



PK PARTNERS

ADVICE & GUIDANCE
FOR STEM EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

The Catherine McEwan Foundation Scholarship:

An external report

Summary and conclusions

The authors of this report have been moved by the evident impact of the work of The Catherine McEwan Foundation and Saturday School Ltd in respect of Scholarships to support children / learners / scholars living with Inflammatory Bowel Disease and recognise the added educational value achieved. We offer a series of recommendations through which the work of The Foundation and SSL could further enhance impact, and these are displayed at appropriate points in the text that follows.

Preamble

In November 2021 PK Partners was invited to prepare an independent overview of the activities of the Catherine McEwan Foundation (hereinafter referred to as 'The Foundation'; <https://catherinemcewanfoundation.com>)¹ in respect of the Scholarship Programme which The Foundation supports in collaboration with Saturday School Ltd (SSL; <https://www.saturdayschoolglasgow.com>) and The Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow (NHSGCC : Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow).

Recommendation 1

The Foundation may wish to improve navigation / links to its Scholarship webpage (<https://catherinemcewanfoundation.com/the-catherine-mcewan-foundation-scholarship-all-in-for-education/>).

Inflammatory bowel disease²

¹ All weblinks were checked, functional, and publicly accessible at the time of writing this report (20th November 2021).

² Background information on IBD has been taken from the NHS and Crohn's and Colitis UK websites [[Inflammatory bowel disease - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)] and [[Crohn's Disease | Crohn's & Colitis UK \(crohnsandcolitis.org.uk\)](#)]

Ulcerative colitis and Crohn’s disease are long-term conditions known collectively as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Ulcerative colitis affects the colon whilst Crohn's disease can affect any part of the digestive system. Whilst people of any age can be affected by IBD, diagnosis is more common in the age range 15 – 40.

The symptoms of IBD include:

- pain, cramps or swelling in the stomach;
- recurring or bloody diarrhoea;
- weight loss;
- extreme tiredness.

Those suffering from IBD will not necessarily display all the above symptoms and they may come and go with periods of remission interspersed with flare-ups. There is currently no cure for either ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease.

Treatment often involves a variety of medications although in a significant proportion of patients, surgery to remove parts of the digestive system is necessary.

Estimates of the incidence of IBD in Scotland and the UK are available. The figure below is taken from the work of Jones *et al.*³ which shows that the incidence of IBD in Scotland, averaged across all age ranges, is 0.77% (females) and 0.79% (males). Corresponding data for the UK are given in a work by Pasvol *et al.*⁴ and show broad agreement with the data for Scotland.

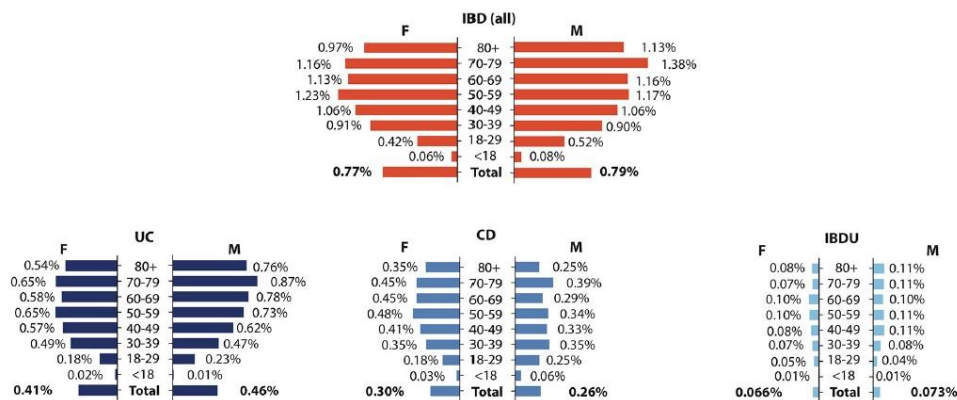


Figure 3 Age group prevalence breakdown by sex and IBD classification. Prevalent IBD cases were subdivided into age groups by IBD diagnosis into all IBD (red) and UC, CD or IBDU (blue). Percentage prevalence is reported for age-appropriate population data derived from National records for Scotland, 2016-based projections for 2018. CD, Crohn's disease; IBDU, IBD unclassified.

³ Jones G-R, Lyons M, Plevris N, et al. (2019), IBD prevalence in Lothian, Scotland, derived by capture–recapture methodology, *Gut* **68**:1953–1960.

⁴ Pasvol T, Horsfall L, Bloom S, et al. (2021), P131 Incidence and prevalence of inflammatory bowel disease in UK primary care: a cohort study, *Gut* **70**: A110.

The Catherine McEwan Foundation

The Foundation was established in 2003 and incorporated as a charity in Scotland (SC049063) in February 2019 with the following Objects:

- the relief of need of individuals suffering from ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease or other inflammatory bowel disease along with providing support to those who care for them;
- the advancement of health of individuals suffering from ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease or similar inflammatory bowel diseases;
- the advancement of education and research into the causes, treatment and prevention of ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease and similar inflammatory bowel disease which will lead to the saving of lives.

Specifically, The Foundation has established a set of Purposes:

- The advancement of education;
- The advancement of health;
- The relief of those in need by reason of age, ill health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage.

The work of The Foundation is well described through its website as well as through an Annual Trustees' Report, a redacted version of which is available via the Scottish Charity Regulator website (<https://www.oscr.org.uk/>).

Since its formation, The Foundation has been helping people living with Crohn's and colitis access better treatment, improved care, and live better lives. Through funding improvements in IBD healthcare across Scotland, The Foundation's focus is to offer / provide support to children, young people and adults with the challenges they face. In addition, The Foundation continues to support, and invest in, pioneering research.

It is well-recognised that that many young people who suffer from IBD are often absent from school for extended periods of time. Such absences are particularly challenging if they occur during periods when young people would ordinarily be studying for National Qualifications. Anecdotally, parents of students suffering from IBD indicate that support from schools during and after such absences from the classroom varies with a consequent deleterious effect on progress. Such observations have recently led to The Foundation creating a partnership with SSL.

Recommendation 2

The Foundation continues to work with other charitable organisations to establish other funded scholarship programmes to support students who have missed significant educational opportunities because of a medical condition.

Saturday School Ltd

SSL (see <https://www.saturdayschoolglasgow.com> for more detailed information) is a tutoring school and SQA Approved Centre based in Glasgow that offers weekend and part-time National Qualification courses in:

- Biology (National 5 and Higher)
- Chemistry (National 5 and Higher)
- English (National 5 and Higher)
- Human Biology (Higher)
- Maths (National 5 and Higher)
- Physics (National 5 and Higher)
- Spanish (National 5 and Higher)

In an 'average' year SSL is involved in supporting some two hundred young people with one or more of their activities. At present SSL does not have the scope to provide an assessment of improvements in student grades over the period of intervention although feedback from attendees and their parents / guardians indicates a high level of satisfaction with the service offered.

The Catherine McEwan Foundation Scholarship

In 2018 The Catherine McEwan Foundation Scholarship was established to enhance the support offered by The Foundation. Scholarships are available to individuals who have missed a significant part of their school education in one or more of the subjects offered by SSL; individual scholarships typically have a financial value of £300 - £1200. Both The Foundation and SSL acknowledge that criteria for the award of a Scholarship have not, to date, been rigorous. Previously applicants would be eligible (and encouraged to apply) if they were (i) studying one or more of the subjects offered by SSL at National 5 or Higher, (ii) registered with the IBD Unit at Glasgow Children's Hospital, and (iii) following positive discussions with IBD staff and SSL. Parents / carers were also consulted pre-selection. In the process of writing this report it has become evident that clearer criteria for selection are under development and this will involve input from the would-be applicant's school / college.

Recommendation 3

As part of the application process, The Foundation and SSL should seek more detailed baseline information on prospective scholarship applicants. In turn this should lead to a greater understanding of the potential 'value-addedness' which the scholarship provides.

Since its establishment 7 Scholarships have been awarded; it is anticipated that 10 scholarships will be provided in 2022. The Foundation has gathered a series of case studies (these will shortly be available through The Foundation's website) which demonstrate, through personal reflections of some of the Scholars involved and / or their parents / guardians / carers, the impact that Scholarships are having at an individual level.

Implementation of Recommendation 3 above will allow both The Foundation and SSL to confirm the 'value-addedness' offered through the Scholarship programme and in turn this should allow other agencies to be approached for additional funds to further enhance the programme.

Recommendation 4

The Foundation, in partnership with SSL, considers whether additional scholarships can be funded.

Recommendation 5

The Foundation, in partnership with SSL, considers whether other geographic locations for scholarship delivery might be pursued.

Recommendation 6

The Foundation should ensure that government, and its agencies, understand and appreciate the work conducted by The Foundation and how this links to the current emphasis on education recovery.

Wider considerations

The Foundation clearly has forged active, productive links with the wider business and industrial communities. There may be opportunities to capitalise on the success of the Scholarship Programme and engage additional support by exploring opportunities for co-funding of specific Scholars for example where the aspirations of the Scholar match the activities of the business / industry. Previous successful Scholars may, in turn, become ambassadors both for the Scholarship Programme and financial supporters.

Recommendation 7

The Foundation, working with business and commerce, might wish to increase the number and range of scholarships available.

The prevalence of IBD in Scotland means that much work remains to be done to support all those in need. Attracting additional funds to The Foundation will increase opportunities to further strengthen its valuable work. Links between The Foundation and, for example, Crohn's and Colitis UK are already strong but we believe that The Foundation is in a strong position to access other funding routes.

Recommendation 8

The Foundation might consider approaching larger charitable bodies (e.g., Children in Need) with a view to forming strategic alliances.