

EDAC ∞ NEWSLETTER



Winter Issue

January 28th 2024

EDAC Events ♦ Happy New Year! Kate Tchanturia awarded MBE. Podcast now on Spotify!

EDAC Research ♦ Recruitment calls! New publications and exciting collaborations!

Knowledge Exchange ♦ London Eating Disorder Conference. INSAR 2025

Coming Soon... ♦ Photovoice exhibitions! Behind the Brain: Neuroimaging in Eating Disorders

EDAC SPOTLIGHT

Dr Helen Sharpe



EDAC EVENTS

Happy New Year From EDAC

Here at EDAC we want to wish you all a Happy New Year! We want to thank you for your support so far and for contributions to making 2024 a fantastic year at EDAC, whether this was being part of the community through our mailing list, research collaborators, research participants and more. We hope to keep the momentum going throughout 2025, working towards our big goal here at EDAC: to be led by Autistic people with lived experience making meaningful change for the Autistic community. We are excited to see what the year will bring and to share it with you all along the way!



2025

Kate Tchanturia Awarded an MBE!

We would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to our very own Professor Kate Tchanturia, who has received an MBE for her services to Autistic people with an eating disorder! Kate has and continues to do so much hard work to improve outcomes and experiences for Autistic people with an eating disorder, and we are very privileged to call Kate a member of the EDAC community. See Kate's response to her outstanding achievement:

"It is both a delight and an honour to be recognized in the King's New Year Honours List. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to the community I have served, my colleagues, students, the large research and clinical teams, and my family for all their support over the years. I am also deeply grateful to the nominators who took the time to put me forward. Although I do not know their names, I am incredibly thankful for their kindness. I look forward to continuing to work hard and collaborate with great people. I have been blessed with fantastic opportunities since moving to the UK 28 years ago, and I hope to make further contributions to both academic and clinical psychology."

Table Talk Podcast now on Spotify

Our table talk episodes are now available on Spotify, so you can download episodes and listen to them on the go! Click the following link to access the Spotify and stay tuned for new episodes coming soon!

[EDAC Table Talk Podcast | Podcast on Spotify](#)



EDAC RESEARCH

Recruitment Call: Autistic young people and FBT

Are you an Autistic young person who has experience of Family Based Treatment for anorexia nervosa (FBT)? Researchers at the University of Edinburgh would love to hear from you. We are looking for participants aged 14-21 living in the UK to take part in an interview about their experiences of treatment. This can help clinicians understand how to make treatments more effective. If you're interested, you can find out more here:

https://edinburgh.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3K6mIVQREsmRwKa.

Please contact vanessa.haugard@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk with any questions.

Recruitment: Learning Disability Photovoice Study

Following our Photovoice research with Autistic people with an eating disorder, we are recruiting for a new Photovoice study that explores experiences and priorities for those with a Learning Disability and an eating disorder. We are conducting this research to develop understanding of the experiences in this underrepresented group and to begin to develop an understanding of some of the potential clinical implications of such findings. Workshops have just gotten started, but we are eager to hear from more community members! If you are interested, please email

kbuchan@ed.ac.uk



Workstream 3 Update: We Have Begun!

Research studies from Workstream 3 have begun! Numerous exciting projects are being conducted, including one by Phaedra Longhurst, who is looking to understand Autistic adults' thoughts and behaviours towards eating, as well as certain eating styles. Found out more here: <https://edacresearch.co.uk/get-involved/8/recruitment-call-exploring-how-autistic-people-think-and-feel-about-their-body-and-eating-and-certain-eating-styles>. Studies focusing on implementing peer support for Autistic individuals with an eating disorder and investigating brain structure and masking behaviour in Autistic individuals with an eating disorder are coming out soon – keep your eyes peeled for these sign-up opportunities!



Publications! Best Practice Guidelines

An article outlining our best practice guidelines for co-producing ethical research with Autistic people with an eating disorder has been published in *Eating Disorders: The Journal of Treatment and Prevention*! This was one of the first workshops we ran at EDAC and was truly a collaborative effort between a lovely group of people. We are really proud of this work, and we hope you are too! The paper is open-access and can be downloaded here:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10640266.2024.2441540>

If you have any difficulty accessing the paper then please get in touch and we will send it to you!

ARFID and Autism Co-Occurrence Meta-Analysis:

Michelle Sader and other EDAC researchers recently published a meta-analysis investigating the co-occurrence of avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID) and autism. The review investigated the autism diagnostic prevalence in those with ARFID, and the prevalence of ARFID in studies with Autistic groups. Using 21 papers, the meta-analysis identified an autism prevalence of 16.27% in those with ARFID, and an ARFID prevalence of 11.41% in Autistic groups. We had the opportunity to publish this work in the *International Journal of Eating Disorder's* special issue focusing on ARFID. A shout-out to EDAC's first publication in 2025!

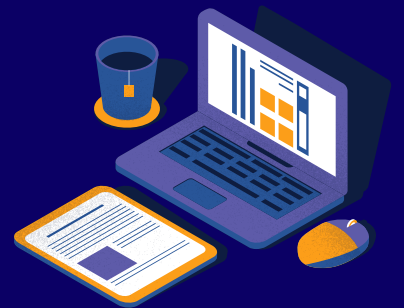


Neural Correlates of Children with ARFID Symptoms:

As part of her previous PhD, Michelle had the opportunity to team up with researchers from the Generation R Study in Rotterdam to publish a paper examining regions of the brain associated with symptoms of avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID). From a total of 1,977 10-year-old children, 121 presented with symptoms of ARFID. Relative to children without ARFID symptoms, these children presented with increased cortical thickness of the frontal and superior frontal lobes, regions important for executive function.

<https://acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcpp.14086>

All publications will be uploaded to our website soon!



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

We have recently added a blog post section to our website, in order to highlight perspectives, experiences and stories shared by our research and lived experience community. Check out our blog section here!

<https://edacresearch.co.uk/podcast-and-blog>



Remember: You can access our plain speaking summaries [here](#)



London Eating Disorder Conference:



Fiona and Emy will be presenting at the London Eating Disorder Conference in March 2025. They will be running a clinical workshop focusing on treatment adaptations for Autistic people with an eating disorder, introducing adapted and novel resources to support assessment and treatment modifications from our ongoing work implementing a PEACE framework within NHS Lothian.

EDAC Members Supporting PhD Students

Michelle will be giving a presentation during a PhD Welcome event on February 5th. She will be giving a talk on co-production in research, and highlighting examples where EDAC has prioritised the lived experience perspective in research. We're excited EDAC can highlight the benefits of co-production and help support the next generation of researchers!

INSAR 2025: Keeping Our Fingers Crossed!



EDAC have submitted a panel for this years International Society for Autism Research (INSAR) conference which is being held in Washington, Seattle, USA.

EDAC hope to present: **Autism and Eating Disorders: Understanding the autism specific experience and how this should inform research, treatment and care**, which includes our photovoice research, underlying mechanisms in eating disorder behaviours and much more! We will find out if our submission is successful in the near future!

COMING SOON

Photovoice Exhibitions!

As part of our latest photovoice study, we will be hosting both an online and in-person exhibition to promote the impactful collection

of images provided by our participants. As with the study, these images have been separated into two distinct, yet equally important galleries: **The Autistic Experience of Eating Disorders** and **The Research Priorities of Autistic People with Lived Experience of Eating Disorders**. This event will take place over two days. **Day 1:** Friday 28th of

February from 6-8pm will be for participants, family members, friends and stakeholders. **Day 2:** Saturday 1st March will be open to the public with a quiet Autism hour between 12-1pm. The exhibition will take place at the Inspace Gallery at Edinburgh University. See the advert below for the full address and additional information!



You're Not Alone

A Photovoice exhibition of the experiences and priorities of Autistic people with Eating Disorders.

A display of photographs, drawings, and digital art produced through research conducted by the eating disorders and autism collaborative (EDAC).

February 28th: 6-8pm
For participants, family members, & Stakeholders.

March 1st: 10-5pm
Open to the public, with a quiet hour between 12pm and 1pm.

**Inspace Gallery: 1 Crichton St,
Newington, Edinburgh EH8 9AB**

 Arts and Humanities Research Council

 Economic and Social Research Council

 Medical Research Council

 NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research

 Medical Research Foundation





FREE ENTRY



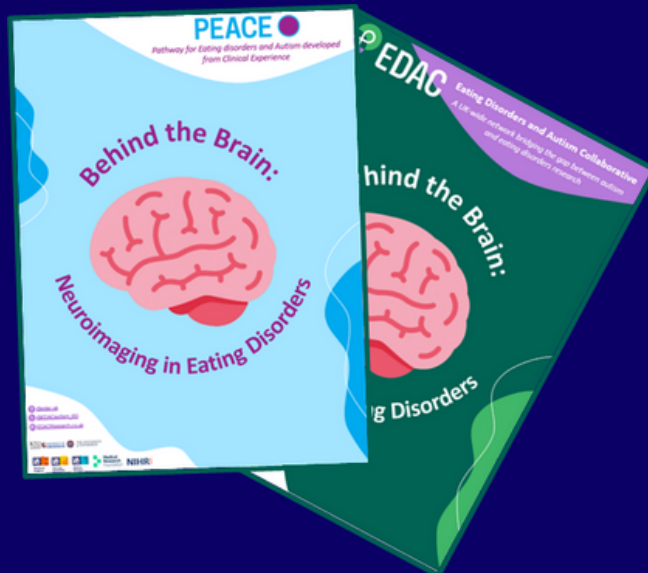
Research Into Practice

A lot of work is going on behind the scenes, meeting with clinicians and with policy makers to start to translate research into improving outcomes for Autistic people with an eating disorder. This year, we are beginning to introduce a PEACE framework across NHS Lothian. For those of you who do not know, the PEACE Pathway is a clinical care pathway developed by Kate Tchanturia for Autistic people with an eating disorder. We are working closely with clinicians across eating disorder services in NHS Lothian and will keep you updated with progress when we can!

Behind the Brain: Neuroimaging in Eating Disorders

EDAC Researchers Michelle Sader and Kate Tchanturia are working on developing a booklet to highlight the strengths brought on by neuroimaging research and showcase current findings from eating disorder research to patients, clinicians and members of the public. Findings from research will also include insights from eating disorder studies with Autistic individuals, and we look forward to sharing this resource when possible!

Stay Tuned



EDAC SPOTLIGHT

Dr Helen Sharpe



WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AT EDAC?

I work across the different workstreams in EDAC, but my main role is in workstream 3, where we have asked researchers to propose innovative new projects and we have worked with our lived experience advisory panel to identify which to provide with seed funding. It was incredible to see all the different applications coming in – I only wish we could have supported more projects! As I'm a research methods geek, I am also probably the 'go to' person in the team for some of the more technical and pedantic research questions.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR PATHWAY TO JOINING EDAC?

I have worked closely with Fiona Duffy for about ten years now – ever since I first joined the University of Edinburgh in fact! My background is very much in eating disorder research rather than autism research. When she mentioned that she was going to be applying for EDAC with the fabulous Karri Gillespie-Smith, I couldn't imagine a better dream team. So, I was delighted to be invited to be a co-applicant with them.

WHAT IS EXCITING ABOUT THE FIELD OF AUTISM AND EATING DISORDERS?

Interdisciplinary work is difficult but so important if we're going to make progress. It's really exciting and interesting to see how two fields that are very similar on the surface can be so very different in terms of their approach to science, co-production, language, norms and everything else. Working at the interface between the two fields has really helped me to re-evaluate some of the things I took to be 'true' and look at research questions in new ways.



WHAT DO YOU THINK WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT IN THE FIELD OF EATING DISORDERS?

I would love to see advances on treatments for autistic people with eating disorders. As researchers, working towards better prevention and treatment is always the holy grail.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK OR FILM?

I read a lot, and get most of my books from Edinburgh Central Library, which is an amazing resource in our city. I mostly read fiction as I find it a great way to unwind. I wouldn't say I have a favourite book, but I just finished Deborah Levy's 'August Blue' and I absolutely loved it.



WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT BRINGS YOU COMFORT?

A walk in Pentland Hills is always a good way to reset and recharge. But if I'm really zonked then, sofa + duvet + book + my cat Jesse is the only way.

A massive thanks to Helen for all the amazing work she does at EDAC!



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<https://edacresearch.co.uk>



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