

Issue Six Winter 2010/2011

Tackling Ageing Continence Through Theory, Tools And Technology



*The TACT3 Team
wishes everyone a
happy and healthy
2011!*

Continence Matters

The Brunel Institute for Ageing Studies (BIAS) in conjunction with KT-Equal has held a highly successful event bringing together over 70 participants including researchers, NHS practitioners, care professionals and members of the Brunel Older Peoples' Reference Group (BORG). The workshop, held on the 13th December 2010 at Brunel University, looked at some of the latest continence research in the UK.

The day included talks and discussions led by researchers in the field of continence and ageing. The issues covered during the workshop included: Impact of Urinary Incontinence; Toilet Provision for an Older Population; Urological Treatments; Continence Technology and Skin Health; Nutrition and Incontinence; Progress on the TACT3 Project; Faecal Incontinence; and Detection of Urinary Tract Infections.

One of the participants said it is really interesting to find out about leading edge technology in the area so rarely discussed". One member of the BORG mentioned that "the information given may well be of use to my wife or myself one day". And another participant commented that "it really was an interesting workshop with a good balance of all the aspects of incontinence well presented."

Some of the presentations during the event are available at:
<http://kt-equal.org.uk/calendar/57/6-Continence-Matters>

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.



Canadian-Linked Project's Successful Launch

Our women's health promotions project "Improving Continence across Continents" was successfully launched when Dr Cara Tannenbaum who developed the workshops in Canada visited the UK in November 2010. We started with a day at Brunel University running through the workshops to make sure they would make sense to a UK audience (Top photo). Then pilot workshops were held in West Drayton (Bottom photo), Doncaster, Glasgow and Manchester.

In Canada, Cara has shown that finding out more about the bladder, how it works and what can be done when there are problems, actually helps improve women's health. The aim of this project is to show that women in the UK can also benefit from these workshops. We don't want women to suffer in silence any longer! We are very pleased to welcome Rona Agnew, who started running the UK project this January. If you would like further information or would like to host a workshop please get in touch with Rona on 07 725 176 201 or email womenshealth@brunel.ac.uk



From traffic lights to toilets, texting is working for local government

By : Gail Knight, Royal College of Art, Helen Hamlyn Centre. Published on the 22nd December 2010, Guardian Local Government Network Blog <http://www.guardian.co.uk/local-government-network/2010/dec/22/local-authorities-texting-services-cuts>

A few years ago I had what might seem like a strange idea. What if you could text a number to find out where the nearest public toilet was? It made sense to me, and luckily it made sense to Westminster city council, who chose it as the winning entry in their ideas competition Westminster Innovate.

It was a pretty logical suggestion. I spent a lot of time wandering around London and inevitably started to build up a mental map of where the public toilets are. However I was always surprised by how few women were using them compared to the usual queues. This didn't seem right since Westminster's toilets are clean (they've been systematically refurbishing them for several years), convenient, and have full-time attendants. But a lot of them are underground, which can make them intimidating and hard to find, and if you're a visitor to the city you won't have the mental map. A text service would provide two things; information on where the facilities are and publicity that Westminster cares about their public toilets. So does it work?

SatLav (of course, we named it that. What did you expect?) launched in 2007. A year later the Department of Communities and Local Government published case studies of both community toilet schemes and SatLav as part a follow on to their strategic guide: Improving public access to better quality toilets.

There's a lot of excitement about councils engaging with their communities through social media, and rightly so, but I get nervous when they talk about moving services to online-only in order to save on printing costs. Our research project, TACT3, is looking at ways to improve public toilets for older people, an age group who are much more difficult to reach online. Increasingly they risk becoming the digitally excluded. Mobile phone use is higher and, for communication when away from home, texting can be a simple and practical halfway house. Here's one idea: how about using it to report broken facilities at public toilets?



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Our Little Ones



We are delighted to welcome the latest additions to the TACT3 project team. Ava (top-right), is the daughter of Dr Jo Worthington, a member of our project team in the Bristol Urological Institute, conducting the clinical testing of the smart underwear and the odour sensor. Oliver (left) is the son of Dr Steve Smith, one of our chemists from the University of the West of England, who are developing the odour sensor. And Lela (bottom-right) is the daughter of Dr Bosco Fernandes, one of the engineers from the University of Manchester working on smart underwear development.

People are being recruited to test vibrating underwear at Bristol hospital

Source: Bristol Evening Post / This is Bristol 3rd September 2010 issue

THERE is a buzz around the latest research project at Southmead Hospital. People with incontinence are being recruited to help test vibrating underwear, which has been developed to trigger a buzzer if their incontinence pads leak. There are also plans for a similar system to send a text message to a mobile phone as part of moves to improve the quality of life for people suffering incontinence. The BioMed Centre at Southmead Hospital has put on trial a range of accessories that could make it easier for people to go out and about without fear of embarrassing problems.



© Bristol Evening Post

People with incontinence can discreetly hold the device close to their lap while in public and if it changes colour they know they need to excuse themselves. The device "smells" urine faster than the human nose and it should help carers know when someone's pad, clothing or bedding needs changing. Researchers at the BioMed Centre need samples of urine so they can test the devices. People who offer samples will receive a £10 Marks & Spencer voucher in return. Incontinence can affect people of all ages as a result of age, medical conditions or injury and sometimes people may feel too embarrassed to leave home for fear of accidents.

Devices like those being tested at Southmead could help people lead more active lives again with the confidence that they will be alerted before a problem occurs. Adele Long, director of the BioMed Centre, said: "People with continence difficulties are most worried about leakage and odour. These fears are often unfounded and can stop people from enjoying a normal social and working life. These devices will help make older people feel more confident in the knowledge that if they have a problem they can do something about it before anyone else notices. We are pleased to be part of this exciting project and we hope that it provides the breakthrough to help people who have difficulties with bladder control lead the life that they want and deserve." People who are interested in finding out more about the trials can email Maryann Slack at maryann.slack@nbt.nhs.uk or call 01 17 323 5188

Meet our New Researchers

Alison Orrell, University of Sheffield
A.Orrell@sheffield.ac.uk



Alison has a PhD in Sport and Exercise Sciences. She has undertaken research in the following areas: implicit motor learning post stroke; physical activity and cardiac rehabilitation; quality of life and building design for older people. Alison joined the TACT3 team at the University of Sheffield on the 1st October 2010 and her interests include running (completed Great Yorkshire run in 2010), hill walking and gardening at her home in Wales.

Rona Agnew, Brunel University
womenshealth@brunel.ac.uk



Rona trained as a Registered General Nurse in Glasgow in 1981. Since then she has had a variety of nursing roles. Rona has a BSc in Health studies and MSc in Gerontology. She has started a PhD in December 2007 exploring nursing practice in relation to patients with urinary incontinence following a stroke. Rona was seconded to the Royal College of Nursing as the Primary Care Advisor for Scotland and involved with the Scottish Government's board for the Review of Nursing in the Community. Rona is the lead researcher conducting Women's Health Promotion workshops in the UK.

Upcoming Event

Use It or Lose It! Exercise, Physical Activity and Older People

Thursday, 24th February 2011

The Brunel Institute for Ageing Studies (BIAS) is holding a study day on the health and social benefits of physical activity and exercise for older people. The day aims to bring together researchers from a range of disciplines, practitioners and professionals, and all those interested in promoting exercise in later life. The event will provide an opportunity to share contemporary knowledge and research focusing on exercise in later life.

Please email Marianne.Keane@brunel.ac.uk by 14th February to secure a place.

The event is free of charge but you must register to attend - book early to avoid disappointment!

Investigators

Eleanor van den Heuvel • Brunel University
Prof Mary Gilhooly • Brunel University
Prof Ian Sutherland • Brunel University
Felicity Jowitt • Brunel University
Prof Kevin McKee • Dalarna Research Institute and Dalarna University, Sweden
Dr Lena Dahlberg • Dalarna Research Institute and Dalarna University, Sweden
Prof Stuart Parker • The University of Sheffield
Prof Patrick Gaydecki • The University of Manchester
Adele Long • BioMed HTC, Bristol Urological Institute
Jo-Anne Bichard • Royal College of Art
Prof Norman Ratcliffe • University of the West of England
Dr Susie Orme, Clinical Consultant • Barnsley Hospital

Canadian Link

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Dr Cara Tannenbaum • University of Montreal
Rona Agnew • Brunel University

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TACT³ gratefully acknowledge our Partners

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

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<http://people.brunel.ac.uk/~tact3/index.php>
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