

# **L3 Lead Examiner Report 2001**

January 2020

## **L3 Qualification in Health and Social Care**

**Unit 4 - Enquiries into Current Research  
in Health and Social Care (31494H)**

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### What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade, at Distinction, Merit and Pass.

### Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the external assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark is for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

### Variations in external assessments

Each external assessment we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries for each assessment, because then it would not take accessibility into account.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, are on the website via this link:

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### Unit 4 - Enquiries into Current Research in Health and Social Care (31494H)

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3			
		N	P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	8	17	31	46

## Introduction

This is the fourth examination series for Unit 4 Enquiries into Current Research in Health and Social Care. The controlled assessment requires learners to consider articles provided from research undertaken in the health and social care sectors including health conditions, lifestyle factors, social care and welfare needs. The controlled assessment aims to consider the learner's ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of methods, skills and ethical issues related to carrying out research. When undertaking the controlled assessment, learners should demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge and understanding of research, with a focus on analysis of information and data related to the current research presented in this assessment. Learners are required to interpret the potential impact and influence of research on practice and provision in the sectors, as well as evaluating current research to make informed judgements about the validity of research methods used and further areas for research.

## Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

Centres overall have prepared learners well for the controlled assessment, with many able learners producing good quality answers to the set activities. Responses from able learners demonstrate a breadth and depth of understanding of current issues in health and social care, with useful and supportive secondary research being included in many of the responses for the series. There has been a mix of secondary research sourced and used, with an improvement in the reliability of sources used throughout the series. Where learners have been prepared for the controlled assessment, they have produced well thought out responses with clear evidence of rationalised and justified points raised throughout the activities.

The controlled assessment requires learners to choose an article from one section of the paper that suits their interests and career choices. This is evident in very few centres, with many still appearing to guide learners in their choice; with whole cohorts completing the same section of the controlled assessment. It is advised that learners should choose the article that supports their future career choice and interests rather than teachers deciding this for them. There is ample time to source and prepare secondary research to use in the controlled assessment and more freedom should be given to learners in the future.

When preparing for this assessment, it is important, once again, to remind centres that notes prepared for assessment should not be potential responses to the activities. Notes for the assessment, as stipulated in Part A, should be limited to the following:

- facts, figures and data relating to secondary sources covering the article's area of research.
- the research methods used in the learner's own secondary research.

Centres once again should be reminded that when preparing learners for this assessment, they should read and respond to the activities set. Many learners have provided responses that, at times, regurgitate the article, do not answer the activity set, or include information in one activity that would be better suited to another activity; learners will not be awarded marks for responses where they have not responded to the activity set. Whilst undertaking the delivery of the unit, it would be advised that centres support learners in how to approach each individual activity, using the guidance and support offered on the Pearson website.

## Individual Questions

### Activity one

The assessment focus for this question is **'understanding research methods, validity and reliability of results of research'**. Learners are expected to understand the research methods used, with understanding of data usage, in the chosen article. They should show understanding of validity and reliability of **research methods used** and draw conclusions in relation to the suitability of the methods used in context.

### Health article

The health article for this series included a range of research methodologies: scientific experiment, proof of concept study, questionnaires and interviews. Learners for this series have in the most part tackled this activity well, with some thorough understanding of research methodologies seen and an improvement of knowledge and understanding in relation to some of the methodologies. However, the understanding of scientific experiments remains weak, with many learners being unable to provide more than basic details of this methodology in relation to the research presented. It is evident that learners find it difficult to consider research methodologies used in health research and continued exposure to this kind of research is crucial to learner understanding.

### Social Care article

Within the social care section, learners were presented with a range of research methodologies and showed good understanding of these. The research methodologies included were participatory action research, focus groups, questionnaires and interviews. Learners were able to provide reasoned and supported conclusions on these methodologies, with more able learners evaluating and making clear and sustained judgements on suitability. Learners tackled participatory action research well, providing good information in context with evidence of a good understanding of focus groups and their relevance to the research article provided.

### Overall

There are still issues with learners' ability to grasp the concepts of reliability and validity of research methods, with many learners still discussing sources of evidence as opposed to the actual research that has been undertaken. Centres need to consider this as a priority in their preparation for the unit; although difficult, these concepts are crucial to a learner's ability to make evaluative judgements on suitability of research methodologies. Sampling methodologies also remains poor in this activity. Some learners have a basic understanding of sampling methodologies used in research, but

these are few and far between. Again, this is an important aspect of research and centres should support learners in their acquisition of knowledge in this area.

Learners are still including secondary sources of information in activity one which is not required. In some instances, learners have included these to support the research methodologies included in the article and if they have supported evaluations, there has been some credit. However, where learners have provided secondary sources to offer alternate research methodologies, this is not asked for and therefore has not been awarded. For this activity, learners need to explain the research methodologies used, evaluate these methodologies and provide judgements and conclusions on suitability within the context of the research. Responses to this activity still frequently remain generic with little or no reference to data usage, the issue presented, or the research methodologies used.

**This response scored Band 4, 14 marks.**

**SECTION 1: Health Research**

**Activity 1**

How have different research methods been used in this research?

In your answer, you should consider the:

- suitability of research methods referred to in the article
- reliability and validity of the research methods.

reliable

(15)

Orbit <sup>ND</sup> have used a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods ~~to~~ throughout their research which is an example of triangulation thus increasing the validity of their results. ~~An example of~~ This study was a small concept study which is a study designed to detect a signal that the drug is active in a pathophysiological relevant mechanism. An advantage of this study is that it allows the researchers to test the effectiveness of alternatives to medicine in treating <sup>(video games)</sup> schizophrenia which can improve the way that symptoms such as hearing voices are treated in schizophrenia patients. ~~How~~ A disadvantage of a concept study is that the number of participants in the study is small thus limiting the results obtained from the research as it will lack generalisability <sup>and representability of</sup> and ~~only~~ to the population. This study is an example of both qualitative and quantitative research. The small <sup>sample</sup> size makes the research less reliable and valid because of the point made above. <sup>This is a quantitative method</sup>

Another method used in this study was MRI which was used by researchers to provide a real time

analysis of brain activity based on changes in blood flow inside the brain. An advantage of this methodology is that it creates <sup>clear</sup> ~~clear~~ images of the brain which will allow researchers to see if the ~~per~~ computer game has an effect on the participants who suffer from schizophrenia, ~~which~~ <sup>this</sup> would clearly be seen on the MRI scan through reduced activity in the superior temporal gyrus. Thus increasing the validity and reliability of this research method as it allowed the researchers to clearly see whether playing the rocket was having any effect on the participants who were suffering from schizophrenia. A disadvantage of this method is that if the participants move too much it can affect the images obtained from this methodology, as seen in the research where one participant did ~~read~~ exactly this and therefore could not be included in the study. This decreases the validity of the research method as it is very sensitive to movement, ~~is~~ therefore limiting it in further research if participants are unable to stay still because the researchers will not be able to obtain any results from their intended research. Thus making this method unreliable in obtaining data. The fact that people who suffer from schizophrenia have anxiety could mean that they would be unable to stay still as the MRI machine is quite scary and makes a loud noise, therefore another more effective methodology will have to be used. The fact that this method is quantitative

means that quick analyses of data can be obtained by researchers allowing a conclusion to be reached quickly, which can help in administering new treatment.

A positive and negative syndrome scale (PANSS) which is a ~~qualitative~~ quantitative research method was used in the study to measure the severity of hallucinations. An advantage of this method is that it takes 40-50 minutes to do which is relatively quick which means that ~~it is~~ <sup>the methodology</sup> less time consuming for researchers. The fact that it is a standardized procedure increases both the validity and reliability of the results obtained because it means that all participants received the same method of treatment which will help researchers to see whether ~~the~~ playing video games is effective in helping people with schizophrenia to manage their hallucinations <sup>and other symptoms</sup>. The fact that all participants had schizophrenia further increases the validity of the research for the other individuals who suffer from it. The fact that this methodology is directly used to measure schizophrenia and is the most popular rating scale for it further demonstrates its high validity and reliability in helping researchers establish their hypothesis. A disadvantage of this scale is that the questions

are closed which means participants cannot give examples or provided a detailed response to their experience of the experiment and whether it helped them with their symptoms such as hallucinations. The researchers could have also made the questions biased based on their own subjectivity to get a desired result in order to possibly validate their research.

One final research method that was used was questionnaires these are quantitative methods of research and were used in the study at the research centre to monitor their mental health. An advantage of questionnaires is that they are inexpensive which means that a large number of them can be produced in a short amount of time which makes them less time consuming. A disadvantage of this method is that it can be misunderstood by participants resulting in the wrong answer being given, causing the validity of the research to depreciate as the participant didn't correctly answer the question.

(Total for Activity 1 = 15 marks)

This response scored highly because:

- Research methods are explained.
- There is understanding of data usage in context.
- There are evaluative judgements made.
- The conclusions on suitability are supported.
- The context of the article is evident throughout the response.

This response scored Band 3, 11 marks.

PAR → 11/11

**SECTION 2: Social Care Research**

**Activity 1**

How have **different research methods** been used in this article to find out about supporting family carers in home-based end-of-life care?

In your answer, you should consider the:

- **suitability** of research methods referred to in the article
- **reliability and validity** of the research methods.

(15)

The research ~~into~~ in the main article was looked in to palliative care, specifically how support workers and volunteers can support family carers ~~with~~ needs such as their emotional, <sup>psychological</sup>, relationship and practical needs. Research into <sup>end-of-life</sup> family carers has found that there is a lack of support and information provided to them and while support workers and voluntary workers are available they <sup>are</sup> of limited and lack the skills / knowledge to do this.

The research method used in the main article was participatory action research (PAR), this was the primary research method used. This ~~type~~ type of research method collects qualitative data which is non-numerical and descriptive data which offers ~~me~~ in-depth and large amount of data that can be used in research findings. This was suitable for the matter being researched because ~~it~~ it was conducted in a collaborative fashion <sup>as it involves</sup> both participants and researchers (other professionals). This means that the data collected is high in validity because <sup>input of the</sup> participants perspective, in this case the carers who <sup>had</sup> partaken, was a valuable towards the findings about how family carers can be supported <sup>through</sup> this training programme and information pack. The carers involved in the research were also part of the advisory group which meant they played an important role in <sup>the</sup> way the research is conducted, such as it being developed over a period of 2.5 years.

The limitations of this however is that due to <sup>plans</sup> only being 3 careers involved, there was not a high amount of <sup>plan</sup> involvement throughout the PAR that was conducted. It is also mentioned how their involvement was inconsistent, this suggests that the validity of the PAR is lessened. This is strengthened by the fact that the number of collaborators is not representative of the careers. There were a large number of ~~peer~~ collaborators, such as university ~~fed~~ employed researchers, <sup>and</sup> support workers from the Careers Federation but only 3 ~~careers~~ were involved. In PAR there is also usually an imbalance of power due to the academics and researchers involved who have greater knowledge ~~therefore~~ <sup>therefore</sup> lead the research. This means that while involving the careers is important and effective it <sup>does</sup> not give them equal power in the research / findings. ~~Another problem with this research method is that it does not state the number of participants~~

PAR is a research method that involves researchers carrying out other research methods to gather data. It uses focus group and interviews which ~~are~~ <sup>well</sup> semi-structured. The use of focus groups, which are group interviews with <sup>many or</sup> participants, is that they are useful in <sup>data that involves</sup> gathering multiple perspectives (Bergold and Thomas, 2012). They appear <sup>less</sup> ~~more~~ clinical unlike one-to-one / face-to-face interviews and are open-questioned which allow a large amount of qualitative data. They are strong in validity because the findings are relevant to the issue and they can offer truthful opinions from various people therefore a variety of answers. There is however a problem with reliability as depending on the researcher the nature of focus groups <sup>makes</sup> ~~is~~ it hard to <sup>recreate</sup> ~~recreate~~ the same answers <sup>and questions being asked</sup>. But this is what is preferred from focus groups as they are made to offer a wide range of perspectives and opinions. The large amount of qualitative can make the findings hard to analyse.

The interviews ~~do not~~ <sup>allow</sup> researchers to investigate wide range of expertise as it is high in validity because a wide range of topics are covered and the semi-structure allows researchers to gather more opinionated and detailed answers from participants. Interviews also allow knowledge and understanding to be directly sought, such getting the experience of how the 3 bereaved carers provided palliative care and the supports they would have liked to receive for their needs. ~~The~~ They are however low in reliability, like focus groups, because the <sup>use of</sup> open ended questions will gather broad and different views ~~that~~ and as ~~a~~ different researcher will be carrying out different interviews the questions they ask from the answers they are given will be different and will affect the overall findings.

The use of focus groups and interviews in PAR <sup>allows for</sup> ~~mean that~~ the research method to meet its ultimate aim, which is empowering oppressed individuals, the family carers to make change by ensuring that all participants are active contributors (Macedonald, 2012). As a result, PAR is highly valid in that it is an effective way to gather truthful and effective information from all participants about the issue and needs of supporting family carers, and so support workers and volunteers can be trained. However, the reliability <sup>might present itself</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>presented</sup> to be low due to the difficulty in repeating the findings and <sup>the</sup> exact way the focus groups and interviews were carried (due to the lack of structure to the questions), but the method is most suitable in the context it has been used because family carers and support workers would have highlighted a range of topics in their discussions which would be crucial to the way which the training programme is developed.

This response scored highly because:

- Research methods are explained.
- There is understanding of data usage in context.
- There are some evaluative judgements made.
- The conclusions on suitability are supported in parts.

This response scored Band 1, 4 marks.

**SECTION 1: Health Research**

**Activity 1**                      original & 2 other sources

How have different research methods been used in this research?

In your answer, you should consider the:

- suitability of research methods referred to in the article
- reliability and validity of the research methods.

(Bazian, 2019) (15)

The research methods used in the original article <sup>is</sup> qualitative research, ~~proof~~-of-concept study, primary research. ~~The~~ primary research is research collected first hand by the researcher. The strengths of primary research is that it is reliable as it is collected first hand by the researcher ~~and~~ another strength is that it is ~~&~~ it is more up-to-date and relevant. The weaknesses of primary research is that it is time consuming and may take several years and affect someone's treatment. ~~A~~ another weakness is that in health and social care, primary research is expensive to carry out. ~~The~~ ~~is~~ A proof-of-concept study is a small study to test feasibility ~~&~~ which means does it work. A strength of a proof-of-concept study is that it can help researcher find out if further research should be carried ~~or~~ is necessary. Another strength of a proof-of-concept study is that it ~~it~~ can save health and social care millions of pounds as it can be used for ~~drug treatment~~ <sup>new drug development</sup> and test if the new drug ~~is~~ effective. A weakness of a proof-of-concept study is that it is time-consuming and takes a long time to carry out. ~~A~~ <sup>strength</sup> weakness of a proof-of-concept study is that it can help gather ~~qualit~~ rich-in-depth qualitative data. It ~~is~~ <sup>not</sup> reliable as if the study was repeated again, it is highly likely that the ~~resu~~ finding would be the same.

Qualitative research is research that is only described using words. The strengths of qualitative research is that it can help researchers gather a rich-in-depth data and better understanding. Another strength is that ~~in qualitative research~~, <sup>for</sup> there are many different ways to carry out qualitative research. For example ~~questionnaires~~ questionnaires, structured interviews, focus groups etc. Primary research is more reliable as it is up-to-date and relevant. Qualitative research is more likely to be valid as it provides plenty of rich-in-depth data.

The research methods used in source 3 (Lovett, 2018) is primary and secondary data, quantitative and qualitative research. Primary research is data collected first hand by the researcher. The strengths of primary research is that it is reliable as it is up-to-date and relevant. A weakness of primary research is that it is influenced by the researcher's judgement and so important data may be missed out. Another weakness is that in Health and Social Care, primary research is expensive to carry out. ~~The strength~~ Secondary research is research carried out by other - used as part of a research that uses previous research as part of the research. A strengths of secondary research is that it is easy and quick to collect secondary research from previously published research. ~~And it can be used to track changes in progress, such as the development of a~~ it is ~~cheap~~ cheap to carry out.

Weaknesses of secondary research is that it is may be unreliable as you cannot find out exactly how the researcher carried out the research. And weakness is that

The research method used in ~~the weaknesses~~ ~~at~~ ~~weak~~ ~~the~~ original article (Bazian, 2018) is likely to be unreliable as some of the data is missing. This is because only data from 11 people ~~not~~ <sup>instead of</sup> 12 people was collected.

The research methods used in source 1 (Highfield) (Highfield, 2017) is a proof of concept study, secondary research, qualitative research and is of a small sample size. A proof of concept study is a small study to test feasibility but further research is carried out. The strengths of a proof-of-concept study is that it ~~to~~ can help the researcher find out if further research should be carried out.

Another strength of a proof of concept study is that it can save Health and Social billions of pound as it can be used to test if a new drug is effective ~~as~~ and if it is ~~working~~ working. The weaknesses of a proof-of-concept study is that it is time-consuming and takes a long time to carry out.

Secondary research is research carried out by ~~pro~~ other researchers. It is research that uses previously published research as part of the research. Another weakness is that ~~the~~ there was a small sample ~~size~~ size as only 27 participants ~~who~~ who had schizophrenia, took part in the study, which reduce the reliability.

The strengths of of a secondary research is that it is easy and quick to to collect a large sample of data from previously published research. Another strength is that it is cheap and cost-effective to carry out.

The weaknesses of secondary research is that it may be unreliable as you cannot find out ~~ext~~ exactly how the research carried out the research, which means it is unreliable. But it ~~is~~ increases validity as the research ~~is~~ has been repeated many times previously.

The research methods in the original ~~an~~ article (Bazian, 2018) is ~~in~~ The research method using original article (Bazian, 2018) using qualitative research is ~~is~~ suitable, as it can help ~~gather~~ gather in-depth data, and improve ~~the~~ However, a ~~prot~~-of-concept study ~~is~~ used in ~~the~~ original article (Bazian, 2018) is not suitable, as it ~~is~~ a small ~~is~~ & requires there to be a small sample size. However, if the the sample sized was larger and more ~~per~~ people participated in the study this would mean there would be more rich-in-depth data and would increase the validity of the results of the study. This would ~~make~~ the findings more mean the study is more ~~per~~ representation of the target population.

(Total for Activity 1 = 15 marks)

This response scored lower because:

- There was a basic description of research methodologies used.
- An attempt at conclusions has been provided but these are not supported.

## Overall

There are still issues with learners' ability to grasp the concepts of reliability and validity of research methods, with many learners still discussing sources of evidence as opposed to the actual research that has been undertaken. Centres need to consider this as a priority in their preparation for the unit; although difficult, these concepts are crucial to a learner's ability to make evaluative judgements on suitability of research methodologies. Sampling methodologies also remains poor in this activity. Some learners have a basic understanding of sampling methodologies used in research, but these are few and far between. Again, this is an important aspect of research and centres should support learners in their acquisition of knowledge in this area.

Learners are still including secondary sources of information in activity one which is not required. In some instances, learners have included these to support the research methodologies included in the article and if they have supported evaluations, there has been some credit. However, where learners have provided secondary sources to offer alternate research methodologies, this is not asked for and therefore has not been awarded. For this activity, learners need to explain the research methodologies used, evaluate these methodologies and provide judgements and conclusions on suitability within the context of the research. Responses to this activity still frequently remain generic with little or no reference to data usage, the issue presented, or the research methodologies used.

### Activity two

The assessment focus for this question is **'understanding the importance of the issue being researched, why the research is being carried out, and how the article and own secondary research reinforces the importance of the issue'**. Learners are expected to understand the importance of the issue in the chosen article and include relevant examples of how the research has affected individuals and/or professionals and/or wider society. Learners should include secondary research in their response, demonstrating an understanding of the relationship between this, and the article chosen.

### Health article

Responses to this activity were once again varied. The more able learners offered considered examples of how the issue affects individuals, professionals and / or wider society with conclusions being drawn throughout the response. Learners did tend to focus on the cost to the NHS, which is an issue for consideration, but not the sole reason of focus. Many learners considered things such as the disabling symptoms of schizophrenia, the ability for practitioners to assess the core deficits caused by the condition and ways to reduce the debilitating symptoms caused by schizophrenia through ideas presented in the research. Many learners produced a general essay on schizophrenia with little or no evidence of application to the set activity. The activity requires learners to provide secondary sources of information that support the importance of the issue (treatment for schizophrenia) but many provided a general overview of the secondary research, with little relevance to the issue in context.

### Social Care article

The responses to this activity varied in levels of analysis used by learners. The importance of this issue was recognised more clearly with learners completing the social care section of the controlled assessment, with many learners providing good and insightful secondary research. Learners considered things such as individuals providing end-of-life-care not always being prepared for what they will have to deal with, and the consequences of this, current family support available and the impact that end-of-life-care may have on the carers. Responses in this section of the controlled assessment included relevant and supportive secondary research, but learners did not always go far enough in their analysis to link this directly in context.

This response scored Band 4, 14 marks.

Activity 2

How does secondary research support the importance of research into this issue?

In your answer, you should consider:

- secondary research and its relationship to the issue
- an analysis of the effects on individuals, practitioners and/or wider society.

(15)

Schizophrenia is a long term mental health condition that causes positive and negative symptoms<sup>9</sup> such as hallucinations, delusions and avolition.<sup>14</sup>

There are two main explanations, of biological and psychological.<sup>6</sup> This suggests that there is a need for more interactionists provision of treatments, as currently there are only several separate treatments like CBT, family therapy and anti-psychotics.<sup>6</sup> This also ~~are~~ gap in provision ~~also~~ in services also suggests that schizophrenic patients who are uncertain of the cause of their disorder, may have to receive more than one treatment. This would create greater demand and costs to the NHS to provide more than one service to each patient with schizophrenia.

Moreover, the exact causes of schizophrenia are unknown.<sup>9</sup> The NHS suggests that a combination of physical, genetic, psychological and environmental

factors can make a person more prone to developing schizophrenia.<sup>9</sup> Also they say that some people may be more susceptible to the disorder and a stressful ~~event~~ may trigger a psychotic episode.<sup>9</sup> This shows the importance of further research into schizophrenia causes are needed, so that future sufferers are able to overcome or avoid developing schizophrenia by tackling their known causes. This will decrease number of patients, improve their quality of life, and help the economy by working again.

Schizophrenic ~~has~~ patients suffer from positive and negative symptoms.<sup>6</sup> This suggests that there treatments are in urgent need to tackle both ~~of~~ symptoms, not only just either symptoms, in order to overcome schizophrenia completely. If health service such as GPs are able to identify different symptoms, then it allows the patients to access treatment faster as they'll seek medical advice. Also, it enable professionals to choose which treatment is best suited to reduce patients' specific symptoms. This ~~will ask~~ further research will acknowledge and ~~extend~~ the public, as well as healthcare professionals.

The NHS mentioned that there are about 220,000 people that are currently being treated for schizophrenia in the UK by ~~them~~ their service.<sup>12</sup> This suggests that there is a large statistic of people currently being treated for schizophrenia, however I ~~for~~ have found that this is not enough as there are half a million adults in England suffering from severe mental illness such as schizophrenia.<sup>18</sup> This demonstrates that more than half of sufferers are not receiving treatment for their condition. This enhances the importance of additional options for treatment, as this ~~stat~~ may be because patients do not like current treatments such as antipsychotics and therapy, so a video game treatment seems more likeable as there is no side effects or distortion in thinking.

~~But~~ Furthermore, the NHS have found out that many studies have shown that schizophrenic patients experience depression. This is bad as if depression is not treated, ~~that~~ then it can worsen and may lead to suicidal thoughts.<sup>19</sup> Studies have shown that people with schizophrenia are at an increased risk of committing suicide.<sup>19</sup> This demonstrates the significance of having more ~~the~~ research on ~~de~~ alternative treatment.

Options for patients to receive, as many are losing their life as of the disorder. If there were more desirable treatment options that ~~were~~ <sup>are</sup> easy, and inexpensive and painless then there is a higher likelihood of schizophrenics accepting treatment.

The BBC have reported that there are increased prescriptions made for schizophrenia, up to more than twice the average number, in most of the England.<sup>17</sup> This suggests that the NHS is put in great demands of providing lots of antipsychotics to patients and is costing them a lot. Therefore this suggests that there is a need for more availability of treatments for patients, and that this research is significant to increase number of treatments and alternative treatments.

Also, ~~the~~ schizophrenics may have cognitive challenges ~~as~~ with memory and orientation.<sup>16</sup> Therefore having treatments like the video game may increase cognitive abilities of patients, overcoming symptoms. This is important as treatments reduce the risks of relapses in patients, affecting their wellbeing even more.

(Total for Activity 2 = 15 marks)

This response scored highly because:

- There is analysis of the issue's importance.
- There are relevant examples of how the issue affects individuals and/ or wider society.
- The evidence presented is supported with secondary research findings.
- The relationship between the issue and secondary research is explained.
- The relationship between the issue and secondary research findings are evident.

**This response scored Band 2, 5 marks.**

**Activity 2**

How does secondary research support the importance of research into this issue?

In your answer, you should consider:

- secondary research and its relationship to the issue
- an analysis of the effects on individuals, practitioners and/or wider society.

(15)

My secondary research looked at how people who have been diagnosed with schizophrenia and hear voices in their head can learn to control the voices in their head with help. This researcher had found that patients who spoke to their voices through the avatar/therapist had shown significantly greater improvement at the end of the treatment. This small proof of concept study had shown ~~that~~ a reduction in the frequency and intensity of the hallucinations.

My secondary research article and article 1 have both shown that schizophrenia and hallucinations are a major issue in society which not only affects the individual, but also practitioners and wider society. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), at least 26 million people are living with schizophrenia

worldwide. Schizophrenia is a severe mental illness where people's perceptions of reality are blurred. An episode can last for several weeks but there are different treatments and support systems available to help - antipsychotics, talking treatments, complementary and alternative therapy, peer support groups. There are also lifestyle <sup>changes</sup> factors which can be made which can be used as an alternative treatment alongside antipsychotics.

source 15

Statistics ~~have~~ shows that mental illness generally will cost the UK economy around £77 billion each year or around 4% of GDP and schizophrenia accounts for around 30% of all spending on adult mental health in the NHS. This has put a strain on practitioners because as the number of diagnosed individuals increase, the larger the strain placed on practitioners to "sort out the problem". However, modern medicine has shown to be effective and reduced the risk of relapse to about 10%. - source 15.

Schizophrenia ~~does~~ <sup>does to some extent effect</sup> also effect wider

society because only 13% of people living with schizophrenia in the UK are in any kind of work and about 25% of people who suffer an episode will go on to recover completely without any further <sup>problems</sup> ~~problems~~ in the future (source 15).

Both articles have shown that schizophrenia is a major issue but they also show that there are different treatments being developed to tackle these ~~problem~~ problems.

This response scored lower because:

- The issue is described with concluding statements about its importance.
- There are some relevant examples of individuals and/or wider society.
- There is evidence of relevant secondary research.

### Overall

There were some good responses to this activity with examples and explanations of the importance of research into both issues included in the health and social care research. The secondary research included was not always relevant and sometimes went of topic, in particularly with the health research section. Some learners tended to recap the issue and state the secondary research findings rather than consider these in relation to the importance of research. Once again, some centres have confused activity two and three and this needs to be addressed. Learners are being disadvantaged with poor preparation for this activity and its focus. It is important to consider things such as the problems faced by service users due to the issue, how research can help, growing concerns in the

UK surrounding the issues, why there is a need for more research into the particular area/issue.

### **Activity three**

The assessment focus for this question is **'research implications for future provision and/or practice'**. Learners are expected to provide implications of the research for future provision/practice in the sector, with analysis of these implications. They should show understanding of the issue and implications in both the context of the article and wider research. Learners should also consider recommendations for change in provision/practice, with justification.

### **Health article**

The activity considers implications of the research on provision and or practice in the health sector. Where learners understood this, they performed well on this activity including things such as a need for more training and support for those working with individuals living with schizophrenia, a personalised approach and the development of appropriate services, along with improvements to policies. There was evidence of good analysis in more able learners with some appropriate recommendations for change in provision and / or practice.

### **Social Care article**

The activity requires learners to consider supporting family carers in homebased end-of-life-care and how this research would have implications of future provision and / or practice, along with recommendations for change in the social care sector. Learners who performed well in this activity demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the research in this area, considering things such as the creation of training programmes and individualised support. They included research that showed the need for a more empathetic approach to supporting carers and training that incorporated care of families and carers, not just the individual receiving end-of-life-care.

**This response scored Band 2, 10 marks.**

**Activity 3**

*IMPLICATION*



How could this research affect social care provision for end-of-life care?

In your answer, you should consider:

- the effect on provision and/or practice
- recommendations for change in future provision and/or practice
- secondary research findings. *family carer support prior to discharge*

*RESULT*

(20)

The main article focused on end-of-life care and researched the effect on family carers. The effect on social care provision is just as large because of the close link between the relationship of family carers with care agencies and maintaining this relationship to ensure that the support is available and given when needed to ensure the palliative patient is receiving good quality of care while family carers maintain a good quality of life.

Social care provision will play a large role in ensuring family carers are aware of their role and what it consists of, as this was a barrier family carers faced, in feeling that it was an immediate and unexpected change rather than a gradual process. It should be stated that the difficulties they may face can be supported for through providing information or practical support and ensuring that they have these services in place, as family carers do not feel they have access to these. These are recommendations that I believe should be made, and is backed up by research which suggest family carers require this (Morris et al., 2015), as good holistic care helps family carers to maintain a good quality of life.

Another positive about this <sup>and my secondary research</sup> research is that it brings awareness on the fact that the social care services are a problem and

cause of these issues surrounding family carers. It emphasises their importance <sup>in my opinion</sup> and that their involvement is essential to bring change. Despite the limitations they might come across such as limited funding, time or staff that is involved with adding more and better quality services, ~~it~~ <sup>the problems</sup> I think this a necessary change to progress society is facing with family carers struggling ~~to~~ with supporting patients and themselves. However, looking at the current economic situation it might seem <sup>difficult</sup> for social care provision to finance these additional services and it might be why they are not applying them now. However, this only emphasises why the training programme devised in the main article should be used as instead of core services, perhaps support workers and volunteers can be trained to provide information and support for practical and other needs.

Although the research has been done to create the training programme, ~~the~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~learning~~ has not been transferred into a workplace. It has been piloted several times in different occasions as it has been updated, however there has not been an implementation study to check its effectiveness, in both about how trainees make use of what they learn and whether family carers feel the support they receive has improved. This ~~reduces~~ <sup>reduces</sup> the strengths of the programme in improving <sup>the</sup> provision of support to family carers from social care services, ~~then~~

There is another tool that has been designed to help with ~~car~~ matter. It is the Care Support Needs Assessment Tool, it ~~is a~~ <sup>is an</sup> evidence-based tool which assesses ~~care~~ <sup>care</sup> needs and help support

the patient at home and preserve <sup>their</sup> own wellbeing. It is a comprehensive tool that can also be used in practice by professionals and its multipurpose aspect allows for carers to open conversations, and express support needs and tailor individual needs (Ewing et al., 2016). It is acknowledged by professionals to be relevant and important with many anticipated benefits such as the visibility of support needs, <sup>and</sup> facilitating discussion with carer and support at home. The CSNAT appears to be more effective than the ~~PAR~~ <sup>PAR programme</sup> and therefore should be considered being used, it also includes social care <sup>services</sup> ~~provision~~ as it is a tool that <sup>is more effective</sup> ~~can be used~~ when used in practice with carers. A stepped wedge cluster trial was used to also test the effectiveness of the CSNAT (Grand et al., 2015). and This a sequential rollout of the intervention to participants (i.e. carers) over a number of time periods, this was spread over 3 month intervals, to 6 palliative home care sites. This method had high validity and high reliability due to the way it was a true test of the CSNAT effectiveness and <sup>the</sup> ~~fact~~ way it can be handed to different sites shows its reproducibility. The outcome showed improved carer outcome in the intervention condition as there were improvement in mental and physical health, this shows that a substantial impact should be possible if it can be fully implemented. The one limitation being the it was only completed by a minority of cases but there are favourable effects from these cases.

As a result, I believe that social care provision should integrate the CSNAT into their services until the PAR has shown effectiveness and <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ evaluated well upon implementation. It will be an effective tool to integrate into their services ~~not~~ as a way to better understand family

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over's need as the currently the <sup>science</sup> provision is lacking information in this.

This response scored highly because:

- There is evidence of implications of the research for provision and /or practice.
- There is an understanding of the issue and the context of the research.
- Recommendations for change in provision and /or practice are included.

This response scored Band 2, 6 marks.

**Activity 3**

How could this research affect the provision of health services for people living with schizophrenia?

In your answer, you should consider:

- the effect on provision and/or practice
- recommendations for change in future provision and/or practice
- secondary research findings.

(20)

This research can positively impact provision of health services, ~~to~~ and schizophrenic patients.

The article ~~say~~ promises that patients were able to control their brain activity even without the MRI scans, suggesting that people that ~~used~~ followed MRI neuro-feedback training protocol, can benefit from home<sup>25</sup>. This suggests that this video game treatment has the potential to provide future patients with receiving treatment at home, rather than ~~or~~ frequently visiting the ~~same~~ health services. This benefits patients as it provides an easier alternative treatment, ~~as~~ unlike ~~for~~ antipsychotics, which patients may forget to take, and therap CBT or family therapy which require a therapist.

This research also benefits health professionals as it extends their knowledge of <sup>other</sup> possible treatments that could be provided to schizophrenic patients.

Also, this treatment has the possibility to decrease the population of schizophrenic patients.<sup>19</sup> This implies that it may be able to improve the health and wellbeing of patients in the whole nation. This would also benefit health provision as it will lead to reduced costs and demands to the NHS, and are then able to fund for other treatments for other health conditions. Moreover, will benefit society as improving patient's quality of life, may enable them to overcome barriers and be able to go out to work again on a regular basis. This means that society can earn profit again as of having their employees returned.

Future practice may be influenced to refer more patients to other forms of treatment such as the Care Programme Approach (CPA) or the Crisis Resolution Team (CRT).<sup>20</sup> As the video game is not yet an official clinical treatment, services may use other treatments available which they don't regularly use, as this may also help patients.

Although it is not yet a clinical treatment, the video game may be able to act as an early intervention to sufferers of schizophrenia, but those that have minor episodes, as it may have

an initial effect, that could reduce symptoms without having to provide expensive, and longer treatments, as these treatments can be used for patients with severe episodes or relapses. Also, providing it as early intervention could reduce the risks of patients with minor episodes, from suffering acute episodes.<sup>20</sup>

Recommendations for change in health provisions can be that current GPs should consider involving this study as a mini test or treatment for minor schizophrenia, but not to be yet for large practices like acute schizophrenia. Also, GPs could provide this treatments for patients who do not respond to other forms of treatments.

Also, health provisions should compare the effectiveness of this treatment between a local area and the nation, to check if they have similar results/effects, therefore can conclude that it is a universal treatment.

Also, researchers should check if this treatment can reduce negative symptoms like avolition, just only positive symptoms.

like the original study had done.

Researcher should do conduct a longer follow-up study, in order to see it's long effect and it's overall effectiveness. If successful then has a higher chance of becoming an official clinical treatment for schizophrenia.

Also, can check on the effectiveness of video game, without using antipsychotics so that we can check whether the video game had an actual effect on reduction of symptoms.

Health professionals can use a bigger sample of patients, and if effective for majority, then has significance in reducing symptoms of schizophrenia. Also, it reduces effectiveness of treatment from occurring by chance, and overcome individual differences.

This response scored lower because:

- The implications for research for provision and / or practice are described.
- The implications referred to in the response demonstrate basic understanding of the issue in the context of the research.
- Recommendations for change are inaccurate – note that they relate to changes in the research undertaken and should relate to changes in provision and / or practice.

This response scored Band 0, 0 marks.

**Activity 3**

How could this research affect the provision of health services for people living with schizophrenia?

In your answer, you should consider:

- the effect on provision and/or practice
- recommendations for change in future provision and/or practice
- secondary research findings.

(20)

Schizophrenia is a long term mental health disorder, which causes a range of different psychological symptoms. There are ~~many~~ many symptoms of schizophrenia such as:

~~hallucinations~~ hallucinations meaning that individuals hear or see things that do not exist outside of the mind.

Delusions meaning that they get unusual beliefs not based on reality, losing interest in everyday ~~activities~~ activities, not caring about personal hygiene.

There is no exact cause for schizophrenia but most experts believe that the condition is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors:

Since Schizophrenia is usually treated with a combination of medicine and therapy. In most cases antipsychotic medicines and cognitive behavioural therapy is used. CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) can cost individuals between £250 - £300 for an initial assessment.

It is important for individuals who have schizophrenia to attend CBT sessions so that

they could have a stable recovery. CBT is a type of talking treatment that helps with patterns of thinking or behaviour that may be causing you difficulties. CBT can help reduce symptoms such as hallucinations, manage any side effects from medication and ease stress so the symptoms do not get worse.

Another treatment is medication which is usually prescribed by doctors. The medication which is given is an antipsychotic drug also known as a neuroleptic ~~drug~~ or major tranquiliser. The drug helps with symptoms of psychosis. The drug can work different on people in different ways. They can also give side effects and might be something you take for a short term or long term.

Another treatment is family intervention. This is a type of talking treatment for relatives or carers of people who are diagnosed with schizophrenia. Family interventions can ~~allow~~ support you, find a way of solving problems and can also involve you.

This response scored lower because:

- There was no rewarded material in the response.
- The response includes ways to treat schizophrenia and not how the research undertaken has implications for provision/practice in the health sector.

## Overall

Some good responses have been seen by learners who have read the activity and considered the focus for this assessment outcome. Those who were successful in this activity provided responses in relation to more knowledge and training in relation to either schizophrenia or support for carers in homebased end-of-life-care. They were able to consider things such as policies used to help professionals, appropriate services, training and advancement in knowledge and understanding, available funding and the development of appropriate services in relation to both issues. However, some learners are confusing research implications for provision and / or practice with the importance of the issue being researched. Where this has happened, learners have not achieved marks that they should be capable of which has limited their ability to be successful in this activity. Centres are advised to use Pearson guidance, Lead Examiner reports and relevant information that can be accessed on the Pearson website to support their delivery of this assessment outcome in future series.

## Activity four

The assessment focus for this question is **'planning and ethical consideration for further research'**. Learners are expected to offer rationalised suggestions of research methods that could be used to continue the research that they have chosen (in relation to the case study presented) and need to justify the reasons behind these choices to show effectiveness /suitability of the methods stipulated in the case study. Learners should be considering planning of further research in the case study, ethical issues and research skills that would be implemented in this research in the relevant area. They should also highlight practical problems with carrying out research in a wider context.

## Health article

Learners, for the most part, have responded well to this activity. They have provided focused responses relating to the activity provided, including relevant information that demonstrates knowledge and understanding of research. However, some learners are still not considering the research methodologies that are provided in the case study, instead opting to discuss alternate methodologies. Learners must focus on the stimulus material presented and use this to formulate their responses. It was evident in many responses that learners, as in activity one, struggle with the concept of scientific experiments. If learners are choosing this section of the controlled assessment, they must demonstrate full and accurate knowledge of this type of methodology; it is used

frequently in health research and this should be a consideration when preparing to deliver the unit.

### **Social Care article**

Responses to this activity were varied across learners, with some learners demonstrating excellent understanding of research in the context of the case study set, and others providing generic responses. Learners were expected to consider focus groups and questionnaires and proved successful in doing so. It is evident that for most centres choosing this article, learners understood these in depth. The issues lay in application to the case study provided and the further research being undertaken. It would benefit learners to have practice with application to case studies for this activity prior to, and in preparation for, the controlled assessment.

**This response scored Band 4, 15 marks.**

**Activity 4**

Cameron works for the National Council for Palliative Care. His job requires him to undertake research and suggest improvements to the care and support provided for those requiring end-of-life care and their families. He works closely with several charitable organisations.

He has been asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the recent implementation of training for carer support staff in providing support to families. He has decided to give questionnaires to the families who have received support. He will investigate the effectiveness of the training.

In addition, Cameron will hold a focus group with delegates from several charity organisations who attended the training events. The focus group will consider the benefits of the training and further improvements needed.

What should Cameron consider when undertaking this research?

You should include judgements on:

- planning considerations *sample size, time, cost, money*
- ethical issues
- research methodologies that could be used *→ structured / unstructured questionnaires → focus groups*
- research skills required to explore the issue.

(15)

There are different research methods that Cameron can use. Already, he has decided to use questionnaires + focus groups. Questionnaires are a good research method as they are relatively quick and the results obtained are easy to quantify. There is no detachment from the researcher as the researcher is not usually present when questionnaires are completed. This eliminates researcher bias and allows the research to remain objective. Questionnaires are useful to study larger groups and so any results can be generalised as they are representative of the larger population. However, they are unlikely to give researchers an in-depth understanding of the research issue of end of life care support as questionnaires with closed questions don't give respondents the chance to expand answers.

However, for this reason, questionnaires are reliable as they can easily be replicated to achieve the same results.

Cameron will also be using focus groups to consider benefits of the training and further improvements needed. The participants in these groups are more likely to be comfortable and open up as they're not on their own. In groups ideas are known around which stimulates others thinking, produces richer data. This method is highly valid as it explores the research topic in depth and gains an insight directly from participants. However, certain individuals can dominate the group. Peer pressure means answers may not be accurate due to pressure from others in the group. The Hawthorne effect can also decrease validity as many may like to please the researcher.

Cameron can also consider using <sup>participant</sup> observations to research his research issue. He can use the observations during the actual training takes place. This is a qualitative method which allows Cameron to join in with the activities (training) of the group. Cameron will be able to gain a deeper understanding of the training and the in-depth understanding of how it works as he is participating with the group and doesn't have to observe from afar. His observation can either be overt/covert, covert may be better. This means his identity as a researcher.

is concealed from the group being studied. This reduces the risk of the Hawthorne effect, where participants know they're being studied and act differently, as the group are unaware of Cameron's identity. However, this is an ethical issue as it leads to deception because Cameron will be lying <sup>to the group</sup> or keeping up an act for the research. If open participation was used, the group will be aware of Cameron's purpose, but may act abnormally. Therefore, the research may lack validity.

When Cameron carries out his research, there are some ethical issues he will need to consider. For example, when carrying out an observation using an observer, he must ensure confidentiality. This means he must keep all personal information of participants such as medical history discreet and must not share it with others unless to gain permission from participants. He must refer to participants as 'Mrs X' e.g. if he does use them in his final results if he fails to do so, he has breached confidentiality and so his research is unethical. Before the research, Cameron must obtain <sup>informed</sup> consent from all participants in order to use them in his study. This should be emphasized more for vulnerable people, children and those who lack the mental capacity to make independent choices. Participants should be told about their involvement or

Well as the purpose of research to ensure consent is informed. They must also be arranged they can withdraw at any time. This ensures Cameron's research is ethical. Cameron must also ensure his research is in accordance to relevant policies and procedures. For example, his research must follow the data protection act. This states that the patient's information must be kept confidential and stored securely. Cameron must also ensure that his research also follows the safeguarding policies. For example, parents can give consent for <sup>for their</sup> children under 16 to participate in the study. This safeguards children as their young age and rational thinking means they're vulnerable.

There are some planning considerations for Cameron and his research. For example, he needs to consider the practical factors. He needs to ensure his research isn't time consuming/costly as these can become barriers for his research. If his study is very long, his results may not be accurate at one specific moment. Cameron must also consider what sampling method he uses. He can use quota sampling. This is to take a very tailored sample that is in proportion to some characteristics of a population e.g. divide a population by income/education level/sex. The population is divided in groups.

(Total for Activity 4 = 15 marks)

TOTAL FOR PAPER = 65 MARKS

This response scored highly because:

- There are rationalised considerations of the suggested research methods including improvements and changes.
- There is evidence of understanding the suitability of the research methodologies.
- An analytical approach to the response is sustained throughout.
- There is coverage of planning, ethics and research skills throughout the response.
- Judgments on the importance of the considerations are consistently supported.

This response scored Band 1, 3 marks.

**Activity 4**

Helen is a psychiatrist who works for the NHS to support patients in her local area to deal with symptoms of schizophrenia. She works closely with a multidisciplinary team to support patients to manage their symptoms through medication and therapy.

Helen wants to investigate the link between brain training and reducing auditory hallucinations to improve the patients' ability to function in everyday life. She is planning to undertake research with her patients and a control group to compare findings. The research will use a range of brain training techniques including reading exercises and listening to music, alongside the patients' prescribed medication.

The research will involve a scientific experiment over a six-month period using MRI scans to assess brain activity changes when using the brain training techniques.

The first scans will be at the start of the research to get baseline measurements of the auditory hallucinations. These scans will be repeated each month to record any changes in brain activity. Interviews and relevant questionnaires will also be used during the research.

What should Helen and her team consider when undertaking this research?

You should include judgements on:

- planning considerations
- ethical issues
- research methodologies
- research skills required to explore the issue.

(15)

Helen should first consider gaining written consent from her group of participants before beginning her study. she also need the approval of organisations to help fund her approach towards scz to gain results.

organisations such as HRA, NREAP and NIHR can help her with her research findings without breaching and ~~process~~<sup>policies</sup> or laws. one way she can gain information of participants is through an interview, this research method allows her and other researchers to observe the behaviour of participants to gain large amounts of information to make her study reliable. she will be

able to make sure participants are not misinterpreting questions and she'll be able to get an honest truthful answer this way. However, this can be very time consuming which may irritate the participants.

she could also carry out a pilot study for a shorter period of time with half the amount of participants in her larger trial to be able to find issues and errors before testing ~~then~~ this on a larger group.

To ensure that her study doesn't become bias, Helen would need to have a group of participants ~~with~~ <sup>in a</sup> similar condition as each other, in terms of, age, ethnic background, what area they're from, types of symptoms shown ect.

she would need to do further research on if the study she is going to do has already been done, and analyse the key findings of that ~~that~~ trial to make her study successful. Once she's done her examination what will she do with the results she's gotten, she would need to consider how she can input them into society to help other individuals facing schizophrenia.

This response scored lower because:

- The response offers a basic consideration of suggested research methods.
- There is reference to planning considerations.

## Overall

This activity has seen an improvement on previous series, with learners demonstrating sustained application to the case study provided. It is nice to see learners demonstrating a depth of understanding in relation to research and that time has been given to support learners to complete full and accurate responses by some centres. However, this is not consistent across the whole cohort, with some centres still demonstrating a lack of knowledge and inconsistencies in the approach to the activity. Some responses seen have been unbalanced, focussing on one area more than others, for example providing great information on ethical considerations but lacking in research methodologies. Centres should work on a balance of each area of the assessment focus in order to make further improvements to responses to this activity.

## Summary

In conclusion, learners are making improvements with each series in different areas of this controlled assessment. Knowledge of research methodologies such as focus groups and questionnaires has seen an improvement, but more needs to be done on things such as scientific experiments. Centres need to prioritise their focus on application of knowledge and understanding to different contexts in order to give learners the best possible chance to succeed in this assessment. The controlled assessment requires learners to apply their knowledge in each activity and is not a simple regurgitation of facts. For some learners, they have simply written everything they know about research rather than focusing on the activities given. Centres should consider exam techniques and preparation for assessment consistently when delivering this unit. It is also noted that learners do seem to achieve better when sitting this assessment further into the course where they are able to draw on knowledge and understanding from across different units and indeed work experiences being undertaken.

The following is recommended for future examination series:

- Make use of the most up to date resources and specification provided for this unit.
- Avoid re-writing the articles in responses, particularly with activity two.
- Support learners with exam techniques and extended writing skills.
- Support learners to use technical language for this unit consistently and accurately.
- Support learners to understand assessment outcomes for each activity, particularly activities two and three.
- Secondary research and choice of article should be independent to the learner and not centre specific.
- Choose an appropriate assessment window for learners to sit this controlled assessment; learners are more successful when they have had the opportunity to

develop knowledge an understanding across their health and social care studies.

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