Association • The IBS Network • The National Trust •
The Simon Foundation • The Relatives and Residents Association

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tact³news | Issue 7

