

JSPS Short-term Fellowship, March – September 2019

Dr Michelle Helena van Velthoven is a researcher at the University of Oxford. Michelle's research interests are around: 1) standards for the safety and quality of **digital health**; 2) the effectiveness of digitally delivered interventions; 3) adoption of digital health in different settings, with an interest in low- and middle-income countries.

What is digital health?

Health services around the globe are under increasing pressure from reduced budgets and ageing populations with higher levels of chronic disease. Digital health (also known as electronic health, eHealth, Health 2.0) tools could address these challenges by revolutionizing healthcare services into a model that is more patient-centred, which is essential for quality and associated with increased safety. Smartphones and apps are increasingly used by healthcare workers, patients and the public all over the world. However, the benefits of using these tools to improve healthcare have not yet been realised.

Nagasaki University

Michelle's fellowship took place in Prof Chris Smith's research group at the Nagasaki University School for Tropical Medicine and Global Health led by Prof and Dean Kiyoshi Kita. Her visit was greatly facilitated by Mrs Misuzu Nakandakari who helped with the administrative procedures and arrangements.

Nagasaki University provided an outstanding academic environment to enhance Michelle's methodological, managerial and transferable skills. It greatly expanded her network by interacting with staff and students at the School. Michelle contributed to the following publications which were closely linked to her research interests:

- 1) **van Velthoven MH**, Smith C. Some considerations on digital health validation. *Nature Digit. Med.* 2, 102; 2019; doi:10.1038/s41746-019-0173-2
- 2) Smith C, **van Velthoven MH** et al. Mobile phone-based interventions for improving contraception use. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*. Forthcoming
- 3) Smith C, **van Velthoven MH**, Pakenham-Walsh N. How do primary healthcare workers in low-income and middle-income countries obtain information during consultations to aid safe prescribing? A systematic review protocol. *BMJ Open.* 2019. 24;9(1):e023015

Furthermore, Michelle was a lecturer in systematic reviews and meta-analysis for Prof Sharon Cox' Epidemiology II module, part of the Masters of Public Health programme led by Prof Koya Ariyoshi. Also, she contributed to one of Prof Smith's funding applications as co-investigator on a Kakenhi submission.

Working and living in Japan

Nagasaki is the largest city (around 430,000 inhabitants) of Nagasaki Prefecture on the northwest coast of Kyushu in the South of Japan. It was a “window” to foreign countries in the Edo Period in Japan. Michelle enjoyed visiting its sights, including the Peace Park, Atomic Bomb museum, Glover Garden, Mount Inasa, and Hashima Island, as well as feeding the many feral cats. For a wider range of things to do and a livelier night scene, Fukuoka (around 1.5 million inhabitants) is a 2-hour train ride away. For recommendations and tips on working and living in Japan feel free to email Michelle at michelle.van.velthoven@gmail.com



View from accommodation in Nagasaki with Soba, one of the feral cats



Watching the Rugby World Cup 2019 with friends from Nagasaki University