



**Centre Health Economics and Medicines Evaluation  
Institute of Medical & Social Care Research  
College of Health and Behavioural Sciences  
Bangor University**

## **PhD Studentship in Health Economics**

**Project Title: Exploring the cost effectiveness of Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for people living with cancer and their carers**

Applications are invited for a full-time PhD studentship, funded by Tenovus – a leading UK Cancer Charity. The studentship is based at the Centre for Health Economics and Medicines Evaluation at Bangor University under the supervision of Professor Rhiannon Tudor Edwards, a health economist, and Rebecca Crane, a research fellow and teacher of mindfulness based cognitive therapy (MBCT).

This PhD project will build on pilot data from an NHS service evaluation, showing the potential effectiveness of MBCT for people living with cancer and their carers. Resources in the NHS for cancer care, as for all other services, are limited and what is not known is whether MBCT, when delivered as part of usual NHS cancer care, is cost-effective.

Our multidisciplinary supervisory/advisory team made up of a health economist, two MBCT practitioners, a consultant oncologist and two statisticians will support the successful applicant to explore the cost effectiveness of MBCT for people living with cancer and their carers under different delivery scenarios. This will provide an exciting opportunity to a student seeking a stepping stone into a career in health economics whilst yielding valuable, methodological outcomes to those leading and collaborating in cancer care in Wales and the UK.

**The closing date for applications is Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2011.** The successful applicant is expected to commence their studies on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 or, at the latest, by the start of January 2012.

Further details about the studentship, the research group, Bangor University and North Wales are available at <http://www.bangor.ac.uk/healthconomics>.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact Rhiannon Tudor Edwards, in the first instance, by email on [r.t.edwards@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:r.t.edwards@bangor.ac.uk) or by telephone on +44 (0) 1248 383712.

### **Studentship Details:**

The studentship is for three years on a full-time basis from October 2011 and is available to UK and EU applicants. In addition to having tuition fees paid, the PhD student will receive an annual tax free stipend of £13,590 in 2011-12, £14,270 in 2012-13 and £14,983 in 2013-14.

The studentship also includes funds to attend an Advanced Economics Modelling course, a substantial budget for travel & subsistence expenses and office costs to support the research of the award, a budget for conference attendance, a laptop and the publication fee for a paper in a suitable Open Access journal. The studentship also includes the fees for attending a [course in mindfulness](#) which is provided by Bangor University's Centre for Mindfulness Research & Practice.

### **Application Details:**

Applicants should be a UK or EU national with a first class or upper-second-class undergraduate degree and, preferably, an MSc in economics, health economics, psychology, relevant social science, or have a clinical background, such as training in delivering psychological therapies or nursing.

Applications should be made using the University's 'conventional postgraduate application form' which is available at a .doc file at the link below.

[http://www.bangor.ac.uk/courses/postgrad/research/apply\\_research.php.en](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/courses/postgrad/research/apply_research.php.en)

Please ensure that you state the department in which you wish to study is IMSCaR and that your area of study is Health Economics. Please also use the Personal Statement in Section C of the form to ensure you explain your academic background, your interest in this PhD topic and expectations if you are awarded this studentship.

The form's Section D regarding financial support should indicate that you are applying for third party funding and the name of the funding body should be quoted as 'Tenovus (project F003210)' with none of the rest of the details below that field in Section D needing to be completed.

### **The Educational Benefits and Opportunities associated with the Studentship:**

The Tenovus student would complete their PhD within the 3 years, and graduate as a practicing health economist with specialist experience relating to the cost effectiveness of MBCT for people living with cancer and their carers.

- S/he will gain a sound basic knowledge of health economics, having attended a MSc module in Health Economics taught by Rhiannon Tudor Edwards at Bangor University, and have had a rare opportunity to gain experience in using real data for an in-depth methodological analysis for his/her PhD. This experience in costing the effectiveness of MBCT in cancer care would be very applicable to post doctoral work on future cancer research.
- S/he will have experience of working with health economists in a centre with a portfolio of research spanning public health/pharmacoeconomics, support to NICE, the Welsh Assembly Government and the UK government. S/he will also have had experience of interacting with two UK Clinical Research Collaboration (CRC) registered trials units (in Bangor and Liverpool) currently conducting a number of cancer trials. There will be the opportunity to meet with clinical

research staff on oncology and haematology units at a large District General Hospital – Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor.

- S/he will gain experience of presenting their research to health economists and clinicians at national meetings and conferences, e.g. the Welsh Health Economists Group, the Welsh Cancer Trials Network and National Cancer Research Institute Conference, and will also be encouraged to gain experience in writing grant applications for post doctoral positions as our centre is keen to retain researchers and provide a career path at Bangor University and add to the critical mass of health economists in Wales.
- The student would join our PhD programme which uses a four paper based PhD framework. The programme will allow the student to integrate fully with staff and other research students in the Centre for Health Economics and Medicines Evaluation, including the support of a wider multi-disciplinary thesis advisory committee spanning oncology, statistics, clinical research methods, health economics and pharmacoeconomics, receiving a rare opportunity for a practical and methodological training in health economics of cancer.

## **The Centre for Health Economics and Medicines Evaluation**

The Centre for Health Economics and Medicines Evaluation ([CHEME](#)) is part of the multi-disciplinary Institute of Medical and Social Care Research ([IMSCaR](#)), within the College of Health and Behavioural Sciences ([CoHaBS](#)) at Bangor University.

The Centre is active across a range of health economic research activities, and employs a team of health economists who are supported by an administrator.

Current research activities include economic evaluation alongside trials of health technologies. The Centre has formal links with two registered Clinical Trials Units that are part of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration (UKCRC): the North Wales Organisation for Randomised Trials in Health (based within Bangor University), and the University of Liverpool's Clinical Trials Research Centre.

## **The Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice**

The Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice ([CMRP](#)) was founded in 2001 and was the first in the UK to establish professional training in the field on mindfulness and remains one of the leading organisations for the delivery of training programmes. The CMRP offers training to professionals through a range of CPD courses and a portfolio of MSc and MA programmes. The CMRP is currently the site for one arm of a large scale Randomised Controlled trial examining the effectiveness of MBCT in comparison to another depression relapse prevention treatment and has a range of other smaller scale research projects underway. The student will have opportunities to exchange and as appropriate collaborate with the CMRP research team.

## **Tenovus**

Founded in 1943 by ten Cardiff business men, Tenovus has funded world leading cancer research for over 40 years. In that time, Tenovus-funded scientists have made breakthroughs that have benefited many thousands of cancer patients worldwide. Tenovus is proud of its nurturing of successive generations of well trained, highly motivated researchers through the funding of PhD studentships in Wales and across the UK.

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

**Project Title:**

Exploring the cost effectiveness of Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for people living with cancer and their carers.

**Funder:** Tenovus

**Supervisors:**

- *Professor Rhiannon Tudor Edwards* is a Co-Director of the Centre for Health Economics and Medicines Evaluation at Bangor University and is a Professor of Health Economics.
- *Rebecca Crane* is a Research Fellow in Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy and a teacher of mindfulness with the Centre for Mindfulness Research & Practice at Bangor University.

**Background to the Project:** People living with cancer and their families often feel distress, given the impact of diagnosis, uncertain survival and effects of treatment. The challenge of managing the psychological adjustment can cause cancer patients to be prone to anxiety and depression.

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) is a psychoeducational approach taught in a group context over eight sessions which supports the development of psychological resilience. There is robust evidence that MBCT significantly reduces the risk of depression recurrence and has been recommended by NICE as a depression prevention approach for people who are prone to depression. Based on this evidence, in North Wales, the mindfulness approach has been adapted specifically to support people living with cancer and their carers.

**Objective:** To explore the cost effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for people living with cancer and their carers.

**Methods:** The student will use current published evidence, pilot evidence from North Wales specific to cancer care, and will gather more evidence using quantitative and qualitative methods, to build and populate an economic model in order to explore the cost-effectiveness of MBCT in cancer care.

S/he will (1) review current theory and guidance on the cost-effectiveness of MBCT in cancer care; (2) undertake a pilot study to measure health related quality of life in 30 patients living with cancer and their carers, before and after attending the MBCT course as part of their cancer care in North Wales; (3) undertake qualitative interviews with 12 patients and their carers to learn more about their experience of MBCT; and (4) undertake qualitative interviews with the teachers delivering MBCT and the clinical staff referring patients to the course to learn about their experiences and perspectives.