Dear All,

We hope you had a lovely, peaceful bank holiday weekend!

In the text below we have a message from the OPSYRIS Chair; information on OPSYRIS meetings (virtual and in-person); links to relevant materials and other bits and pieces.  Enjoy reading and keep in touch.

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**Message from OPSYRIS Chair**

COVID-19 has fundamentally changed stroke care and stroke research.  My diary, which had been full of the usual mix of travel, grants, meetings is now a continuous block of clinical work – initially COVID and now stroke related again.  Its been a tough few months.

As we enter the next phase of the COVID response, and the novelty wears off, the clapping fades and the rainbows are taken down, I fear we are faced with an even tougher road to recovery.  Psychological research in stroke may be hit especially hard and I foresee something analogous to what I am seeing on the wards. The prognosis for many university departments, charity funders and specialist clinical services is, at best, uncertain. Without the necessary life-support, some of these groups may not survive.

Now, more than ever, the stroke psychology community needs to come together.  If OPSYRIS can help, even in a small way to protect and encourage stroke psychology research, then I am keen that we do that.

* In uncertain times, knowledge is power.  I am hearing about lots of innovative new ways of clinical and research working - why not share these with your colleagues through OPSYRIS.
* Support and networking are really important at the moment. We can’t have an in-person annual meeting this year, but we could set up a virtual meeting – see below.
* The academic job market is not going to get any kinder and so I am keen that OPSYRIS continues to bolster CVs, for example with our Rising Star award – nominations please.
* We probably all have questionnaire fatigue, but if we don’t respond to these requests, we can’t be sure our voice will be heard – links to some relevant surveys below.
* These are my ideas for OPSYRIS in the time of COVID. I am sure you will have better ideas – let us know.

Stay Safe

Terry

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**Annual meeting**

For many of us, the past several weeks have been about prioritising the health and wellbeing of our families, patients, study participants and co-workers, often at the expense of our daily research activities and future targets. In line with these efforts, after careful consideration, we have decided that the 2020 OPSYRIS annual meeting will **not** take place as planned. We are however pleased to confirm that the University of East Anglia, with our supportive host – Dr Stephanie Rossit, will welcome us in Autumn 2021.

Although our plans have changed, our keenness to provide a platform for dissemination of stroke psychology research is as great as ever! We would like to suggest a free virtual half-day meeting on the 18th of September.

Please let us know whether you would be interested in a virtual OPSYRIS meeting

via email (b.drozdowska.1@research.gla.ac.uk),

twitter (@OPSYRIS1)

or by voting here: <https://linkto.run/p/QURMF7C6>.

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**Nominations**

We would like to sustain the continuity of OPSYRIS activities and pursuits as best we can. This includes nominating successors to take on the roles of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary once the term of the present team comes to an end. If you have some exciting ideas for our organisation’s development and future directions, and would like a chance to bring them to life – please let us know! If there is someone whose skills and enthusiasm you admire, and who you believe would be great for the position of Chair – please let us know!

Despite cancelling the in-person annual meeting, it is also important to us to recognise the work and contributions to our field made by an early career researcher or clinician. Please send us (self)nominations for the Rising Star award, including a brief account (max 150 words) of why you think your candidate should receive it. We are looking forward to seeing new names, as well as last year’s strong candidates re-nominated.

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**Surveys and links**

Help out by participating in a study on how UK stroke staff screen for low mood and suicidality in those with post-stroke aphasia. Please follow this link to complete a 10-15 minute questionnaire: <https://uea.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/healthcare-professionals-screening-for-depression-and-suic>. The advert for the study is included at the end of this email. If you have any questions, please contact Dr Hope Schlesinger (H.Schlesinger@uea.ac.uk) or Dr Catherine Ford (Catherine.Ford@uea.ac.uk).

How will research for older people need to change in a world with COVID? Share your thoughts via this brief survey to help shape priorities, design and delivery: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/FVSDVTW>.

Calling for all people working in stroke: we need you to help decide what happens next for UK Stroke Forum!  Your preferences matter! Please complete survey by 25/05/2020 at: <https://bit.ly/2ymLJc5>

Please help us to change the future for people affected by stroke by telling us your questions for stroke research to consider. You can take part at:

http://stroke.org.uk/jla

@PspStroke

#MySayforStroke

British Association of Stroke Physicians (BASP) along with others is helping with a national surveillance project, collating case-reports on neuropsychological complications of COVID. Is there a case you want to share? Please follow this link:  <https://fitwise.eventsair.com/basp-covid-19-surveillance-project/c-19-stroke-surveillance/Site/Register>

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Please remember that we are always happy to hear your opinions, suggestions, and concerns, and to answer any questions.

Stay well and safe!

OPSYRIS Team

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Calling all UK Stroke Professionals! Have your Say!

We invite you to complete this online questionnaire on screening for depression and suicide in people with aphasia following a stroke.

We know those with aphasia are at an increased risk of developing depression but that in your day-to-day practice working to support these patients can be challenging.

It will only take 10-15 minutes of your time and will help to contribute to the continued improvement in services and care for this community.

<https://uea.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/healthcare-professionals-screening-for-depression-and-suic>