James Watson

Tell me about your research
My research looks at care for people diagnosed with dementia and their interactions with healthcare. We are looking at socio-economic factors (e.g. deprivation), geography (e.g. where somebody lives) and protected characteristics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity) to identify whether, and to what extent these factors impact care use and quality and outcomes for people living with dementia.

We want to reflect the routes people with dementia take through primary and secondary care, using GP, hospital and A&E data. My aim is to improve pragmatic use and enhance the quality of people’s care when living with dementia. Using these datasets, I hope to support clinicians with a practical data-driven tool to use during care discussions with the individual and their care group.

What motivates you?
Having family members with dementia and meeting others with dementia motivates me. There are so many inequalities in public health which I want to find out more about. I think dementia is the most important health issue for the next 10 to 20 years.

Are there any myths about your work which bother you?
There is a worry my work could be seen as telling doctors and nurses what to do, but it is vital that we are working with clinicians and public advisors from the outset, getting input from everybody involved in caring for people living with dementia. We need to make it clear this is not to replace clinicians, but to give clinicians additional support in care discussions, to provide the right service at the right time for the individual.

In an ideal world, where do you see your work in the future?
The data-driven tool will be used by clinicians while talking to patients and carers and involving them in decision making. In an ideal world there would also be policy changes affecting care pathways.

About the artwork
Speaking to James, the overarching theme was confusion. This included the confusion felt by dementia patients and their families while trying to navigate all the different barriers and twists and turns of dementia care, as well as James’ own uncertainties as he was just starting his PhD - Hana

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