



Dr Sally Payne – Recipient of the Pearson Award 2017 towards a critical appraisal and systematic review course.

Sally applied for a Pearson Award in 2017 to enable her to attend a course to develop her skills in critical appraisal and systematic reviews. She attended a 4-day course at Nottingham University in June 2017 which was hosted by the Cochrane Schizophrenia Group.

A part of my PhD research (completed in 2015) which explored how life is experienced by teenagers with developmental coordination disorder (DCD)/dyspraxia, I carried out a literature review which focused primarily on the qualitative literature. To take forward my research recommendations and support future research proposals I recognised a need to expand my skills and ability to review and appraise the wider literature. As well as advancing my career as a clinical researcher, I anticipated that developing my critical appraisal skills would enable me to improve outcomes for young people and families by providing services based on the best available evidence.

I attended the 4-day Nottingham Systematic Review Course in June 2017 having rearranged plans so that I could attend and present at the RCOT conference the day before the course began! There were more than 50 participants, mainly medics but also including allied health professionals and a few social researchers. The course included a combination of presentations, discussions, group work and practical activities in the computer lab. Sessions covered developing a protocol, creating a search strategy, managing references, data extraction, interpreting data and writing reports. The course was skilfully led by Professor Clive Adams, Coordinating Editor of the Cochrane Schizophrenia Group who shared his vast experience, knowledge and amusing anecdotes.

The course was intense and challenging at times. Whilst I have developed and refined my skills in searching and appraising the literature, I now recognise that carrying out a systematic review should be a team activity. I also recognise that should I be lucky enough to uncover sufficient evidence to justify a meta-analysis, then I would need to find a friendly statistician to help crunch the numbers.

Following the course, I have developed plans to carry out a systematic review of self-management interventions for teenagers with DCD/dyspraxia and have invited others to join the review team. The findings will inform development of a future research proposal to co-produce an online self-management programme with and for young people with DCD/dyspraxia.

I also have plans to share my new skills with other occupational therapists and students during one of our bi-monthly CPD sessions. This will enhance the ability of all team members (and future members of the profession) to critically evaluate the literature, ensuring that we continue to provide high quality, cost-effective and evidence-based practice that improves the lives of young people and their families.

As a clinician it is difficult to access training in research skills as clinical skills are typically prioritised for funding and support. I would therefore like to thank the Royal College of Occupational Therapists and Pearson for granting this award to enable me to attend the critical appraisal and systematic review course.

Sally Payne, October 2017.