

# Breathe, Eat, Sleep, Move & Grow

a kinetic chain approach to designing for healthcare futures.



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Our emotional health and wellbeing can be enhanced positively through exercise and physical activity. The WHO has stated the importance of health management and not just viewing it as the absence of disease or infirmity. Design research approaches can define unmet needs in how these challenges can be interconnected to become a catalyst for healthcare system futures. This approach would alleviate burden on traditional healthcare providers and visualise a role beyond clinical settings that evolves into becoming a catalyst and enabler to autonomous yet supported health management for the individual across the lifespan, catering for all ages and all abilities. For the healthcare professional it provides an approach implemented during training to implement and see day to day spaces such as leisure centres, work and education settings, social spaces as places for healthcare opportunity and promotion to Breathe, Eat, Sleep, Move & GROW!

The NHS has faced numerous challenges to effective healthcare support and delivery as we celebrate its 75 years as an innovator to human connected accessible healthcare (McMahon, et al., 2023). The NHS was founded with a mandate to deliver accessible free healthcare for all (Oliver, 2023). This was an innovative and marvelous initiative at a time of great challenge to everyday people. Up to 1948 Childbirth, emergency care, physical and mental rehabilitation was accessed based on how much money you had and where you were located. Bevan delivered a promise to provide healthcare “free at point of delivery” (Flyn, 2018) and for all.

The aim of this post is to document a novel concept that promotes a personal approach to health management in the future. It encourages autonomous health practice to prevent several NCD's across the lifespan, which are currently affecting efficiency and delivery of NHS services (Scrutton, et al., 2015; Main, et al., 2022) and enhance mental wellbeing of the individual. Experience Based Design approaches demonstrated success in healthcare settings as a collaborative focus to deliver solutions (Bate & Robert, 2007; Macdonald, 2017). Two key questions motivated the research:

- (1) How can we envision a future of healthcare that is not only focussed on clinical settings to alleviate NCD rates?
- (2) How can we alleviate pressures and challenges of healthcare professionals through future skills development?

The NHS delivers healthcare across community and clinical settings from mobile delivery with teams of healthcare professionals, technology interventions have demonstrated needs for new roles and services (Imison, et al., 2016).

Challenges can be experienced by those striving for a healthy life and adopting new behaviours and goals (Riegel, et al., 2021). In addition, there are times through major policy makers, statisticians, and other agencies whereby a focus is elevated on particular aspects of health and lifespan, e.g., prostate cancer, menopause, obesity. This often results in healthcare promotions and focus, e.g., bowel cancer – bowel cancer screening (Ekberg, et al., 2014). Global events e.g., Covid pandemic can result in reduced access and/or provision of services resulting in socioeconomic consequences that affect peoples' lives (Nicola, et al., 2020). It can present challenges to budget planning and closures or cancellation of service provision (Turner et al., 2020; Mc Council, 2023).

The Covid-19 pandemic presented a real challenge to health autonomy and exercise regimes for people (Constandt, et al., 2020). Exercise was limited for some groups accessing green spaces during the pandemic (Geary, et al., 2021), people were restricted to exercising in their homes or with reduced access to outdoors due to closure of

leisure centres (Stockwell, et al., 2021). Gyms and exercise facilities closed, and fitness professionals relied on delivering classes online (Myers, et al., 2020). Outdoor public settings could facilitate ongoing activity and gym spaces to be inclusive in a post pandemic society (Marston, et al., 2020).

Design can be a resource that defines improvements to life (Shore, 2019), and reimagining making and doing (DiSalvo, 2022). This practice can have an activism that encourages a democratised balance to define solutions through a “social conversation” (Manzi 2015) and gives voice to invisible communities. As a social catalyst design has also played a key role in social and policy delivery (Clarkson & Coleman, 2015) and has been key to many innovations in healthcare – devices, products and services (Flood, et al., 2021).

As we embraced the 21st Century UK and Scottish Government introduced the Health Innovation (& Care) Centre – DHI in 2013 as one of eight innovation centres (Rimpiläinen, et al., 2019). The DHI has researched and delivered several key innovative services, e.g., Covid-19 app, Scotcap, Backpack that introduced digital focussed supports in relation to the global pandemic, endoscopy procedures, and Multiple Sclerosis. It continues to focus on delivering digital solutions that enhance practice and delivery of healthcare services in Scotland and working with partners across Europe through knowledge exchange and partnership (Hughes, 2022). However, as this research develops, it is evident of the need for human centric focus to behaviours and attitudinal change by people as they aspire to managing their healthspan (Shore, et al., 2024a).

Leisure centres face unprecedented challenge to the maintenance and operation of facilities that are intended to provide access to exercise and social engagement. Currently, physical inactivity is impacting on Quality of Life and places a cost in the UK of £1 Billion and, if no action is taken, Globally the cost will be approximately £232 billion. Physical Inactivity is a global challenge that impacts Quality of Life, societal balances and results in increased rates of NCDs (noncommunicable diseases e.g., stroke, heart disease, cancer, diabetes (WHO, 2022). This focus demonstrates progress made as a provocative action to innovate and address societal and public

health challenges (Cruickshank, 2023) whilst transforming human behaviour to a autonomous and self-management to their health and wellness.

## **“If you don’t breathe – you die”**

Earlier in 2023, I presented research as part of the bid to raise funding for the redevelopment of a Leisure Centre. I opened my presentation with “If we don’t breathe, we die!” The attendees reacted with reflective but noticeable pause. I followed this and expanded a discussion imagining the future of healthcare beyond clinical settings (Shore, et al., 2024a), innovation and opportunity to develop a future focused leisure centre transforming human behaviour through engagement, activity, energy and design. As an emerging trend (Tseklevs & Cooper, 2017) self-management of healthcare is a design opportunity. The public space of the leisure centre was about to undergo redevelopment as a future focused health, wellness and exercise is primarily emulate beyond the person to include also the environment through salutogenic architecture and design considerations that optimise and enhance the possibility “sustainable healthy future” (Dilani, 2017).

The concept would envision a traditional 20<sup>th</sup> Century Leisure Centre as an innovative ‘health-e-space’ for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It presented the following mantra:

**Breathe | Eat | Sleep | Move | GROW!**

This research introduction discussed NCD’s current challenges to personal and public health management, and lifestyle. It presented five key drivers to support innovation in leisure facilities and public healthcare beyond a clinical setting. It considers the importance of the current ‘leisure centre’ model and the engagement and standards it has in community settings.

The research begins with the human responses we rely on daily and that can ensure our capacity to be ‘healthy’ while also considering the relationship with physical and digital spaces as supports to enhance our health. The geographical location of the leisure centre presented novel opportunity also due to its proximity to mountains.

and forestry. It introduced four 'labs' within a healthy environment. The redevelopment of the leisure centre would require many of these existing facilities to be enhanced or improved to optimise a sustainability aligning to environmental goals, e.g., net zero.

There are current design research activities and effectively a design research lab imagined as a 'hot live spot' in the leisure centre to ensure on the ground awareness and diarising or ideas through engagement with members, staff, public health providers and policy makers.

As the project develops it visualises the physical spaces and digital supports as a further funded innovation, it includes the development of the four lab spaces (Altitude Nutrition, Sleep and Gait) to the redeveloped leisure centre. The labs will provide a base to remain focused on change and responsive to the needs of community and society as we progress from the 21<sup>st</sup> century to the 22<sup>nd</sup> (Siodmok, 2024)

- Conduct research and testing focus on healthcare and self-management of health conditions innovation
- Spaces for elite athletes to train and prepare for competition/events
- Spaces for members/attendees to manage their health conditions in an environment that promotes wellness and energy.

## **2.1 Breathe – Altitude Lab**

Altitude has been relied on to support health rehabilitation and care, particularly in Alpine regions (Pichler, et al., 2022). Respiratory conditions and pulmonary diseases such as asthma can benefit from Altitude treatments (Fieten, et al., 2022). Asthma is a major global health problem affecting over 300 million people (Saxer, et al., 2019) regular physical activity has demonstrated benefits to reduced risk of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) (Chen, et al., 2022). Elite athletes can rely on altitude training as part of competition preparation (Sharma, 2022) often as one of a series of preparatory approaches aimed at enhancing performance (Fernández-Lázaro, et al., 2022). The lab would also lend itself to research activity that uncovers new

knowledge to enhance respiratory health management and support to the individual and health providers.

## **2.2 Eat – Nutrition Lab**

Healthy diet is recommended to combat sedentary behaviour (Ingram, et al. 2020), poor diet can contribute to obesity and wellbeing imbalance (McIntosh, et al., 2020). A nutrition lab within a gym/leisure centre setting could provide accessible resource to nutrition knowledge and diet quality for regular gym goers who are seeking to build a healthy lifestyle, or manage health conditions, for elite athletes and education can provide access to build knowledge regarding food options, environmental consequences (Spronk, et al., 2015; Macdiarmid, et al., 2016). Food supplements are often taken by gym goers and often informed by unpredictable or unreliable sources (Mettler et al., 2020). The 'Eat' nutrition lab is positioned within the same environment as the leisure centre attendees, therefore opportune to supporting nutrition education and building knowledge through expert staff. The lab in conjunction with the café area could provide research opportunity to understand and share nutrition, diet management knowledge to alleviate or reduce NCD's such as type 2 diabetes.

## **2.3 Sleep – Sleep Lab**

We can spend up to one third of our lives sleeping (Frank & Heller, 2019), yet we experience lack of sleep resulting in negative impacts (Mi & Lei, 2023) on our social work and healthspan. Sleep can present challenge at stages of life (Sigelman & Rider, 2014) or because of transitions, hormonal changes etc., e.g., menopause (Tutia, et al., 2019). Elite Athletes well-being and performance can be affected by disrupted sleep patterns (Rice, et al., 2016). From a health perspective, conditions such as sleep apnea can be a risk factor to stroke (Culebras, 2015). The sleep lab would provide an opportunity whereby research is active with collaborations between academia, industry, and general population as well as elite athletes to provide innovative solutions that support well-being and health management.

## **2.4 Move – Gait Lab**

The Gait Lab would provide research, innovation, and health support opportunities related to mobility, gait pattern and behaviour etc., Research in a controlled environment such as a gym is understudied (Schmitt, et al., 2021). Assistive Technologies such as Functional Electrical Stimulation can enhance experience in a gym setting (Bulley et al., 2011). Post-menopause estrogen replacement may be a factor in maintaining muscle strength and enhancing muscle trainability and thus be important in maintenance of static and dynamic balance and the potential risk of falls in older females (Perry, et al., 2005). This presents opportunity to provide the access to research and health management in a centre that facilitates a community interested in preventing falls, innovating emerging and assistive technologies to deliver innovation from a health-e-space setting.

## **2.5 GROW! - the environment and space around**

Our wellbeing is affected by the environments we utilise daily (Cooper, 2014). Simple daily activity such as walking can be impeded or enhanced by the built environment (Townshend, 2014). Future cities are envisioned to be sustainable and fully regenerative (Dunn & Cureton, 2020). Reimagining a traditional leisure centre is as an ambitious update of a building that is currently 'tired' with poor performing equipment and resource to efficiently operate. The new developed leisure centre position itself as a catalyst for change in traditional leisure activity, including a human centric and human connected focus to innovations in health, well-being, exercise experience. Consideration to salutogenic design principles (Dilani, 2015) will enable the attendees and community who access this new healthy environment, to provide social support space as a driver to self-management of health.

## **Making present what is absent in future health equity – a discussion**

The simple act of breathing air into the lungs and expelling them is an act we often don't focus on or consider, but do, are doing now as you read this post, we have had numerous intakes and discharges of air to and from our lungs. Breathe, Eat, Sleep, Move & GROW! promotes and encourages self-managed approaches to wellness

health. It facilitates a place that people can engage with and trust expertise, guidance and support as they exercise, interact and enjoy the resources and facilities at the Leisure Centre of the future.

In the future, it operates as a 'Push' for the people who choose to walk through the door to engage in activities that enhance quality of life and health autonomy.

Current health condition management operates on a 'Pull' whereby once you are diagnosed you tend to be called to appointments or schedules that pull you through the experience.

This focus and vision creates the possibility for individuals to experience something tactile or tangible as their reality and autonomy across the healthspan, and to realise a self-managed approach to healthcare outside of clinical settings.

## **Future focussed healthcare across the lifespan**

Health across the lifespan can be optimized through exercise and other factors such as good diet (Sigelman & Rider, 2021). Our physical, social, emotional, and mental interactions enhance our development and participation in the environments we encounter daily (Cech & Martin, 2011). PhEMiniNe reflections and practice have indicated good prospect to managing peri and menopausal symptoms (Shore et al., 2024b). The importance of Mental wellbeing balance, good nutrition and support in healthy environments could underpin innovation to healthspan management. Our to-day experiences evolve and change through the lifespan, whereby we can be hesitant to ask or seek help in our younger years we can sometimes feel a burden at times in later age (Marston, et al., 2022; Shore, 2019).

More than one-in-four adults are physically inactive – less than half the population of children in the UK do enough physical activity recommended for their age. This impacts as a healthcare concern across life stages and can impact on spending and economic budgets to the NHS. Exercise & physical activity improves emotional health & wellbeing and is a key aspect for children's motor and cognitive development (Keech, 2022). Globally, this presents as further inequalities in levels of physical

activity across gender, age, and those experiencing poverty or deprivation. Almost half of new NCD diagnosis is a result of secondary impact from hypertension (47%) or depression (43%). If we do nothing to stem or find innovative ways to encourage activity, exercise, and social interaction this will see costs globally on health systems and service providers of \$300 Billion annually (WHO, 2022).

## **Wellness Laboratories enhanced health and research opportunities**

Social determinants of health rely on an inclusive ecology of supports and autonomy e.g., self, social, cultural (Jones, 2017) which in turn contribute to our flourishing sense of belonging as “entanglements between people, objects and systems” (Speiser, 2023). Characteristics of emotional design can optimize interactions and experiences beyond the appearance or usability (Norman, 2004).

According to the Collins Dictionary (Collins, online ed., 2014) the word ‘Affect’ is defined as “If something affects a person or thing, it influences them or causes them to change in some way.” Affective approaches to design and developing tools that are utilised by individuals could encourage a sense of empowerment, and engagement seen previously (Shore, et al., 2024a).

APHEX-U (A Personalised Human Experience Universal) (Shore et al., 2024b) tool approaches encourage responsibility whereby the individual accesses the tool with a purposeful approach to managing or seeking informed guidance or support to symptoms or conditions e.g., perimenopause/menopause.

Peri/menopause is a transitional stage in life, and often can feel quite debilitating due to the range of symptoms experienced that are often quite subtle and numerous (Shore et al., 2024b). Developing tools or emerging technologies that encourage autonomy and anticipate acceptance or adoption need to be understood from the users’ perspective and their perceptions or intentions to use same (Shore, 2019). Theoretical approaches can affect and be utilised to affect user responses or behaviours, or intentions to use a device (Shore, et al., 2018).

Self-Liberty was introduced previously as an attitudinal measure construct when assessing perceptions and acceptance of emerging technology (Shore, et al., 2022) facilitates expression and intent of use differently from Self-Efficacy because it encourages autonomous perception of control (Shore, 2019). Bandura discusses the four psychological approaches (cognitive, motivational, affective, & selection) that promote our interest or engagement with tasks or activities (Bandura, 1994).

A traditional leisure centre reimagined for the future requires an ecosystem that is supportive and not reliant on just the service and the products, it crosses the ecosystem to deliver access for all ages and abilities to engage on their terms utilising face to face, interactive and informed sources (Ghani, et al., 2020).

The future leisure centres will include those traditional and typical studios, equipment, swimming pool etc, but goes a step further to promote health autonomy and management, e.g., physiotherapy supports, or NCD combined managed support between self, the healthcare service, and the future leisure environment.

A design driven holistic hybrid approach ensures human connectedness and engagement across the ecosystem of the individual.

## **Conclusion**

This vision and concept for an Innovative facility for the future of healthcare, personal health management and community engagement provides opportunity to review the 20<sup>th</sup> century model of leisure, and leisure centre environments and conceptualise an innovative approach to health management. This concept is a catalyst for change in personal health management and healthspan approaches that alleviate burden on a distressed NHS, provide new life for the leisure centre estates of numerous countries within the UK and beyond that are struggling to optimise income and economic returns, whilst struggling with health and social care challenges.

Design research work continues as collaborative activity to ensure an inclusive and sustainable facility that promotes personal health management, physical activity

interaction and well-being whilst optimising community and stakeholder engagement to utilise, innovate and collaborate.

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