



The PSP Association's International Medical Workshop 7th July 2009

ABSTRACT

Title of Talk: CLUSTERING

Part 1: Speaker(s) details	
Title	Professor
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Part 2: Abstract (Maximum 400 words) Please make your abstract easy to understand as it will appear on our website and will be read by people with PSP and their carers who are not scientists but who will want to understand your work and what it means for them.

Clustering of disease is an extension of astute clinical observation and was first exemplified by John Snow (the father of epidemiology) with a localised cholera outbreak. Clusters are excessive number of cases located in either time and/or space above what would be predicted. Such clusters are important mainly because of the potential alarm they cause to the local population but are often, as it turns out, false positives (i.e. no a true cluster), which is a particular problem when the area is highlighted as a post-hoc observation rather than predicted before hand from a specific hypothesis. Complex statistical methods and various design methods have evolved to deal with this problem and should be used. Even when clusters are genuine they do not always lead to a definitive answer, but they should be explored for their potential to provide new insights into the causes of disease.

