

Delivering Health Outcomes

Introduction

These case studies summarise two pilot projects run by the UK Medical Collections Group (UKMCG) to investigate ways in which medicine and healthcare collections can deliver health outcomes.

There are many examples nationally of museums using their collections to improve people's health, for example working with mental health service users or isolated elderly people, but many focus on art or social history collections. Our aim was to assess whether medical history collections could be used in the same way or if they could have a different impact because of their medical content.

The UKMCG funded two short-term projects using a Subject Specialist Network grant from Arts Council England. The Thackray Medical Museum worked to improve the wellbeing of people living with dementia, their families and carers. The Infirmary in Worcester, part of the George Marshall Medical Museum, aimed to increase young people's awareness of sexual health. Both projects ran between January and April 2013.

**UK MEDICAL
COLLECTIONS
GROUP**



Thackray Medical Museum: Dementia Café

Lauren Ryall-Stockton, Curator

About the Museum

Thackray Medical Museum is one of the largest medical museums in the UK. Since opening in 1997, the museum has established an audience of over 70,000 visitors per year and a collection of over 70,000 objects, books and medical trade catalogues. Its purpose is to preserve, interpret and promote the heritage of the medical and healthcare industries. Using collections, exhibitions, learning and conferencing the museum delivers learning, health and social outcomes inspired by history, and enables audiences to realise a healthy future.

Audience and partnerships

The target audience for the project was people living with dementia and Alzheimer's disease, their families and care workers. The museum did not engage extensively with this audience before the project, although staff were aware of some potential interest. The museum collaborated with several local dementia care providers, including NHS partnerships, council-run organisations and individual community providers.

What did we do?

The project objective was to develop and pilot reminiscence handling boxes for people living with dementia for use at dementia cafés, community centres and care homes. We also aimed to pilot the 'Wellbeing Umbrella' evaluation methodology developed by University College London. The project's long-term objectives were to:

- Increase and widen participation in the museum's activities, amongst people aged 50+
- Increase use of the museum's stored collection
- Develop partnerships and links with other organisations to develop a new resource that could be used easily by museum volunteers and staff
- Establish a team of museum volunteers with an interest in working with people living with dementia
- Respond to local and national strategies such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for the Leeds area (JSNA) and the Public Health Outcomes Framework 2012-2013

The museum employed a freelance museum consultant, Angela Sutton-Vane, to deliver the project. The museum drew on the experience of other organisations who had worked with similar audiences, for example the House of Memories project at National Museums Liverpool. (<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/learning/projects/house-of-memories/>)

During the project the freelance consultant:

- Sourced strong, brightly coloured, light-weight boxes with insert trays for objects and suspension files for laminated sheets, questionnaires etc
- Created a comprehensive, easy-to-use handling box resource with fact sheets, contact lists, links to further organisations who provide support for dementia and information on dementia for volunteers and staff
- Developed a user-base with a complete guide to dementia cafes and other resources in Leeds, along with an information pack to send out to session leaders and a pre-visit questionnaire

- Identified suitable items from the collection and sourced additional supporting material
- Sourced training for volunteers
- Set up pilot sessions with dementia cafés in Leeds
- Made contact with most of the dementia cafés taking place in Leeds and sent out information packs
- Created a diary of the schedule of all the dementia cafés

The handling boxes used items from the stored handling collections such as medicine bottles, a first-aid box, a nurse's uniform and a stethoscope, supplemented with items bought in specifically such as a 1950s St John's Ambulance First Aid manual. We also bought objects to stimulate different senses, for example Wintergreen Ointment and carbolic soap which have distinctive smells, along with items to stimulate memories of local products including Potter's Cod Liver Oil with Malt Extract, Pontefract liquorice, Zam-Buk embrocation and Peps tablets. The handling boxes included laminated, printed images of advertisements for the products used in the boxes, as well as photographs of local pharmacists and chemists shops in Leeds. The aim was to use the objects and images to trigger positive memories of places, childhood and family professions centred around home remedies, the family doctor and visiting the local chemist.

We identified 19 Dementia Cafés and day centres in Leeds, and made contact with 11 of them. All of the responses were positive and enthusiastic.

The workshops

The museum held 4 sessions in total in Leeds: one at an Alzheimer's café, one at a Caring Together Memoirs group, one at Neville House, a care home for people living with dementia, and one at DeCaf Central, a dementia café run by Carers Leeds. At the DeCaf Central workshops the museum staff tested University College London's 'Wellbeing Umbrella' evaluation methodology.

Angela Sutton-Vane delivered the pilot sessions together with the Thackray Medical Museum's Curator, Lauren Ryall-Stockton. An MA student on a work placement at the museum, Gemma Meek, attended one of the pilot sessions to take photographs and observe.

Neville House

There were 13 participants, 11 women and 2 men, all from white British backgrounds. Some had quite advanced cases of dementia and were not able to participate, though they remained in the room. Residents at Neville House are aged between 64 and 99 years.

The session took place in the living room, with residents seated in armchairs around the edge of the room and a few small coffee tables available. A pre-questionnaire and information pack was sent, but not returned. Angela and Lauren attended the session and care staff were present for some of the time. 2 of the residents were particularly interactive and seemed to enjoy the session; another 2-3 joined in occasionally; 2 others watched with interest but did not want to join in; others were not able to participate or slept. The session was ended after about 45 minutes as concentration was visibly reducing.

DeCaf Central

Before the session we talked to the organiser, Lisa McAven, who explained that numbers at the café could vary from 2-3 participants to 15. We asked for the room to be set up with one big table so that all participants would be together.

Lauren and Angela attended the session, along with

Gemma, who observed and took photographs. The café had a low turnout on the day with 2 participants with dementia, one carer and 3 volunteers present. Both of those with dementia were men; one at a more advanced stage than the other.

The involvement of both dementia sufferers and carers created a good level of interaction. The room was welcoming with plenty of tea and coffee available, and flowers and tablecloths on the tables.

Bob, one of the participants, arrived without a carer. He appeared to have early stage dementia as well as many other health problems. He was very sociable and said he loved coming to the cafés: "I go to them all and my life revolves around them". He really enjoyed the objects and humour was an important means of communication for him, though he became emotional when reminiscing about his wife. Bob used to enjoy going to museums and found heritage interesting. The other participant, Neil, had more pronounced dementia and came with his wife. He was more introverted and quiet, but was kept fully occupied and engaged.

Conversation was continuous and the involvement of carers and volunteers created a really vibrant atmosphere, with subjects ranging from memories of home remedies such as cod liver oil, malt extract, Horlicks, Germolene, shops and buildings in Leeds, professions, illnesses and National Service. The session lasted for about 90 minutes and could have continued for longer.

Successes

The objects were effective in engaging participants, with some unexpected responses. The first aid manual and the bandage gave Bob a chance to demonstrate the first aid skills he had learned perhaps 50 years before. Joan at Neville House read a sight-test wall chart from top to bottom without glasses, to the amazement of everyone in the room. Products such as the Zam-Buk and the nurse's uniform were also popular, along with photographs of pharmacists' shops in Leeds.

The use of different sensory stimuli was effective. Smells were very popular – participants enjoyed the bar of carbolic both for its bright pink colour and its strong smell. We had ordered vortex cubes (toothpaste, malted barley and antiseptic, for example) to extend the use of smell but they had not arrived in time for the pilots, and this is definitely an area to explore further. Likewise sound, for example through the use of a printed card containing a "sound bite", such as the song Lily the Pink.



Learning points

- Humour was an important part of both sessions.
- It's important to include objects and images that interest men; many reminiscence packs, for example, are centred around the home and products that women would have used.
- The sessions need at least two facilitators to maintain interaction and keep objects circulating.
- Hygiene is important: wipes should be available for those items that came into close contact with noses and ears. We had some liquorice roots which we decided to remove due to health and safety concerns.

Challenges

Leeds has a large multi-racial community, and the two pilots were not representative of this. One of the challenges for the future will be finding how to access other communities and develop handling boxes that will engage people from different backgrounds. Because of the set-up in care homes, and the likelihood of meeting people with more advanced dementia, we found these environments more challenging to work in than dementia cafés.

Obtaining feedback in an environment where people are busy and not used to completing evaluation forms is a challenge. The wellbeing umbrella is a paper-based format and requires participants to complete a form at the beginning and end of each session, which we found unsuitable in some settings and with some participants. For example, residents at Neville House with more advanced dementia didn't fully understand who we were or why we were there. It therefore seemed inappropriate and potentially confusing to use evaluation forms which the participants would not understand. While we did use the forms at DeCaf Central, participants found the purpose difficult to understand, though carers and volunteers did complete the evaluation.

Outcomes

Both sessions went well from the museum's point of view and those participants who wanted to engaged with the objects and other items in the boxes with enthusiasm. Following the session at Neville House the manager, Julie Craven, was enthusiastic and keen for the museum to return to deliver another session.

"The room was full of chatter; it was lovely to hear; you interacted really well with them".

She also said that other residents who were not well enough to attend would have "loved the sessions", especially as a number had worked in caring professions. Julie later sent further feedback by email.

"I think the overall session was great, we had a residents' meeting on the 11th and all those that attended said positive things about how much they had enjoyed what you did and that they would like to see you again on a regular basis if that was possible."

At DeCaf Central the session leader, Lisa McAven, was given a facilitator feedback form at the end of the session, which she completed as follows:

Mood before the session: "relaxed"

Wellbeing before the session: "calm"

Engagement in session: "all participants engaged fully in the session"

Enjoyment of session: "lots of laughter and discussion – smells created fond memories and

stories"

Changes in mood after session: "lifted and jolly, cheery"

Changes in wellbeing after the session: "lively, chatty".

While the evaluation was positive, we felt it was difficult to assess whether changes in mood were due to the activity or to just being in a social environment or the novelty of having something different to do. Certainly at DeCaf Central, by the time everyone had settled, chatted and had tea and biscuits the atmosphere in the room was upbeat, before the reminiscence boxes were opened up.

The Infirmary, Worcester: Sexual Health

About the Museum

The Infirmary is a partnership project between the University of Worcester and the Charles Hastings Education Centre, which owns the George Marshall Medical Museum (GMMM).

Funded by the HLF in 2011, the project has two main aims: to establish a permanent exhibition of medical history within the former Worcester Royal Infirmary, and to establish successful formal and informal learning programmes for the public, schools, and University students and staff. Stored collections from GMMM are displayed at The Infirmary, which opened to the public in August 2012.

As a museum of medical history, wellbeing is a key strand of the programmes we develop, and features in the permanent exhibition in a 'test your health' and public health area. The Infirmary is committed to promoting wellbeing in participants and visitors.

One of our main approaches to sustainability is to embed the project into University structures and activities. The pilot project was designed to work towards this objective by supporting engagement with young people at the University's new joint public and University library, The Hive, as well as offering practical development and experience for youth work students.

Audience and partnerships

We worked with two partner organisations in the delivery of this project. Our healthcare provider was the Sexual Health Education Unit within the Specialist Sexual Health Service at Health and Care Worcestershire (NHS Trust). This Unit has a remit within their service level agreement to deliver sex and relationships education (SRE) directly to groups identified as being particularly vulnerable, or potentially engaging in risky behaviour. The Infirmary had previously worked with the Unit in the past as part



of a sexual health project with young people who were not in education, employment or training. We also worked alongside course leaders for Youth and Community Studies at the University, who support the activities of the Access and Inclusion department.

Our audience was, in the most part, young people aged 14-19 accessing services at The Hive, the city's new joint University and public library. This group is seen as a 'problem audience' at the Hive at present as many young people spend time in the library and are a visible and noisy, group, often viewed as disruptive to other library users.

As University of Worcester students studying Youth and Community Studies delivered the sessions as part of their work-based training, we considered these students to be a secondary target audience.

What did we do?

With activity sessions led by youth work students, we engaged young people at The Hive in themes relating to safe sex and healthy relationships through art-based activities (cupcake decorating).

The collections we used to inspire this activity focused on sexual health and included medical instruments, contraceptive devices and methods, skin disease atlases, and a series of 20th century 'growing up' pamphlets. These collections belong to the George Marshall Medical Museum. Some items were on loan and were used for display only.

We invited Two Little Cats Bakery (<http://www.twolittlecats.co.uk/>) to train our staff and youth work students in making their unusual decorations, as seen at an Eat Your Heart Out event at St Bart's anatomy museum in 2012. The youth work students then delivered two sessions at the nearby University and public library to young people (mostly aged 13-15). Issues surrounding sex and healthy relationships were discussed and explored while the young people decorated cupcakes with infectious diseases made of icing, including genital warts, syphilis and gonorrhoea.

We had planned to display work from the project at The Hive but due to the nature of the art form this was not possible.



Engagement with the activity was entirely voluntary and the approach by youth work students/staff was deliberately informal (albeit with clear aims and objectives) in order to encourage a feeling of being welcome. We hoped that the activity would be delivered over several sessions at different times, but it was not possible to build this into the wider activity of the Youth Work students at The Hive.

We worked with a total of 69 participants and 11 University students. Most participants were aged 13-15 but around 15 of them were aged 15-18. The youth work students were all aged 18-22.

Successes

The highlight for us was seeing so many young people participating. The average enjoyment rating given by young people at the end of the session was 9.5 out of 10, which is very encouraging. No participant rated the activity as less than 8 out of 10. All those who filled in questionnaires said they would like to do the activity again.

Youth work students were greatly enthused by the positive feedback from participants and the sessions will run again.

The student facilitators and the University Youth and Community Studies department have now become aware of what we do and we have gained one volunteer as a direct result of the project. This department does outreach work in local schools, and building this relationship gives us the best chance of on-going support within the University and further evidence of our ability to support University course content and student development.

Learning points

Humour was a significant aspect of the sessions. Due to the light-hearted nature of the activity, student youth workers felt that they were able to have conversations with young people that might otherwise be difficult to get started. Because the participants felt welcome and relaxed and were engaged in a creative activity, it was possible to talk to them in a different

environment than would normally be the case when discussing issues around sexual health and it was therefore possible to have different conversations. Because of the availability of materials we could only allow young people to decorate one cupcake each, which means the time they spent at the activity was limited. This meant that the time available for youth workers to engage them in discussion about sexual health issues was also restricted. We will take this into account in future and consider developing extension activities that work around the cupcake decorating.

Challenges

Evaluation of the changes in participants' knowledge and understanding over time could be improved. The evaluation methodology we employed was the 'Wellbeing Umbrella' developed by University College, London. This indicated that the participants enjoyed the sessions and felt welcome, which was part of our objectives in working with the Hive, but was less effective at assessing changes in their knowledge and understanding of sexual health issues and services.

We would hope to achieve greater use of the museum collections in future. Unfortunately, in the complex partnership structure we felt that the museum link was mostly lost on the participants, though not on the student facilitators.

Outcomes

It is difficult to assess the extent to which the project improved young people's knowledge of sexual health. Because their knowledge was not measured before and after the activity, it is difficult to demonstrate a change. We would aim to address this in future.

The comments about a favourite part of the activity unanimously focused on the cake-decorating aspects ('making cakes', 'making boils', 'decorating cakes' etc) and not on the sexual health aspect of the project. This was part of the point: the aim was to engage young people in an enjoyable activity through which they would learn about sexual health issues, rather than making sexual health the focus of the session. Over half the participants felt they had learnt something from the activity, though it is possible that others had too but were focused on the fun aspects of the activity and may have absorbed information without being immediately aware of it. None of the participants said they had learnt how to decorate cakes, so it is clear that they knew the session was geared towards sexual health even if light-heartedly so.

However the student youth workers were extremely enthused about the activity and its potential for engagement. They felt that many unexpected discussions came up in conversation and that the young people were much more comfortable talking about sexual health than they had experienced in other environments.

"The activity worked amazingly well, we want to run it again. All the young people wanted a go."

"Comedy was maybe the main good thing with this, it led to conversations I've never had with young people in the things I do"

[this student had worked in Bronx and with regional

young offenders/ young people at risk of offending, as well as on a youth work course].

For the Infirmary Museum we aimed to achieve increased visibility and public awareness of the collections and the museum through linking with a large venue in Worcester that currently receives large volumes of visitors. We were pleased with the number of young people we reached who would otherwise not have come into contact with the museum. We have strengthened links with the University of Worcester departmental framework and will be putting in an application to the departmental funding streams over the summer. It was unfortunate that we were not allowed to put up display boards in the space but felt that the museum was visible in a place where it would not have been normally. Interest among staff members was high, with many dropping in to have a look.

Outcomes have also been achieved for the University of Worcester's access and inclusion department. The project supported its aim to address concerns about the use of the space by young people and internal advocacy. Engaging with young people in a meaningful way helped to support achievement of the department's targets. Youth work students involved in the project were able to develop their skills through training provided by the project and passing on those skills to young people.

Links and Further Information

The UK Medical Collections Group
<http://www.thackraymedicalmuseum.co.uk/library-resources/uk-medical-collections-group/>

Arts Council England
<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/>

Thackray Medical Museum
<http://www.thackraymedicalmuseum.co.uk/>

The George Marshall Medical Museum and The Infirmary, Worcester
<http://www.medicalmuseum.org.uk/index.html>

The Alzheimer's Society
<http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/index.php>

University College London Health and Well-being research
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums/research>



**Thackray Medical Museum,
141 Beckett Street,
Leeds LS9 7LN.**

**Tel: 0113 244 4343
Fax: 0113 247 0219
Email: info@thackraymuseum.org
www: [thackraymedicalmuseum.co.uk](http://www.thackraymedicalmuseum.co.uk)**