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British Society of Gerontology

Generations Review

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- Peer review without fear
- Recreation, Falls & Aggression in care homes
- The Ageing of British Gerontology

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EDITORIAL

October 2017

We all know on of the major challengers when we start working in Higher Education is writing. We have an excellent article highlighting issue surrounding peer support when we first start writing as PhD students or post-docs from Valerie D'Astous and colleagues at Kings College, London.

The second article features the balance that we so often get wrong, the need to give care home residents a fun and enjoyable time while also making sure things are safe. The article specifically looks at how activities can impact on falls and aggressive behaviour of people living with dementia. There are some interesting and perhaps surprising results, but they are well discussed and the need to look in depth at this issue is further warranted.

We also examine a project charting the history of our own society, examining archival material, old conference handbooks, past editions of Generations Review and letters and correspondence, along with interviews with people who have been part of the society's history. This will paint a fascinating picture of changes in how gerontology is represented in academia, and indeed policy and practice over the past 46 years.

A final article examines the role of U3A in involvement with research, getting older people involved in taking part but also advising and running research projects.

Happy reading and please do send me your articles!

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Peer review without fear: A PhD and early career post-doctoral writing group

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Abstract

Academic writing skills are integral to successful completion of a PhD and early career post-doctoral academic years. Peer learning may be an effective way to improve writing skills, eliminate writing isolation, and enhance academic identity and transferable proficiencies. This paper describes the establishment and sustainability, strengths and limitations of an academic peer writing group comprising PhD students and early career post-doctorates. Attention is given to specific aspects for consideration of reproducibility. The peer writing group provided individual and scholarly community benefits. Utilising the strengths of peers broadened our writing skill base and developed our personal and professional skills. We gained confidence in presentation skills, and the ability to think critically and defend claims. Peer writing groups within academic departments foster supportive environments to facilitate academic competency and success.

Key words

Writing groups; academic writing; group support; peer learning, academic acculturation

Introduction

Academic writing is an explicit expectation for Ph.D. students. However, it has been identified as a key difficulty and obstacle to the completion of Ph.D. programmes (D'Andrea, 2002). Ph.D. students often experience low levels of writing efficacy and high levels of writing anxiety (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Kamler & Thomson, 2004). Moreover, writing a Ph.D. thesis can be a solitary, isolating experience (Ali, Kohun, & Cohen, 2006; Janta, Lugosi, & Brown, 2012). Establishing a collective relationship and writing organisation within a community of academic peers may be a powerful way to improve writing skills and eliminate writing isolation. A scholarly community (Stubb, Pyhältö, & Lonka, 2011) and peer-to-peer group support (Devenish et al., 2009) can positively affect the postgraduate experience. Additionally, peer relationships forged around the common goal of academic writing may enhance individual post graduate achievement and consolidate departmental cohesion.

The need for, and establishment of, writing groups for academic faculty has received increased attention as ever more the maxim 'publish or perish' sets the expectations of academic careers (Cuthbert & Spark, 2008; McGrail, Rickard, & Jones, 2006; Morss & Murray, 2001). Positive outcomes of writing groups include: increased writing

output and publication rates, collaboration and support, improved writing confidence and leadership, motivation to write and better time-management skills (Galligan et al., 2003). Less attention and fewer publications are focused on writing groups for Ph.D. students, with most emanating from Australian Higher Education Institutions (Cuthbert, Spark, & Burke, 2009; Lee & Kamler, 2008; Maher et al., 2008). Moreover these publications perceive that integral to the Ph.D. student writing group is the involvement of a departmental staff facilitator.

This paper details the development and format of a Ph.D. student and early career post-doctoral peer writing group at King's College London in the Institute of Gerontology, department of Global Health and Social Medicine. Peer support is defined as "a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful" (Mead & MacNeil, 2006 p.30). Mutual empowerment and learning are highlighted through peer support (Boud & Lee, 2005). The growing list of benefits of peer-support at the post-doctorate level includes a greater sense of community, decreased stress, positive informal accountability, successful degree completion and the acquisition of transferable skills beyond the doctorate (Buissink-Smith, Hart, & van der Meer, 2013). Saliently, a

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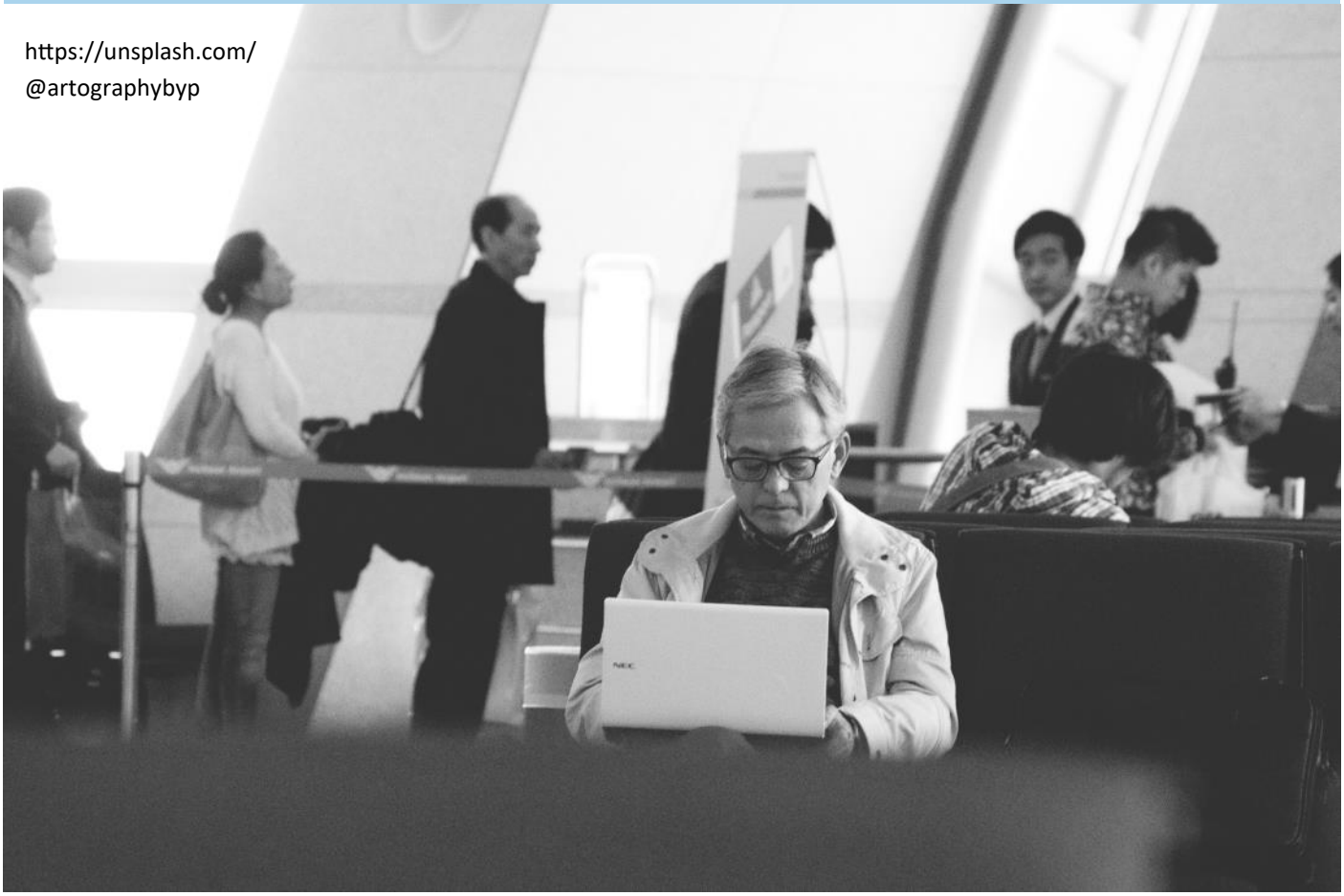
peer support writing group may foster high quality, productive academic writing.

Three distinct features differentiate this writing group from aforementioned works: it is strictly peer initiated and directed without an academic staff facilitator; it comprises Ph.D. students and early career post doctorates only; and for some members English is their second language. The establishment and sustainability, strengths and limitations of the academic peer writing group are described through an objective lens within this paper. Attention is given to specific aspects for consideration of academic peer writing group reproducibility.

Peer writing group development and design

King's College London offers a number of high quality lectures and workshops on improving academic writing for graduate students. However we felt that there was no forum within which Ph.D. students and early career post-doctorates could openly present their research without the authoritative presence of supervisors, and where they could assist and thoroughly engage with one another's academic writing on



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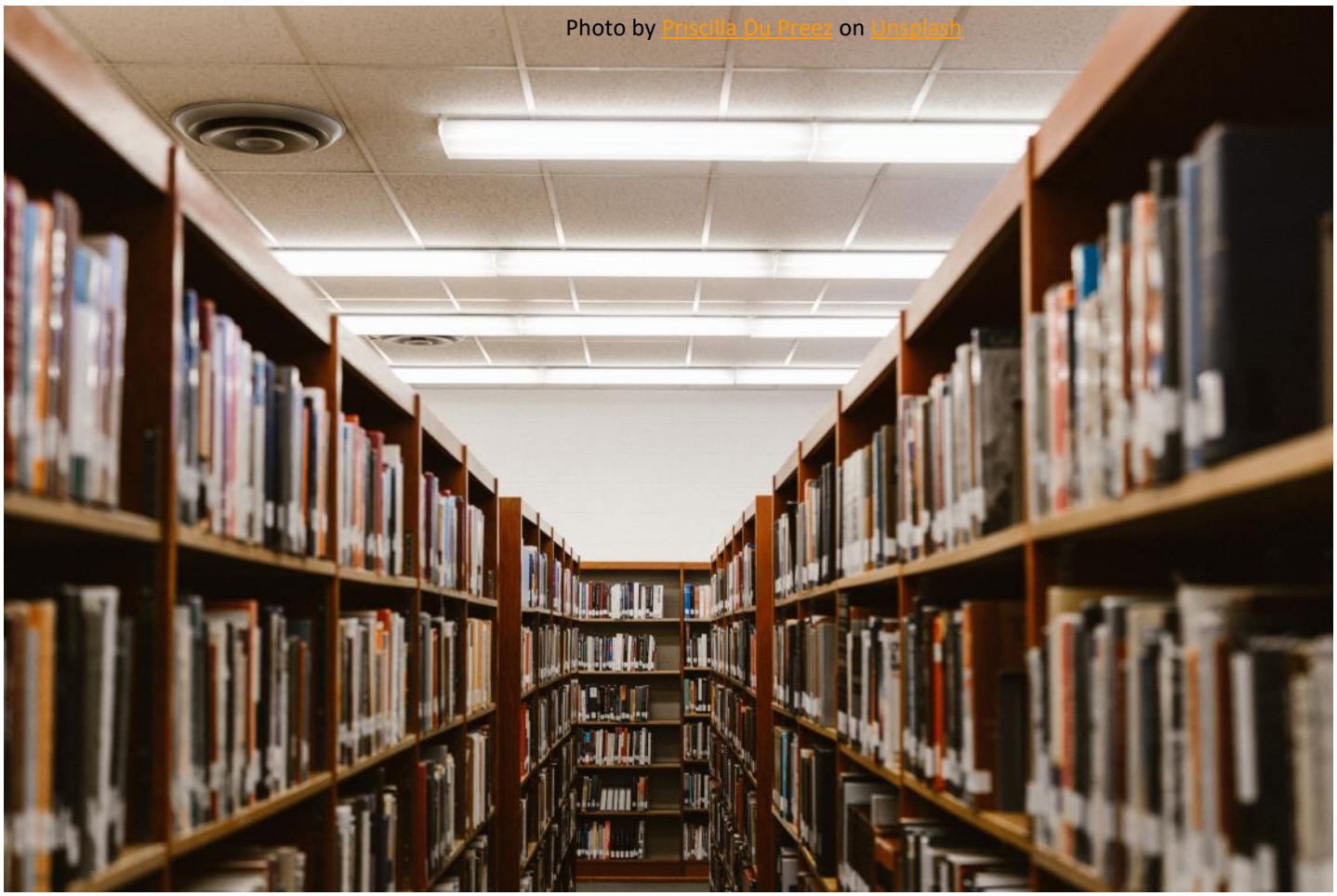
a continuous, regular basis. To assess the interest in establishing a peer writing group, an invitation to discuss the possibility was sent to all Ph.D. students and early career post-doctorates in the Ageing and Society research group of the Global Health and Social Medicine department. Nine people attended the first meeting (6 Ph.D. students and 3 early career post-doctorates). After this initial discussion, and with department approval and encouragement, the Graduate Research on Writing (GROW) group was established March 2013. The aim of the group was to provide a regular forum in which members could share a draft of their written work, be it a manuscript, dissertation chapter or grant application, and receive constructive feedback on it from their peers.

A central tenet to the development of GROW was the belief that academic writing improvement is a learning process which can be enhanced through peer interaction, mutual support and performance. Although the group was established based on shared attitudes and unwritten rules, group parameters and prospects were clearly established. These are demonstrated through the group's inner workings, group-image, interactions outside the group and future goals. Although every group has unique parameters, expectations and experiences, this article aims to share our developmental process, core guidelines and goals of sustainability to assist and encourage others to establish peer writing groups in their university department.

Inner workings



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The primary and essential key, central to the group's establishment, membership and success was commitment. Collective commitment to participation was established at the first conceptual meeting. Individual commitment to attend meetings, to provide constructive feedback on all written submissions and to offer a written contribution for group review were verbally agreed by all members. At the first assembly, we decided how often we should meet, eventually opting for monthly meetings. Meeting dates and times for the whole academic year were also established on a set date and time each month and all members were encouraged to each choose a month to present their writing submission. This afforded members to schedule the meetings, plan their preparation and to prevent non-attendance due to time mismanagement. However, it was acknowledged that personal or professional commitments and obligations might conflict with the agreed timetable. To maintain a level of fairness and mutual respect among the members and ensure that each written submission received feedback from all group members, we agreed that, if a member was unable to attend a GROW meeting, they were still required to provide verbal or written feedback to the individual whose work was presented and discussed. Each participant volunteered to present their work on their chosen date, and circulated their draft a week before the meeting to allow members enough time to read it thoroughly. Commitment to the group and to group members out of respect and responsibility validated the worth and ensured the success of the peer writing group.

Initially, all GROW members were anxious about critiquing one another's work and about receiving feedback. Additionally, some members were hesitant to share their written work and lacked confidence in their ability to provide quality, appropriate feedback on members' varied research topics; their specificities and differing methodologies. Moreover, non-native English speakers, who represented a third of the group, worried that they would not be able to contribute significantly to enhancing the writing style of their colleagues. Indeed, it can be difficult to prepare oneself to receive and accept constructive comments on a highly personal piece of work; similarly, Ph.D. students and early-career researchers may be reluctant to be critical or worried about producing 'good' or 'correct' feedback if they feel they are still learners themselves and possess little expert knowledge (Cuthbert et al., 2009). However, we soon adopted the perspective that each reviewer only has the best intentions for their colleagues and their work (Rubin 2006). Similarly, we expected that skills would strengthen over time, confidence would develop and that ultimately comments on content, structure, style, grammar and other aspects of academic writing would be beneficial, despite limited knowledge of the specific field or

methodology, various English language proficiencies, and different levels, skills, and styles of academic writing.

Group-image

At the first meeting, we discussed a name for the group, eventually opting for GROW: 'Graduate Researchers On Writing'. All future communications concerning the group used this acronym. This not only reinforced our sense of belonging to the group, but also helped build our collective academic identity and shared goal. Gradually we identified ourselves as members of GROW. The peer-to-peer relationship with no hierarchical authoritative assistance within the group may have increased the rate at which this took place. Autonomy was also important; this self-initiated group provided Ph.D. students and early-career post-doctorates a mechanism of control and engagement beyond supervisory, departmental and university responsibilities. Membership in GROW was based on commitment, mutual trust and respect, and the shared experience of being Ph.D. students and early career post doctorates. Leadership, writing, critical thinking, editing, formatting, and creating personal academic identity were explored and developed through participation. The feelings of cohesion and camaraderie among members spread to collective social activities. Additionally our GROW self-image reinforced our efforts for improvement and the desire to communicate our experiences with others.

Interactions outside the group

Peer interactions within the doctoral writing group extended to both social and academic exchanges beyond the original boundaries of GROW.

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As mutual trust strengthened and the relationship between the members of the group developed, we broadened the aim and content of the GROW group beyond reviewing one another's written drafts. In February 2014, the monthly meeting included an invited speaker from the King's College London's Royal Literary Fund Writing Fellow scheme. The presentation concerned principles and critical elements of good academic writing including: clarity, vigour, signposting, paragraph construction and editing. This training not only complemented the professional training available to postgraduate students and staff of the university, but also provided GROW members with a private space within which

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they felt comfortable enough to ask the 'stupid' questions that had plagued them. We also curated external Ph.D. speakers to present their doctoral or post-doctoral work to GROW and department members.

Together we planned, organised and carried out an event to share and inspire others through our experience with development and participation in GROW. With internal and external funding we presented a one-day workshop at King's College London to connect with fellow Ph.D. students and early-career post-doctorates from multiple disciplines, aiming to inspire such individuals to create similar GROW groups with their peers. The positive reception and voiced need for such a writing group from the delegates provided the impetus for this article.

Although all GROW members were invited to contribute to this written work, some declined due to pressing commitments and deadlines. However, everyone agreed to provide feedback on the manuscript. We, the authors of this article, then agreed a timeframe for the writing and editing of the paper, and discussed the role and tasks that each member would undertake. We strongly believe that such a collaborative paper testifies the reciprocal trust and shared excitement about our academic writing group experience. Moreover, the paper itself is an example of peer-review: the structure and content of the paper has been discussed on several occasions, and several iterations of the manuscripts were necessary to incorporate the constructive feedback received by GROW members.

Future goals

The sustainability of GROW, as founding members leave to assume different positions outside King's College London and new PhD and early career post-doctorates join, is an important goal. GROW was established four years ago; since then, six new Ph.D. students and one early career post-doctorate have joined the group and two early career post-doctorates and two PhD students have left. Two founding members received their PhD in gerontology and another has submitted corrections post viva voce. Peer writing groups such as GROW need to be an on-going entity in doctoral programmes so that the supportive environment includes members at all stages in the doctoral process. The invaluable experiences our writing group afforded is both replicable and advisable for other students in Ph.D. and early career post-doctoral positions.

Academic peer writing group: Strengths and limitations

Academic writing competency is not only a significant barrier to completing a Ph.D. (D'Andrea, 2002) but also an important asset to achieve a successful early post-doctorate career. The activities of a peer writing group to provide extra training and experience in writing, critical thinking, justifying and defending one's work may facilitate academic competency and success. The GROW group's activities provided individual, departmental and scholarly community benefits. The potential benefits and limitations of a Ph.D. student and early career post-doctorate peer writing group are described below.

Improved writing skills

The most pertinent member-

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perceived benefit of GROW was improved academic writing skills. Members identified that their academic writing improved as a result of using relevant vocabulary specific to the subject and appropriate for the audience; making clear and concise sentences; establishing an argument, presenting different perspectives where applicable; and demonstrating critical thinking. Indeed, the feedback GROW members provide ranges from opinions on the wider concepts and structure of the written work to micro-level line by line, sentence by sentence, grammar, typographical errors and sentence meaning. Having additional reviewers outside of the supervisory or project team provides an audience less familiar with the topic which helps the author to improve explanations and clarity of argument. Moreover the peer writing group helps the members to see writing as a public endeavour rather than a private process (Maher et al., 2008). The two-way informational exchange within GROW meetings teaches members about the fundamental content, focus, structure, and style of academic writing appropriate for a thesis or publication (Dochy et al., 1999). Additionally, the way GROW meetings were structured, with fixed deadlines and expected commitments, has helped members to increase their outputs and to overcome writing blocks and procrastination.

Reciprocal learning

The GROW meetings provided time for the doctoral students and early-career post doctorates to collaborate: introduce concepts to one another, exchange knowledge, offer suggestions and share strengths. Reading each other's work and giving feedback enabled members both to strengthen critical and creative thinking skills, and to deliver greater attention to detail in academic writing (Gere, 1987; Rubin, 2006). Furthermore, it provided us with the opportunity to explore topics beyond our own work and to gain an appreciation of the scope of research being conducted within the department. Such mutual relationships and interactions not only strengthened a thesis chapter, article, or grant application but also provided us with valuable work experience and the acquisition of transferable skills for the future (Boud, 1999). Indeed, it is assumed that peer-reviewing is essential to academic endeavour and that academics are expected to peer-review journal articles (Tite & Schroter, 2007); yet, it is rare for Ph.D. students and early researchers to be

given opportunities to practice, and learn how to provide constructive and critical feedback.

A safe environment

The ethos of the GROW meetings provides a 'safe' environment to discuss, debate and learn. The GROW motto is 'peer review without fear'. The group promotes exploration of ideas, feedback and peer-learning in a non-threatening space (Boud, 1999; Ladyshewsky 2006). Although equally valuable, it feels less intimidating than the critiques received during supervisory or project meetings. However, of heightened concern in receiving and giving feedback within a GROW meeting is that there is no anonymity. It can be daunting to give feedback directly to the recipient (Svinicki, 2001 cited in Rubin, 2006) although this can be good professional practice for future higher education lecturers. Furthermore, members are not required to verbalise all their comments in front of others at the meeting. Typically reviewers make notes on a hard copy of the text and hand this to the recipient after the meeting; therefore some comments can remain private between the two. Feedback is provided in a respectful manner and the privacy and details of exchanges are respected as confidential, confining the discussion of a person's work to within the meeting.

Although GROW automatically provides an

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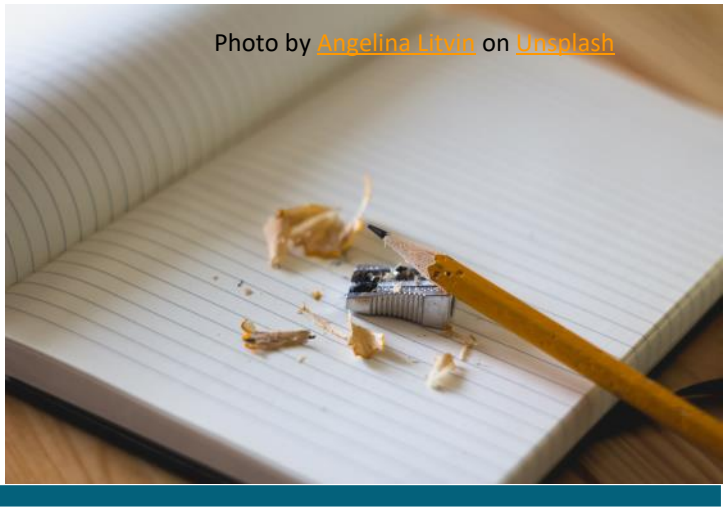
audience for each individual during their month to submit, this audience is made up of people from different academic and professional backgrounds with varying personalities, expertise, knowledge and perspectives. While diversity may be an asset of the group, it may also lead to conflicting feedback. This however mirrors the conflicting opinions that might be presented by article reviewers for future publications (Rubin, 2006). Furthermore, feedback-recipients do not have to use any comments that are given; it is not assumed that the feedback necessitates a change to the work. The GROW meeting created a safe space in which to present and accept constructive criticism, to vent frustrations and to develop indispensable qualities of the academic community.

Supportive community

The camaraderie and trust which developed and strengthened throughout the meetings have created a supportive community, positively influencing each person's experience. Phyalto et al. (2009) found that almost 30% of surveyed doctoral students did not feel part of a scholarly community. The turn-taking aspect of peer submissions to GROW has helped to build mutuality and reciprocity between the members, giving members an opportunity to feel part of a scholarly community (Lee and Boud, 2003). The group provides space to verbally defend or explain decisions on structure, concepts, methods, conclusions and writing styles. This therefore gives members informal rehearsal for: upgrade and viva voce examinations, journal publications and receiving audiences' questions after oral presentations. The collegiate, respectful atmosphere we have created has enabled us to connect and encourage one another with both professional and personal goals, including but not limited to submitting papers and applying for grants (Buissink-Smith et al., 2013). We have evolved into a supportive community who care for, trust and inspire one another. We have motivated and encouraged one another through tough periods and reinforced faltering beliefs that the work is worthwhile (Devenish et al., 2009).

At times, however, conflict arose between the GROW feedback and that of an individual's supervisory committee. This created tension, particularly when GROW members were criticised by their supervisors or line managers for taking into account feedback suggested by GROW members. When such rare occasions arose, GROW members were reminded that feedback-recipients are not obliged to utilise any feedback given from any source. As with the aforementioned differences of opinion, members are ultimately responsible at all times for the work they submit to GROW, supervisors or project team. Furthermore, some members felt that having a text peer-reviewed prior to review by supervisors or project team increased confidence in their work.

Reviewing others' work can take some time



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away from one's own activity (Gere, 1987; Page-Adams et al., 1995; Rubin, 2006). However, we believe the many other benefits as described above make the process worthwhile. Typically a submission is rarely a whole thesis chapter but a short section of approximately 10 pages, or one potential article; therefore only an hour is usually required to review a manuscript.

Conclusion

High quality academic writing skills are integral to the process of successful completion of a Ph.D. programme and early career post-doctoral academic years. Insufficient experience in academic writing increases stress and decreases writing confidence among Ph.D. students and early career academics. The establishment and availability of a peer writing group may help facilitate the academic writing process. Setting clear guidelines, expectations and having shared beliefs among members may contribute to building group identity and sustainability.

In this paper, we have shared our experience in setting up a peer-review group whose members, Ph.D. students or early career post-doctorates, wanted to improve writing skills in a non-authoritative environment. Moreover, we shared similar commitment, accountability, trust and respect with regards to the group and to each other. Taking responsibility to improve our professional development by addressing and overcoming writing weaknesses and utilising the strengths of peers not only broadened our writing skill base, but also developed our personal and professional skills and confidence. Furthermore, skill development exceeded writing skills to include: presentation skills, and the ability to advance critique and defend claims, editing, evaluation and critical thinking skills.

Beyond the formal learning of academic writing through the internal and external activities of GROW, members acquired an academic identity. Peer ownership of establishing and directing the group facilitated a sense of community, providing at the same time a supportive environment in which skills and confidence building took place. Creating and participating in GROW positively modified our academic environment and experience. Furthermore, all GROW members felt that they enhanced a range of transferable skills in the areas of organisation and time management, team work, interpersonal and communication styles; such experiences could facilitate our career progress, both within and outside academia.

While we do not claim that GROW can take credit for group member outputs, we do feel it contributed in many ways to our writing skills and productivity, both individually and collectively. Since its initiation over four years ago, outputs of members include multiple peer reviewed publications, conference presentations, grants, new employment and post-doctoral positions. Our success may be attributed to the recognition of individual differences, the strengths and contributions each of us bring to the group and the acknowledgement of our shared experiences professionally and personally. Commitment, reciprocity and authority residing with the members as a collaborative, peer-led en-

deavour with a shared common interest in improving our writing skills has indeed helped us all grow.

Ph.D. student and early post-doctoral career perspectives are rarely voiced (McAlpine & Norton, 2006). Our intent in presenting objective views of the establishment and development of a peer writing group is twofold; to highlight that writing insecurity at the post-doctoral level may impede academic success and to voice our personal experiences of a Ph.D. student and early career post-doctoral writing group with the hope of inspiring others to take the initiative to establish their own peer writing groups. It is our subjective, collective opinion that the invaluable experiences GROW afforded us, are reproducible and advisable for others in post-doctoral positions. Writing groups need to be an ongoing entity in doctoral programmes so that the supportive environment benefits and includes members at all stages in the doctoral process.

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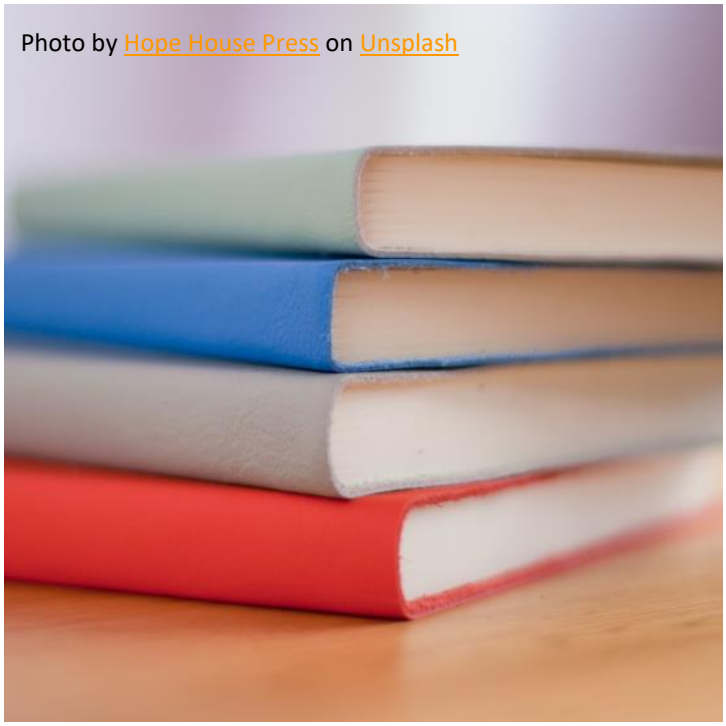

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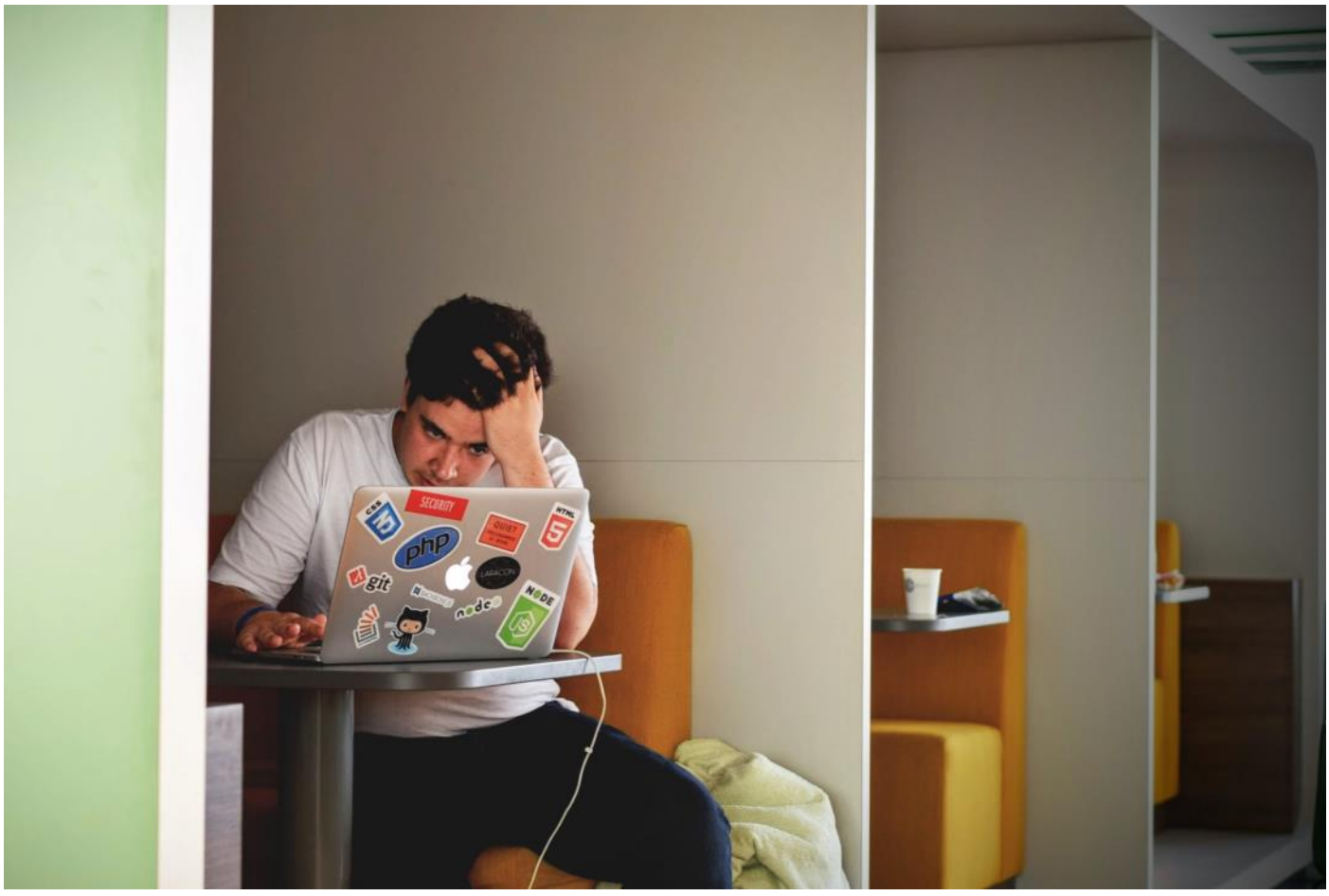

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Ageing in an Unequal World

Shaping Environments for the 21st Century

MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester
Institute for Collaborative
Research on Ageing

Manchester Metropolitan University

University of Salford MANCHESTER

The effect of recreational activities on falls and aggressive behaviour among residents of a dementia care home

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A key issue for care home staff is how to balance the needs of people with dementia: we need to keep residents safe but they also need to have fun.

Dementia is a degenerative condition with an increasing prevalence. By 2050 it is expected that 131.5 million people will have dementia (Prince et al, 2015). Current estimates suggest that on average, 69% of care home residents have dementia in the UK (Prince et al, 2014). Two major threats to the wellbeing of people with dementia are falls and aggressive behaviour, as they both occur among residents with dementia more frequently than the general older population (Hamel et al, 1990; Van Doorn et al, 2003). Falls are the leading cause for Accident and Emergency presentation in adults aged 65+ (Samaras et al, 2010), and people with dementia are more than twice as likely to fall and twice as likely to sustain an injury from falling compared with their cognitively-intact peers (Taylor et al, 2012; Winter et al, 2013). Dementia-related aggressive behaviour can make providing care difficult, as this can interfere with effective

communication, lead to agitation, and decrease residents' overall wellbeing (Oliveira et al, 2015). During the course of the disease, aggressive behaviour affects up to 90% of people with dementia (Kales et al, 2012). Therefore, initiatives are required to increase safety and improve the wellbeing of residents in dementia care homes.

Evidence suggests that the provision of recreational activities improves the wellbeing of care home residents with dementia (Brooker et al, 2007; Vaapio et al, 2007). Research has been conducted into the promotion of wellbeing in institutional settings using various non-pharmacological approaches (Goodall and Etters, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2013) and in particular among residents with dementia (Marx et al, 1990; Cohen-Mansfield, 2001; Lord et al, 2007). This research has shown promising evidence and in particular for the promotion of leisure activities to reduce aggressive incidents among residents with dementia. Such activities appear to provide benefit through meeting residents' individual social and psychological needs (Cohen-Mansfield, 2001). As recreational activities are now commonly provided in care homes, the current study seized an opportunity to test whether the provision of recreational activities could reduce the incidence of falls and aggressive behaviour among residents of a dementia care home. Many studies testing recreational activities as the control condition in controlled trials find that they may reduce falls and agitated behaviour as much as the intervention (Cooke et al, 2010; Klages et al, 2011; Vink et al, 2013). However, the evidence for recreational activities to reduce the incidence of falls and aggressive behaviour among people with dementia has yet to be established. The aim of this study was to evaluate whether existing provision of activities such as board games and listening to music would reduce the incidence of falls and aggressive behaviour.

During the course of the disease, aggressive behaviour affects up to 90% of people with dementia (Kales et al, 2012).

Method

Design

Residents of a UK dementia care home were included in a service evaluation. Over a two-month period, residents were provided with recreational activities on some evenings (activity evenings) and no recreational activities on other evenings (control evenings), as per usual care. This service evaluation was a within-groups cross-over design to compare the frequency of falls and aggressive incidents of each resident between activity and control evenings. Anonymised case reports were retrospectively examined by a researcher to compare the incidence of falls and aggressive behaviour on thirty evenings when recreational activities were provided and thirty evenings when recreational activities were not provided. A systematic way of recording the events was constrained to the times from 19:00 until 23:00 to assess the short-term effects of these activities. These activities included music sessions, board games, singing, entertainment and light exercise, and we focused on evening activities as this seemed to be the most predominant time for falls and aggressive acts in this care home. The activities provided were all energetic, carer-led, and seated. The content of activity sessions and daily reports from care staff were also recorded to examine residents' engagement with the activities provided. Music and singing sessions involved swaying and light dancing to their favourite genres of music, each to their own mobility with residents dancing in the lounge or swaying and moving their arms while seated. Light entertainment included zumba sessions, ballroom dancing, and light stretching exercises.

Participants

Before this study commenced it was approved by the Psychology Department Research Ethics Committee, Bournemouth University. Informed consent was not required for this study as there was no direct contact with residents and it was a service evaluation (of existing practice) rather than a research project (that would introduce changes to practice). Of sixty-four residents, 41 met the eligibility criteria of being permanent residents with dementia at the residential care home. Of these, four participants did not have complete follow-up data

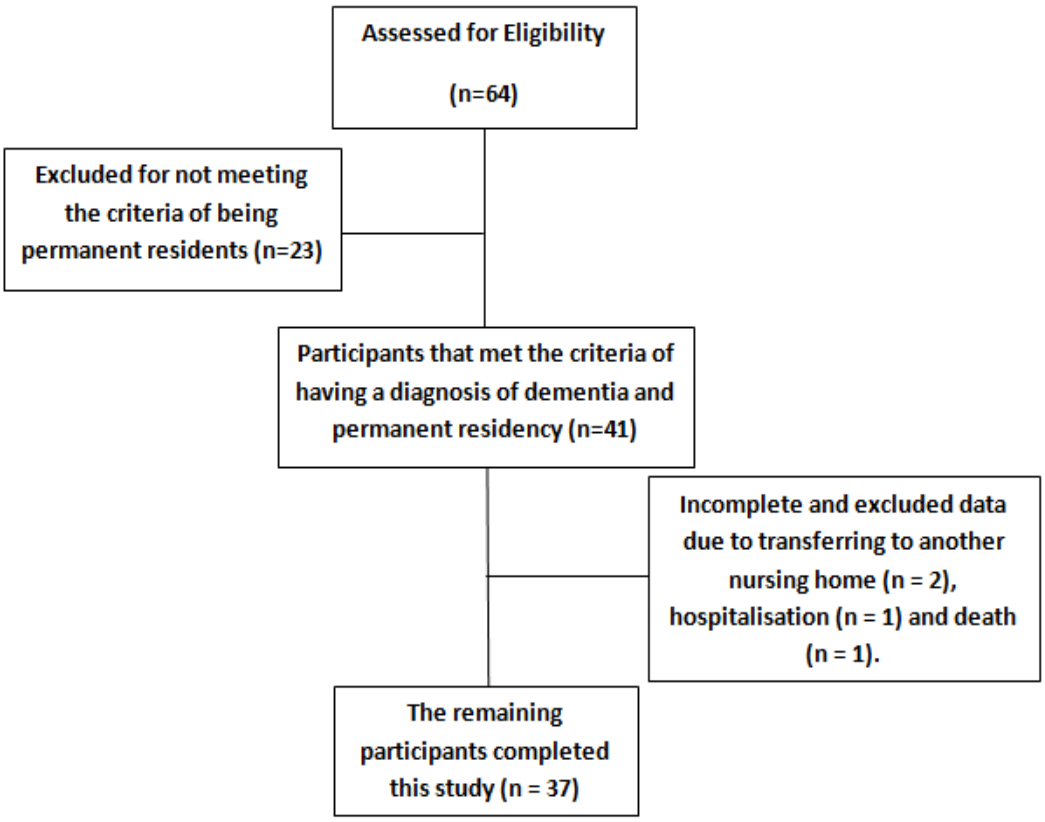

Figure 1. Flow of residents included in the study

for the two months and were excluded from the analysis (see Figure 1). The remaining 37 participants (30 female, 7 male) aged 73 to 98 (M = 87.7, SD = 6.27) had varying types of dementia as diagnosed by a doctor: Alzheimer's disease (43%), vascular dementia (35%), and mixed dementia (22%).

Outcome measures

Falls were recorded, whether witnessed or unseen, from carer and ambulance reports that documented a resident was found lying on the floor. Aggressive behaviour was recorded through incident forms completed when residents exerted physical aggression or disruptive vocal behaviour towards another resident or staff. Unintended outcomes of implementing recreational activities were also included within the findings to give a more conservative outcome (e.g. if residents fell while doing an activity). As the data was not normally distributed, Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were performed that are applicable for both ordinal and interval level data. Each test was one-tailed and so the p value was divided by two. All analyses were conducted using the statistical package SPSS.20.

Results

The frequency of falls and aggressive incidents are shown in Tables 1 and 2 respectively. Among the 37 residents, compared to evenings when no activities were provided, residents with dementia fell significantly more on evenings when activities were provided (z = 1.96, p = 0.025, r = 0.32 (medium effect size)). The frequency of aggressive incidents did not significantly differ on evenings when activities were or were not provided (z = 0.74, p = 0.229, r = 0.12 (small effect size)).

A post-hoc sub-analysis was conducted with 24 participants (19 female, 5 male) aged 73 to 96 (M = 87.1, SD = 6.35) recorded by two or more members of staff to have consistently engaged with the recreational activities throughout the study. This was assessed by monitoring staff reports of the residents and noting the residents that had consistently engaged with the activities. This subsample had varying types of dementia as

Table 1. Frequency of falls as a function of activity versus control evenings

Sample	Activity evenings	Control evenings
All residents	23	11
Engaged participants only	8	9

Falls were recorded for all dementia care home residents in the study (n = 37), and only dementia care home residents who were consistently engaged in the activities provided (n = 24). For both, falls were split by evenings when recreational activities were provided (activity evenings) and evenings when no activity was provided (control evenings).

diagnosed by a doctor: vascular dementia (46%), Alzheimer's disease (33%), and mixed dementia (21%). Among the 24 residents who were consistently engaged in activities, the frequency of falls and aggressive incidents did not significantly differ on evenings when activities were and were not provided (falls: z = 0.30, $p = 0.763$, $r = 0.05$ (very small effect size); aggressive incidents: $z = 0.21$, $p = 0.831$, $r = 0.04$ (very small effect size)).

Discussion

This service evaluation examined the effect of the existing provision of recreational activities on falls and aggressive behaviour in a dementia residential care home. The results were unexpected as they suggested that the provision of recreational activities for care home residents with dementia may increase the incidence of falls. This was in contrast to previous research that found significant improvements in balance and fall prevention when recreational activities were provided (Province et al, 1995; Klages et al, 2011). Furthermore, our findings contradicted previous research that suggested music sessions and low cognitively stimulating activities reduce aggressive behaviour among residents with dementia, through addressing their social and psychological needs (Cohen-Mansfield, 2001). A possible explanation for this contrast could be because the activities in our study were group-based and not specific to the individual needs of residents, and different residents will have different triggers for evoking aggressive behaviour (Ferrah et al, 2015).

The results were unexpected as they suggested that the provision of recreational activities for care home residents with dementia may increase the incidence of falls.

The sub-analysis suggested that falls may only be increased among those that chose not to engage in the activities provided. It is uncertain why this pattern was found, but it could be because residents fell when attempting to move away from the activities. Perhaps the disengaged residents did not enjoy the activities offered, which made them agitated (e.g. if felt volume of music was too loud). Alternatively, it may be that residents who chose not to take part in the activities received less attention and supervision by staff, leading to increased risk of

falls while mobilising. However, as this was a service evaluation that did not use randomisation to conditions, our findings would need to be replicated in controlled experimental studies with more care homes. Our study was also limited by a small sample size. Future studies with larger samples could seek to replicate our findings, compare the effect of providing different activities, and account for other contributing factors that increase the risk of falls and aggressive incidents (e.g. use of medication) in the analyses.

Implications for practice

If our findings are replicated in future studies then this raises an issue for care home staff to consider as they balance keeping residents safe with providing activities that promote wellbeing. Recreational activities that provide enjoyment for residents may increase their risk of falls. In particular, additional care may be required among those that choose not to participate in the recreational activities who may be agitated by the activities or receive less supervision from staff. Staff may take this on board by making adaptations to be more able to facilitate safe mobility out of the communal living area and for those not supervised by staff leading the activities.

Conclusion

The findings from this study contradicted previous findings and suggested that there was no effect of providing recreational activities on aggressive behaviour but an increase in the incidence of falls. This highlights the delicate balance care staff must contend with as they prevent harm but also provide an enjoyable environment for the residents to live. Indeed, recreational activities hold substantial benefits to the wellbeing of residents with dementia. As falls appeared to occur more often among those that choose not to partake in the recreational activities, this may mean that additional care is required for those who disengage from group-based activities.

Key points

Two major threats to the wellbeing of residents with dementia are falls and aggressive behaviour, as both occur more frequently

among these residents compared with their peers from the general older population.

A key issue for care home staff is how to balance the needs of people with dementia: they need to be safe but they also need to have fun.

Recreational activities that improve the wellbeing of residents in dementia care homes may reduce the incidence of falls and aggressive behaviour among residents of a dementia care home.

Our findings contradicted previous literature and suggested that there was no effect of providing recreational activities on aggressive behaviour but an increase in the incidence of falls.

Particular care should be taken with residents who may become agitated by certain recreational activities or choose not to participate in them, and may fall while staff are busy leading the group activity.

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The Ageing of British Gerontology: learning from the past to inform the future

Mo Ray (University of Lincoln)
Mim Bernard and Jackie Reynolds (Keele University)

The BSG archives

Introduction and Context

Ageing, it now seems, is everybody's business. Wherever we turn these days, older people are visible in the media: on television and radio, and in advertisements which continually strive to persuade us to stave off the signs of growing older for as long as possible. Paradoxically, alongside this increasing visibility, has been an ever-present sense that population ageing – and older people themselves – is somehow to blame for many of society's current problems with statistical and demographic information often being used uncritically to generate moral panic amongst the media, government and the general population (Lodge *et al.,* 2016).

Our two-year (2015-2017) Leverhulme Trust funded research project, 'The Ageing of British Gerontology: learning from the past to inform the future', is located at the intersection of this paradox. We also contend that whilst gerontologists have always been interested in the relationship of their discipline, and themselves, to prevalent cultural attitudes about ageing, much popular and societal understanding of ageing and older people often has very little basis in the accumulating body of gerontological research which has been undertaken in Britain over the past 40-50 years. Our main way into investigating gerontology's evolution has been through the contributions and experiences of senior figures in British gerontology: experiences we contextualise and integrate with an examination of the archives of the British Society of Gerontology (BSG). The project's research questions examine the evolution of British gerontology since the founding of the BSG in 1971 (formerly the British Society of Social and Behavioural Gerontology); explore key developments and changes in gerontological research, theory, policy and practice; investigate the ways in which gerontology has been conceptualised; and uncover the connections between the professional and personal as gerontologists age. The potential implications of the em-

pirical findings for academic colleagues and others interesting in studying and responding to the challenges and opportunities associated with population ageing have also been considered.

The research team has been supported by a 'virtual' advisory group comprising experienced and career-young, British and international gerontologists (Box 1) and by the BSG and the Centre for Policy on Ageing (CPA) which houses the archive. In the second year of the project, we also worked with professional photographer, gerontologist and artist Sukey Parnell to develop a series of photographic portraits which form the heart of our Ageing of British Gerontology Exhibition launched at the 46th Annual Conference of the British Society of Gerontology hosted by Swansea University in July 2017. □

Research Methods

Our study, which was granted ethical approval by Keele University's Ethical Review Panel and is fully informed by the BSG's own ethical guidelines, employed two main research methods: archival analysis and a series of qualitative semi-structured narrative interviews with established and well known gerontologists. The BSG archive materials currently exist in their 'raw' state and are stored in over 50 archive boxes with information about their contents. The archives provide a rich source of documentary material charting changing societal attitudes to ageing and the evolution of gerontology as a field of study. The first phase of our fieldwork comprised an initial trawl through the archive boxes to assess what was there, after which we decided to focus initially on the extensive archival material reflecting the development of BSG conferences. As well as being a consistent feature of the BSG since its inauguration, our assessment was that these materials (conference handbooks; programmes; participant lists and associated documents) would provide insights into the shifts in thinking and research about ageing over time. Analysis has been carried out using a data extraction template on which we recorded key information about each conference. This enabled us to identify themes and develop and refine them as the archival analyses proceeded. A parallel exercise, also using a specifically developed analytical template, has been conducted on issues of *Generations Review*: the BSG's newsletter. Tessa Harding, a member of our Advisory Group, kindly volunteered to undertake this task which has provided valuable additional information.

The second phase of fieldwork involved qualitative interviews, using a biographical framework, with established gerontologists. Each interview invited participants to reflect on how they first came to ageing (research and/or practice), how their careers developed, and the kinds of contributions they have made to gerontology. Participants were also invited to reflect on the ways in which gerontology has been conceptualised and understood over their career, to identify important developments, and to highlight future directions and areas of priority as they see them. Personal reflections on their own ageing, the ways in which this has or has not intersected with their professional and academic lives, and relationships and interactions with others in the field, were also explored. Subject to consent being given, each interview was video and audio recorded in order that interview clips could be used to develop a series of short films for both our project website and the BSG website.

Progress to Date and Next Steps

Early conference handbook

At the time of writing (September 2017), the project is drawing to a close and formally finishes at the end of October. In terms of the archival analysis, we have over 40 sets of detailed data extraction sheets documenting each annual conference from the Society's inauguration to the present day. Individual data extraction sheets have then been grouped into decades and a further level of analysis undertaken to extrapolate key themes which, to date, focus on:

- research themes and topics
- methodological and methods papers
- theory development
- the development of gerontology as a field of study

Supplemented with the analyses of *Generations Review* and of other key material, these will inform our findings in three main areas. First, in conjunction with the interviews, the archival analyses will contribute to understanding the ways in which gerontology has developed as a field of study since the establishment of the BSG. Second, they will support our explorations of the development of specific areas of gerontological research. Third, they feed into an historical timeline we are producing in order to chart the relationship between the evolution of gerontological research, key policy developments and practice initiatives.

We have also completed interviews with 50 gerontologists; have entered all the transcripts onto Nvivo and finalised a coding frame. This coding frame, and our initial analyses, has been triangulated with two further analytical tasks: first, we have identified topics and themes in the interviews which lend themselves to making a series of short films (15-20 minutes each). Working with a filmographer, we have selected relevant extracts to be used accordingly. At the time of writing, the films are being finalised: there will be seven in total (Box 2) plus an introductory film outlining the project and directing viewers to the range of outputs be-

Conference abstract books

ing produced. Second, we have been using the interviews to put together a series of 500-word pen portraits designed not just to identify the gerontological contributions made by each participant but to provide a flavour of who each of them are as people. These word portraits complement the images taken by our photographer Sukey Parnell: images which are a wonderful visual representation of the people we have interviewed and which have been compiled into an electronic exhibition, an accompanying newspaper-type publication and a series of postcards (reproduced here on the following pages). Having launched the exhibition at the Swansea conference, it is also showing for a month at Keele University (from October 19th to November 17th) and is available for loan to others who may wish to host it.

Although the project formally finishes at the end of October, there is still much more to be done in terms of writing up our findings and disseminating the work. We have a book contract with Policy Press which will keep us busy until the summer of 2018, together with plans for a series of journal articles on various aspects of the project. We shall also continue to make presentations at conferences and other events and would encourage anyone who is interested in what we have done – and are doing – to make contact with us. The electronic exhibition, the newspaper and the films are all available to view on our project website at www.keele.ac.uk/abg/

Can you help?

The BSG archives do not have any documentary materials relating to the conference held at the University of East Anglia in 1993.

If any reader has a book of abstracts or a programme for the conference, we'd love to hear from you!

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Box 1

Advisory Group members

Dr Andy Achenbaum	Professor Emeritus of History and Social Work, University of Hou-
Ms Gilly Crosby	Director, Centre for Policy on Ageing.
Dr Claire Garabedian	Associate Researcher, Association for Dementia Studies, University of Worcester.
Ms Tessa Harding	Community activist and former policy analyst.
Dr Robin Means	Emeritus Professor of Health and Social Care, Faculty of Health
Dr Sheila Peace	Past-President, the BSG and Emeritus Professor of Social Gerontology, Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies,
Dr Debora Price	President, the BSG and Professor of Social Gerontology/Director, Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing
Dr Tom Scharf	Professor of Social Gerontology, Institute of Health and Society,
Dr Charles Simpson	Research Fellow, Centre for Research in Primary and Community
Dr Mark Skinner	Professor of Geography and Director, Trent Centre for Ageing and Society, Trent University, Canada.

Box 2: Films

Film 1	Introducing the Ageing of British Gerontology Project
Film 2	Becoming a Gerontologist
Film 3	To Be or Not To Be a Gerontologist
Film 4	British Gerontology: Building the Foundations
Film 5	Gerontology's Collaborations and Connections
Film 6	Gerontologists on Ageing
Film 7	Do Gerontologists Ever Retire?
Film 8	Gerontology Futures

images taken by our photographer Sukey Parnell: a wonderful visual representation of the people we have interviewed and which have been compiled into an electronic exhibition, an accompanying newspaper-type publication and a series of postcards

The Researcher and the Researched: The role, value and challenges of U3As researching older people

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Gwen Dawe , member of Northumbria Region U3A

Lynne Corner, Director of Engagement, Newcastle University Institute for Ageing

Introduction

In 1981, Peter Laslett, a founder of the University of the Third Age, set out his vision for U3As. Research was an essential element. He distinguished between personal research which he felt should be undertaken by all U3A members to increase knowledge on subjects such as archaeology, the history of climate, and professional research into the process of ageing in society and especially on the position of the elderly in Britain and the means of its improvement. He also envisaged collaboration between local U3As and other local adult education providers so that U3As could take advantage of available teaching and research facilities in those institutions.

In the decade following the founding of U3As, the Department of Health endorsed the involvement of patients and the public in NHS research to make it more relevant and beneficial to patients. It set up a group called 'Consumers in NHS Research', later renamed INVOLVE when its remit extended to social care and public health research (Rose, 2015). In 2006, the policy for public involvement was extended to include all stages of the research process from conception to dissemination (Mockford et al 2016). Undertaking interviews with research participants, and user/carer researchers carrying out research are examples of active lay involvement given on the INVOLVE website (www.invo.org.uk). Much of the lay led research that actually took place in the 2000s was in the field of mental health and has been characterised as service user led research (Rose 2015).

In principle, therefore, members of U3As doing research independently or in partnership with professional researchers on the process of ageing in society and the position of the elderly is encouraged in government policy. How has research in general fared in the U3A?

The position of research in U3As today

Gwen, who is a Regional Trustee on the National Executive Council of the Third Age Trust (TAT), was concerned that research was being neglected. Her own interest in research stemmed from being a member of Voice North which is a partnership between Newcastle University and people in the North East who, because of their interest in ageing, become members and support a range of research activity. Former Director of Newcastle Institute for Ageing, Jim Edwardson, was the driving force in establishing Voice North and also for developing a research culture amongst Northumbrian U3As by, for example, holding training days and setting up a Regional Research Support Group. Gwen re-established TAT's National Research Sub-committee, recruiting members who were actively

involved in research in their own U3A. An article in TAT's magazine to foster more participation in research generated around 100 expressions of interests from U3A members. Of these, 18 volunteered to become Research Ambassadors (now expanded to 29) whose role is to find out what research is being carried out locally, encourage the setting up of local research groups and make contact with local universities to seek and/or offer help with research. Most research ambassadors have extensive professional research experience. At a national meeting of research ambassadors it was decided to write a research guide, which has recently been sent out to every U3A, and to set up a national database of U3A research activity (www.u3aresearch.org.uk). To date nearly all research activity falls into four categories:

- Investigating aspects of U3A membership, to assist management and accommodate the needs of members
- Exploring local landmarks, monuments, events and celebrities
- Assisting museums, art galleries and other institutions to research artefacts held in storage
- U3A members participating in research carried out by universities.

In 2012 and 2013 Voice North and Northumbria Region U3A organised a competition called RITA (Research Ideas in the Third Age) to find the best research ideas amongst U3As in Northumbria. Latterly, a number of developments, such as the appointment of a U3A National Subject Advisor for research, negotiations with Newcastle University for U3A pages on Voice North's digital platform, have made U3A a much more research oriented organisation.

Experience from a U3A research project into a social issue in later life

In 2013, Janet, a member of Tynedale U3A, submitted a research idea - to investigate older people's views on and experiences of getting help and support from neighbours - to the RITA competition (https://u3asites.org.uk/files/t/tynedale/docs/finalreportapril112016.pdf). It won joint second prize of £400. Three Tynedale U3A members, all of whom had experience of doing qualitative research, took the project forward. Janet described it as a liberating experience after retirement to be able to explore a topical issue that was under researched.

A first concern was to get resources to carry out the research:

- Additional funding
- Digital voice recorders
- Access to library and on line journals
- Software for qualitative data analysis

Northumbria U3A loaned digital voice recorders and Voice North gave advice on a possible source of funding – the Averil Osborne Fund - which proved fruitful. Lack of access to software was not a stumbling block but getting hold of relevant books and papers was a challenge.

The biggest challenges, though, concerned dissemination and meeting responsibilities in relation to research governance requirements. The types of research identified by Gwen in the U3A research database were not subject to such requirements because they did not involve human research participants but Tynedale U3A's project did. Some participants were Tynedale members and some were not. In a university such a project would have been sent for an independent ethical review but U3As do not have the infrastructure to carry out

such a review. So, Janet adopted the Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association 2002.
(https://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/23902/statementofethicalpractice.pdf)

In addition to safeguarding participants' rights and welfare, there is also a need to ensure that there are adequate resources, including researchers, to complete the project and disseminate the findings. But U3A members are voluntary researchers and, for example, an unforeseen change in their personal circumstances could jeopardize completion. Disseminating the Tynedale project findings has been testing. Janet decided to prioritise getting a paper published in a peer reviewed journal in order to get credibility for the research. The process for getting papers published may, unwittingly, disadvantage U3A led research. A local U3A is the academic affiliation for a would-be U3A researcher but a local U3A does not have an institutional bricks and mortar or electronic address. It does have a web site and on Tynedale U3A's website the 'Research Group' is positioned between 'Poetry' and 'Scrabble'. A strength of U3A research is that it can be responsive to how the research plays out in practice rather than being constrained by a protocol submitted in a bid for research funding. However, reviewers saw the phased approach of our study, which was a response to the context in which we were operating, as a weakness and evidence of a lack of rigour. There is a risk that U3A research is judged by its cover.
Janet concluded that some research topics/participants/methods, of which the Tynedale project was an example, are perhaps better suited to being carried out in partnership with an external body, which could help resolve research governance issues, potentially increase resources, allow wider inclusivity of U3A members, i.e. they need not have had previous experience of research but be trained by the external body, and facilitate dissemination. There is evidence of both the benefits and challenges of co-research (Baxter, Thorne and Mitchell 2001, Mockford et al 2016). While academic publications cannot lower their standards, the process for getting published should recognise that U3As have experienced researchers and that U3A members who lack such experience can learn how to do research. After all, the main aim of the U3A is lifelong learning and sharing knowledge, skills and experiences.

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JOIN THE BSG TODAY!

British Society of Gerontology

Ageing research is increasingly high profile, nationally and internationally. Consequently, those in universities and in organisations working with older people, will benefit from joining the British Society of Gerontology. The Society gives members access to a multidisciplinary forum and network of like minded people dedicated to applying the knowledge gained through research and practice to improving quality of life in old age.

Membership of the BSG brings you into a community of academics and practitioners interested in a wide range of issues related to ageing. In particular, membership:

- Facilitates access to dynamic and up-to date debates about ageing and ageing studies - our members are involved in cutting edge research, policy and practice and are very willing to share their perspectives with you
- Members have access to a number of social media platforms – blog **Ageing Issues**; **twitter** account; YouTube channel **Ageing Bites**; **LinkedIn** Group
- Entitles you to significantly reduced rates at the Annual Conferences of the British Society of Gerontology
- Gives access to our vibrant group of Emerging Researchers in Ageing (ERA), which includes students, postdoctoral researchers and those established in their careers but new to field of ageing, who meet regularly to discuss research, policy and practice and support one another in their careers
- Access to our mailing list (BSGmail) to enable you to keep up-to-date about conferences, seminars, teaching courses, and research about ageing and ageing studies
- If you are a student, postdoctoral or unwaged member, you are entitled to apply for a conference bursary, for example, to cover costs to attend our annual conference
- Entitles you to substantially reduced subscription rates to the following peer reviewed journals: *Ageing and Society* and *Journal of Population Ageing*
- Provides you with access to all areas of the BSG website, including the Membership Directory and Members Only pages

How can I join?

Visit the website and fill in the registration form online and we will do the rest!

www.britishgerontology.org/join