Last week was a busy one for Cloudy! We reconvened our patient partner group to discuss some of the exciting plans for the future of the study, and two members of the Cloudy team travelled to Google HQ in London to exhibit at Delving into Digital, an event held by the Association of Medical Research Charities. We have plenty to say about both, so do read on to find out exactly what we got up to.

Photos of the week
Tooting at twilight. This cool evening sky was photographed by Kate Haley last week.

This beautiful photograph was taken from Fife Coastal Path across the Firth of Forth to Edinburgh by Bernadette Boulten.

"The weather was cold but we had a lovely low winter sun. Lovely conditions for a walk".

Have you got out and photographed any winter weather this month, at home or away? Email your weather photographs to the Cloudy team at: cloudy@manchester.ac.uk.
Cloudy’s patient partners discuss what the future holds for the study

Cloudy with a Chance of Pain was developed in close partnership with a team of patient partners; members of the public who have helped to shape pivotal areas of the Cloudy project, from the design of the app to the look and feel of Citizen Science. As we prepare for the end of data collection, the group was reconvened to discuss what comes next for Cloudy.

Key areas for discussion were: What would be a fitting way to say thank you to the Cloudy community for your commitment to the study over the last year? How might we maintain momentum around the project up until the findings are released? And should we hold a Cloudy celebratory event? It was a great afternoon, with lots of excellent ideas flying around the room. We’re very excited about bringing many of these to fruition over the next year, so do watch this space!

*Photo: Cloudy patient partners and members of the project team (from left: Dorothy Slater, Karen Staniland, Simon Stones, Louise Cook, Susan Moore, Prof. Will Dixon, Carolyn Gamble, Dr Caroline Sanders).
Cloudy invited to exhibit at Google HQ for Delving into Digital event

Last week, Cloudy team members Dr John McBeth and PhD student Anna Beukenhorst travelled to the Google headquarters in London for Delving into Digital, a conference held by the Association of Medical Research Charities. John and Anna were invited to showcase Cloudy, and some of the other mHealth studies currently being conducted at the University of Manchester’s Centre for Musculoskeletal Research, to charities that support healthcare research. Apart from showcasing the project, the event also provided an opportunity to find out about how patients, designers, clinicians and computer programmers can work together to innovate in healthcare, from developing a simple smartphone game that improves our understanding of dementia to providing eye care to rural areas of Kenya.

Anna tells us about the day’s fascinating talks and the health research innovations that are currently taking place, and those that are on the horizon, in this week’s Cloudy blog.

Did you know…Cloudy Pain Facts

A number of studies have shown that people with natural red hair are likely to be more sensitive to pain, but less sensitive to local anesthetics. Red heads have been shown to require up to 20% more anesthetic when undergoing a medical procedure than their dark haired counterparts. A study has also demonstrated that people with red hair are more likely to fear the dentist, apparently due to a natural resistance to subcutaneous (below the skin) local anesthetic.

Despite being more resistant to anesthetics, red headed people also detect temperature changes more acutely. One study compared the tolerance of 30 red-haired volunteers with 30 brunettes to thermal stimuli. The redheads tolerated sensations as low as 3°C (38°F), and detected
brunettes to thermal pain. The redheads began to feel pain at around 6°C (43°F), unlike the volunteers with dark hair, who started to report pain when the mercury dropped to freezing.

The relationship between red hair, pain susceptibility and anesthesia is thought to be due to the properties of the variant of receptor gene MCR1 that codes for the pigment found in red hair. MCR1 is known to be related to a family of receptors involved in perceiving pain, which may explain why mutations here would increase pain perception.

Gout: No Laughing Matter

Throughout history, people with gout have been the butt of the jokes of comedians and cartoonists – however, for people living with this intensively painful condition, it is anything but funny.

The UK Gout Society has been working to dispel some of the myths around gout and to provide support to sufferers since 2002. In this week's blog the charity shares some of the most common causes of the condition, explains what to do if you are experiencing a gout attack and reveals an interesting association between gout and the changing seasons.

Read more on the Cloudy blog.
Marion’s Story

We met Marion at last year’s Manchester Day event. Marion shared her experiences of living with chronic pain and how she combats its physical and emotional impact through diet and lots of exercise.

I have been experiencing pain since the early eighties. I discovered at this time that I have food sensitivities which set off stiffness in my lower back and so I need to avoid a lot of different types of food. I am as a result very careful about what I eat. Four years ago I broke my shoulder in four places and osteoarthritis set in. It was my rotator cuff that was broken and a serious infection set in after the operation. Pain was there every day after that and worse at night. I also get pain in my fingers, but I can live with that.

Despite my pain, I teach six Pilates classes a week and complete triathlons. I also do yoga and spinning every day, which helps. If I feel rubbish I go for a run. If I don’t do the teaching, I feel worse. I watch my sleep patterns and I try to work on my sleep as much as I work on exercise and diet. At the minute I’m working really hard with wearable trackers to get a better understanding of my sleep and body patterns. I am also using the Cloudy app for my pain: I can tell you that I’m sleeping 7-8 hours a night with a 90-minute-deep sleep cycle.

When it comes to the relationship between weather and pain, I don’t know if it’s sunshine, rain or barometric pressure, but I do believe that there is a relationship.

Would you like to raise awareness around the impact of pain and the reality of living with a pain condition by sharing your experiences? If so, please email cloudypain@manchester.ac.uk.

Technology by uMotif

Don’t forget that there are many more features to the app than the pain tracking. You can get more information and find help on using them all here: https://umotif.zendesk.com

Like using the app as part of Cloudy? Please take a moment to complete this simple two question survey for uMotif. We’d also always welcome a positive review in the app store!

Have ideas for features that you think would be useful in the app, or comments on existing features? Send us an email at Cloudy@uMotif.com letting us know what they are.

Cloudy Music

A brand new year demands fresh, new tunes, and that’s just what we’ve got over on the Cloudy
Would you like to discuss this week’s blog or anything else Cloudy-Pain related? Head to the Cloudy HealthUnlocked forum and join the conversation.

Recruitment has now ended. A big thank you to everyone in the Cloudy community for your commitment to the study.

We have 13,256 registered participants and 4,665,159 recorded symptoms.

To give our research team the best possible dataset to answer the important scientific question of whether there is a relationship between weather and pain, we ask that you have some sustained periods of daily symptom entry. This will also help you to spot your own patterns, particularly if your data entry spans different seasons and weather conditions.

If you have had a break from filling in the uMotif but would like to enter your symptoms again then we are very happy for you to re-engage with the study.

If there is anything you want to tell us about that makes it difficult to record your symptoms please email us at cloudypain@manchester.ac.uk or if you are having trouble with the app itself email help@umotif.com

Keep Tracking!

Cloudy HQ
You are receiving this email because you've registered to take part in Cloudy with a Chance of Pain. Thank you for making a difference!

Our mailing address is:
uMotif Limited
201 Borough High Street
London, London SE1 1JA
United Kingdom

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