

# Appearance Research News

The Newsletter of the Centre for Appearance Research - Issue 7



## WHAT'S NEW?

## Welcome...

...to the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR).

In this issue we welcome new PhD students and our first overseas member to CAR and review CAR's highlights of 2006, including our conference **Appearance Matters 2**. Special features include a research overview from our Co-Director Dr Diana Harcourt.

## The Headlines...

### Appearance Matters 2

The 2-day conference held in Bath in June 2006 was a great success! Amongst the 150 delegates were those who had travelled from America, Canada, Australia, Norway, Belgium and Switzerland. The conference included keynote addresses by **Professor Tom Cash** of Old Dominion University, USA and **Professor Jane Ogden** of Surrey University, both of whom are internationally known for their work on appearance and body image. A total of 4 workshops, 3 symposiums, 2 roundtables, 5 sessions of individual papers, 41 papers and 24 posters were presented. Abstracts from the meeting are available on [www.uwe.ac.uk/fas/car](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/fas/car). Many thanks to all who contributed to making the conference such a success!

Check our website to keep up-to-date with the latest details of our next conference '**Appearance Matters 3**'.

### 'Purely Cosmetic? Psychology & Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery'

CAR is hosting a one day event on psychology and aesthetic, plastic and reconstructive surgery. Presentations from speakers including **Dr David Sarwer**, **Dr Alex Clarke**, **Dr Eileen Bradbury**, **Dr David Veale** and **Professor Nichola Rumsey**.

### Whole Face Transplant Recommendations

The 2nd edition of the report from The Royal College of Surgeons Expert Group on Whole Face Transplantation, recommending minimum standards for care, was launched in November 2006. It is available from [www.rcseng.ac.uk](http://www.rcseng.ac.uk).

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# Welcome to New Members!

We are delighted to welcome **Dr Jeanne Reeve** to CAR this year. Jeanne is our first overseas member and is coming from New Zealand to work with CAR for several months. Jeanne is from the University of Auckland where she is a lecturer in Health Social Sciences.

Welcome also to **Caroline Huxley** who has just started a PhD exploring lesbian and bisexual women's appearance concerns and associated health-related behaviours, supervised by **Emma Halliwell** and **Victoria Clarke**.

Congratulations to **Dr James Daniel** who has been appointed as a Lecturer in Health Psychology Lectureship here at UWE, and to **Liz Payne** who was successful in her application for the post of lead researcher for the Healing Foundation Project.

**Emma Williams** joined CAR as a placement student as part of her MSc in Health Psychology at the University of Bath. Emma is now employed as part-time Research Administrator for the Healing Foundation Project.



## Funding Success!

**Emma Halliwell** secured a UWE Faculty of Applied Sciences (FAS) PhD student bursary for a project exploring lesbian and bisexual women's appearance concerns and associated health-related behaviours.

Congratulations to **Diana Harcourt**, **Emma Halliwell**, **Hannah Frith** and **Melissa Wallace** for their successful project bid entitled: 'Altered appearance during treatment for cancer: A qualitative study of the experiences of adolescents patients and their families' which was submitted to CLIC Sargent, totalling £40,000. The project will run for 18 months, starting in the summer of 2007.

## CAR in the Media

### Appearance Matters 2

The conference attracted much media attention, including coverage by *HTV West*, *The Times* and the *Bristol Evening Post*.

### Cosmetic Surgery

**Nicky Rumsey** was interviewed by *BBC World Service* as part of a programme on attitudes to cosmetic surgery worldwide.

### Facial Transplantation

**Nicky Rumsey** was interviewed for several television and radio news programmes including *BBC Breakfast*, *BBC News 24* and *BBC Radio Scotland*, and was quoted in an article in *The Irish Times* about the psychological aspects of face transplantation. Nicky's article on the issues was published in *The Times Higher Education Supplement* on 21st July 2006.

### PhD Research

**Irmgard Tischner** was interviewed on *GWR* and *Star Radio* about her research into people's experiences of being large in contemporary society. Her research was also featured in the *Bristol Evening Post*.

### Healing Foundation Study

CAR's research into the factors and processes that influence adjustment to a visible difference (funded by the Healing Foundation) continues to be the focus of much media attention.

### Exercise & Appearance

**James Daniel** was interviewed on *BBC Bristol* on 23 January 2007 discussing "appearance motivations to exercise and the media".

# CAR News...

## Awayday with Professor Tom Cash & Dr Canice Crerand

A CAR awayday held after the Appearance Matters 2 conference was an opportunity for CAR members to discuss current research activity with our guests Professor Tom Cash of Old Dominion University and Dr Canice Crerand from The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia who then went on to highlight their current projects. Tom Cash highlighted the use of the internet as a valuable research tool, and Canice Crerand shared her experiences of working with children and young people within a clinical context. The day was extremely productive and stimulated much discussion and ideas for future research within the group.

## Interventions Meeting

CAR members organised a meeting in December 2006 to discuss psychosocial interventions for people with a visible difference. We were joined by Dr Alex Clarke, Clinical Psychologist at the Royal Free Hospital and Dr Natty Triskel from Outlook, a psychological support service at Frenchay Hospital, Bristol, which provides interventions for people with a different appearance. The meeting was a great success and plans for future development, evaluation and implementation of interventions were cemented.

## Postgraduate Forum

After 2 years of coordinating the CAR postgraduate forum Sue Jackson is handing the reins over to the new committee who will now be organising the forum. We would all like to thank Sue for all the hard work she has put into making the group such a success. Future plans for the forum include an awayday with a focus on University and NHS ethics applications.

# Recent Publications

**Al-Shakhli H, Harcourt D & Kenealy J** (2006) Psychological Distress Surrounding Diagnosis of Malignant and Nonmalignant Skin Lesions at a Pigmented Lesion Clinic. *Journal of Plastic, Reconstructive & Aesthetic Surgery*, 59, 479-486.

**Gleeson K & Frith H** (2006) (De)constructing Body Image. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 11(1), 79-90.

**Jackson S, Harrad RA, Morris M & Rumsey N** (2006) The Psychosocial Benefits of Corrective Surgery for Adults with Strabismus. *British Journal of Ophthalmology*, 90, 883-888.

**Kennedy F, Harcourt D & Rumsey N** (2006) 'You fall between normal and cancer': The Experience of Being Diagnosed with Ductal Carcinoma in Situ (DCIS). *Health Psychology Update*, 15(2), 20-24.

**Kennedy F, Harcourt D & Rumsey N** (2006) 'I haven't had breast cancer but I've had a mastectomy anyway': Do Women with Ductal Carcinoma in Situ Have Appearance Concerns? *Breast Cancer Research*, 8 (Suppl 2).

**Maddern LH, Cadogan JC & Emerson MP** (2006) 'Outlook': A Psychological Service for Children with a Different Appearance. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 11(3), 431-443.

**Morris P, Bradley A, Doyal L, Earley M, Hagen P, Milling M & Rumsey N** (2007) Face Transplantation: A Review of the Technical, Immunological, Psychological and Clinical Issues with Recommendations for Good Practice. *Transplantation*, 83, 109-128.

**Sandham C & Harcourt D** (2007) Partner Experiences of Breast Reconstruction Post Mastectomy. *European Journal of Oncology Nursing*, 11, 66-67.



# Using Photography in Appearance Research

by Dr Diana Harcourt, Reader in Health Psychology & Co-Director of CAR

Intuitively, photographs and other visual methods seem ideal tools to study visual appearance, yet they seldom are. There are a variety of ways in which they can be used to offer a vivid insight into the world of participants and add an extra dimension to research. Using photographs taken by participants themselves is typified by “Photovoice” - a participatory action research strategy often used in community-based health research. Meanwhile, photo-elicitation uses interviews alongside an individual’s photographs to elicit more detailed accounts of personal experiences.

We recently completed a qualitative study using both interviews and photographs taken by participants in order to explore women’s experiences of changes to their appearance during chemotherapy treatment. Photographs seemed an ideal tool because they would explore the process of appearance changes and how these were experienced during a period of time (a course of chemotherapy treatment typically takes place over 4-6 months). Also, we were keen to use a method that could be unobtrusive (in comparison to repeated interviews) and less demanding than other methods (e.g. writing a diary) and we hoped that photographs would facilitate the interview process by acting as a prompt.

We were keen for our research to be as sensitive and non-invasive as possible, since chemotherapy treatment is often a very difficult time during which patients feel disempowered by the changes that are taking place to their bodies. We placed very few constraints on the participants in our study - they could take as many or as few photos as they wished; they did not have to be of themselves; and they could decide when and where they took them. Importantly, participants were able to choose how they represented themselves since we were aiming to give participants maximum control over the research process. In summary, we decided to include photographs because it seemed a potentially fruitful tool for exploring difficult experiences over time, in a novel way.

Our participants took photographs throughout their treatment and were clearly motivated to take part in the study. Although this kind of research will not appeal to everyone, visual methods may open up possibilities for involving groups of participants who may find it difficult to engage in other forms of research (e.g. those with limited verbal ability) or who have previously proven difficult to engage in research (e.g. adolescents). They might also make the research more appealing since most people are used to taking photographs in their everyday lives, whereas research interviews are often unfamiliar. Visual data also enables us to represent our findings in ways that engage our potential audience, for example in conference presentations where visual imagery might typically be limited to standard medical photographs taken before, during and after treatment.

Researchers thinking about using photography should be aware of its possible limitations – participants may or may not be able, or want to depict or record all their experiences in this way; cameras might be left at home or participants may simply forget to use them. They also need to consider some important issues around ethics, including who is depicted in the photos, whether they gave consent, whether they are identifiable and who will see the images.

There are still many issues to be resolved around the use of photographic data in appearance research. For example, can the photos stand alone as data or are interviews necessary to make sense of the photographs and elaborate the photographer's experiences? The photographs can also be analysed for the content of the photographs themselves - noting what is, or is not, included in the data sets can potentially enhance our understanding of the topic.

In summary, our experience to date has led us to believe that photography can offer many benefits to researchers studying issues around appearance. We are now pursuing this avenue of research further, with a study of adolescents' experiences of an altered appearance during cancer treatment. We believe that the use of cameras in this study will give us an insight into experiences which have tended to be overlooked in previous research. We will be conducting this research with Melissa Wallace and Emma Halliwell and the study, due to start in the summer of 2007, is being funded by the charity CLIC Sargent.

**For further information see:**

**Frith, H. & Harcourt, D. (2005). Picture this: using photography to explore women's experiences of chemotherapy, *Health Psychology Update*, 14(3), 2-9.**

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# Knowledge Exchange & Public Engagement

## CAR Events

### CAR Seminar Series 2006-2007

This year we have been delighted to receive presentations from leading researchers in the appearance field, including Professor Jane Ogden from Surrey University, Dr Sue McHale from Sheffield Hallam University and Dr Nigel Hunt from Nottingham University, and Dr Helen Fawkner of Leeds University. Still to come in 2007 is a talk from Dr Jeanne Reeve. All welcome!

**Dr Jeanne Reeve** (Auckland University) - *Current research in New Zealand on visible difference*  
Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1.30 – 2.30, Room 1N5 Frenchay Campus, UWE Bristol

### 'Purely Cosmetic? Psychology & Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery'

CAR will be hosting a one day event focusing on psychology and cosmetic, plastic and reconstructive surgery at the Watershed in Bristol on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2007. The event is aimed at anyone working in the field of cosmetic, plastic or reconstructive surgery, including psychologists, specialist nurses, surgeons and researchers. Presentations from Guest speakers including: **David Sarwer**, **Alex Clarke**, **Eileen Bradbury**, **David Veale** and **Nicky Rumsey**. The event costs just £99 and there is a reduced fee for PhD students of £50 (limited to 5 places).

**More details and registrations forms are available on the CAR website ([www.uwe.ac.uk/fas/car](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/fas/car)).**

### Appearance Matters ... 3!

Plans are underway for a third Appearance Matters conference to be held in Bristol in 2008. Check our website to keep up-to-date with the latest details.



## Conference Presentations & Talks

**Emma Dures** gave a presentation entitled 'Life with EB - The Psychological Perspective' at the DebRA UK conference (May 2006: Manchester, UK).

**Diana Harcourt** convened a symposium entitled 'Using Alternative and Innovative Methods in Appearance Research' for the British Psychological Society's Division of Health Psychology annual conference (September 2006: University of Essex). Papers presented within the symposium were:

- **D Harcourt**, H Frith & A Fussell (2006) 'Picture This: Using Photography as a Tool for Exploring Experiences of Chemotherapy'
- **F Fox**, M Morris & N Rumsey (2006) 'Using the Internet to Host Real Time Communication Between Young People with Chronic Skin Conditions'

**Fiona Kennedy** presented a talk entitled 'The Experience of Being Diagnosed with Ductal Carcinoma in Situ (DCIS)' at a BPS conference for Health Psychology trainees & students at The University of Derby, UK.

**Fiona Kennedy**, D Harcourt & N Rumsey (2006) 'Exploring Women's Experiences of Ductal Carcinoma in Situ (DCIS)', poster presented at the Division of Health Psychology annual conference (September 2006: University of Essex).

**Fiona Kennedy** "I haven't had breast cancer but I've had a mastectomy anyway": Do Women with Ductal Carcinoma in Situ Have Appearance Concerns? poster presented at the Breast Cancer Campaign Scientific Conference at the Royal Society, London (November 2006).

# Knowledge Exchange & Public Engagement: Conference Presentations & Talks

## Appearance Matters 2: Papers & Posters

**AL Bessell**, T Moss, D Harcourt & N Rumsey 'Psychosocial Interventions for Visible Differences: A Systematic Review' (Poster)

**JZ Daniel**, N Rumsey, A Clarke, D Harcourt, T Moss, L Payne, S Newman, R Newell, A Thompson, K Saul & R Charlton 'Identifying Factors and Process Contributing to Successful Adjustment to Disfiguring Conditions'.

N Rumsey & **E Dures** 'Fluctuations of body image states in daily life: An Exploration of Women's Experiences'.

**Emma Halliwell** convened a symposium entitled 'Regimes of Idealised Weight And Weight Management' which included the following presentations:

- **H Dittmar**, E Halliwell & L Kingston 'Selling Weight Loss Regimes: The Impact of Model Thinness and Attractiveness on Advertising Effectiveness, Body Image and Dieting Intention'.
- **E Halliwell** 'Associations Between Self-Imposed Eating Regimes and Daily Fluctuations in Body Image and Mood'.

**D Harcourt, H Frith & A Fussell** "Chemo Sucks!": Anticipating the Impact of an Altered Appearance During Cancer Treatment on Self and Others'.

**FE Fox**, M Morris & N Rumsey "Skin is everything for teenagers! Everyone is conscious"; Young People Talking Online About Living with a Chronic Skin Condition'.

**A Fussell**, N Triskel, J Cadogan, S Cook, H Skuse & A Scott 'What We Do at Outlook – The Structure of and Services Provided by Outlook, a Unique NHS Regional Psychosocial Support Service for People with Visible Differences'. (Poster)

**F Kennedy** 'The Psychosocial Impact of Ductal Carcinoma in Situ (DCIS), a Preinvasive Breast Condition'. (Poster)

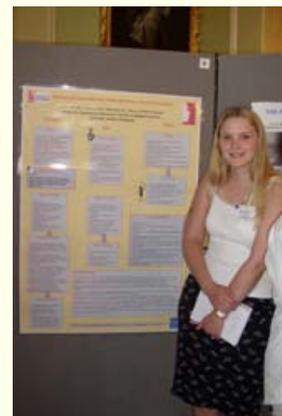
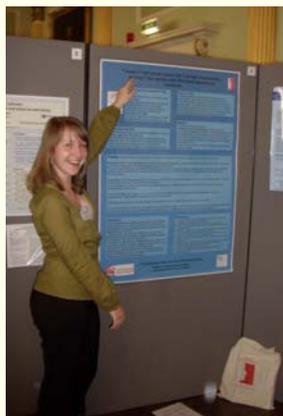
**T Moss** & DL Harris 'A Prospective Controlled Outcome Study of Psychological Change Following Plastic Surgery'.

**BA Rosser** & T Moss 'Cognitive Biases in Appearance-Related Information Processing and Adjustment to Appearance: The Role of the Self-Schema'.

**N Rumsey**, G Fiddian, E Paltatzidou & N Yearsley 'Whole Face Transplants: Technological Miracle or Psychological Minefield?'.

K Mander & **N Triskel** 'Short Clinical Interventions, Long Clinical Relationships: Psychological Support After a Burn Injury'.

**M Wallace**, D Harcourt & N Rumsey 'Appearance doesn't seem important until something happens to yours, and then suddenly it does feel very important': Permanent Appearance Changes Resulting from Meningococcal Septicaemia During Adolescence.



Members of CAR presenting at the Appearance Matters 2 conference:  
Left to right: Fiona Kennedy, James Daniel, Tim Moss, Alyson Bessell

## Conference Presentations & Talks

**Nicky Rumsey** was invited to give a talk entitled 'What Do We Do When We Say Hello? Forming Impressions of Beautiful and Different Faces' at a discussion session for Making Faces, part of the British Association's annual Festival of Science (September 2006: Norwich, UK).

**Nicky Rumsey** 'Psychological Aspects of Cosmetic Surgery' and 'Who Needs the Psychologist Most, the Patient or the Plastic Surgeon?' papers presented at the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons annual conference (September 2006: Bath, UK).

**Nicky Rumsey** 'What are the Psycho-social Issues Facing Burn Survivors and Their Families?: A Review of the Evidence' and 'Burns, Body Image and Quality of Life' invited presentations at the 13th Congress of the International Society for Burn Injuries (September 2006: Fortaleza, Brazil).

**Nicky Rumsey & James Partridge** were invited to give a presentation entitled 'Community Integration: What Is Not Known? What Should Be Known?' at the American Burn Association's 'Burn Research State of the Science' (October 2006: Washington DC, US). The focus of the meeting was to define goals, priorities and needs for burn research in the US in next 10 years.

**Nicky Rumsey** was invited to give a presentation entitled 'Whole Face Transplantation: Read the Small Print Carefully' as part of the Royal College of Surgeons 'Surgery Unmasked', a public lecture on contemporary issues in facial surgery (November 2006: London, UK).

**Nicky Rumsey** gave an invited lecture at the Centre for Life in Newcastle entitled 'The Psychology of Appearance & Cosmetic Surgery' (November 2006).

**Nicky Rumsey & Diana Harcourt** gave a presentation on the impact of appearance associated with genetic conditions at Cardiff University (December 2006).

### UWE Faculty of Applied Sciences Postgraduate Research Forum, November 2006

**Alyson Bessell** 'Psychosocial interventions for visible differences: A systematic review'

**Emma Dures** 'Exploring the psychosocial impact of living with epidermolysis bullosa (EB)'

**Fiona Fox** 'Teenagers, skin & online chat: A PhD in progress'

**Fiona Kennedy** 'Women's perceptions of DCIS: Is it 'real' breast cancer or not?'

**Ben Rosser** 'Adjustment to appearance: the role of self-schemata'

**Irmgard Tischner** 'SIZE MATTERS - A Critical Psychological Investigation of 'Obesity''

**Jamie White** 'The influence of the family on adolescent alcohol and tobacco use'

### UWE Faculty of Applied Sciences Psychology Postgraduate Conference, Nov 2006

**Alyson Bessell** 'The Importance of Psychosocial Interventions for Visible Differences: Exploring the Needs of Clients'

**Fiona Kennedy** 'Perceptions of Ductal Carcinoma in Situ (DCIS): A Qualitative Study'



When you've looked at  
the ceiling, the coffee machine,  
your shoes and the far wall,

look me in the eye  
and say hello.

Photographer Andy Flack



Don't feel bad. It's a natural response not to know where to look when meeting someone with a facial disfigurement for the first time.

I'm used to having conversations with the side of people's faces, or the tops of their heads.

I've even had people conduct an entire discussion through the person standing next to me. (Sometimes even when I don't know the person standing next to me).

What I'm saying is, don't be scared. Make eye contact, shake hands, or even smile. I won't bite. We could talk about what happened to me, if you like.

Or we could discuss something more important, like the weather, or the price of fish. Above all, don't get put off. Meeting a complete stranger is a difficult business at the best of times.

You will find it awkward, but it does get better. I'm still learning myself. So, until we meet again, get a little practice in. Look me in the eye and say goodbye.

