Welcome to the seventh edition of the School of Population Health Newsletter!

Our Newsletter facilitates communication within the School. We aim to put out an issue every quarter and depend on you to support your Newsletter through interesting, informative and constructive contributions that we will all want to read. Huge thanks to everyone who has contributed so far, the response has been fantastic, and please keep items coming in.

Head of School's message

Dear SPH colleagues

The School is an active and vibrant organisation and there isn't too much that sits still long enough to gather dust so there are always plenty of changes and new directions and newsworthy items so this Newsletter should be a good read.

In the early part of 2010 many researchers submitted research grant applications and recently many have received assessors' comments on their applications and effectively decide which ones get funded. Best wishes also to those involved in this important aspect of the process.

The lack of notice and consultation regarding the commencement of building of the new UWA Child Care Centre next to the Clifton St Building was most unfortunate and this caused some disruption to first semester exam schedules and the associated loss of staff parking bays has made finding parking on this site a more serious problem. Despite our protests and raising concerns with UWA officials it is clear that we will have to contend with considerably less staff parking bays on this site from now on. Some staff have already changed their commuting and working patterns. If more staff use more active forms of transport (eg cycling, walking) or use public transport then at least there will be some public health and environmental benefit from this. Also, hopefully School staff with young children will soon be able to take advantage of the new child care facility.

The first semester teaching program went well and the second semester has also successfully commenced. There was a need to recruit several new tutors and a few lecturers to help delivery of teaching programs for second semester. The first semester budget has been submitted [with sadly too little funding and too many red numbers] and we now have a proper school governance document for your perusal and most exciting of all is the School Operational Priorities Plan and Target Schedule has been completed. My thanks to Annette for her work on it and the other half a dozen people that read it and gave input. The OPR follows on from UWA’s and the Faculty’s but most importantly, it follows our Strategic Plan and contains a number of key performance indicators that we will be evaluated by... Have a look sometime!

Speaking of evaluations, we will be starting to collect data from everyone for use in the new Teaching and the New Research workload models. Who’d I can hear your groans from afar, the positive side of this is there will be less work to do come School Review time and your CV will be up to date.

In addition, I believe the Teaching Staff are going to submit a Teaching and Learning Portfolio to CATL next year since schools are now eligible to enter in years other than the School review year - we got a ‘Highly Commendable’ from 2007. Other admin news is Financial Services are rolling out new systems for Travel booking and approvals, credit card payments and the way we order things. It will take a while but please bear with us when the processes are changed, particularly with travel bookings...

There has been a rule change for transferring money between institutes, universities and other research groups; we must use specific account codes or otherwise we lose government $, so please contact me when you are contemplating this action.

Finally, I continue to persevere with upgrading the cleaning services delivered to the school and also to have something done about the little Sahara desert with one palm tree and a large hole under the building.

Cheers - Peta

**Note changes in responsibility below:**

School Manager's message

Well, work has been busy with reports and more reports. The school budget has been submitted (with sadly too little funding and too many red numbers): we now have a proper school governance document for your perusal and most exciting of all is the School Operational Priorities Plan and Target Schedule has been completed. My thanks to Annette for her work on it and the other half a dozen people that read it and gave input. The OPR follows on from UWA’s and the Faculty’s but most importantly, it follows our Strategic Plan and contains a number of key performance indicators that we will be evaluated by... Have a look sometime!

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**Staff changes - New & returned faces**

Judy Katzellenbogen

Originally trained as an Occupational Therapist in Cape Town, South Africa, Judy worked for a decade as an epidemiologist for the South African Medical Research Council. In NZ, Judy was primarily involved with analysing and synthesising health evidence for health purchasing authorities. In WA, Judy was first associated with the Epidemiology Branch of the Health Department where she was involved in the first Burden of Disease study for WA and continues to be involved in updates of these estimates. Her doctoral thesis used the WA Data Linkage System to enhance burden of disease estimates for urological cancer and she is currently a postdoctoral fellow on a joint Curtin-UWA NHMRC-funded project Management of coronary heart disease in the Indigenous population in Western Australia: from information to action.

Lindy Nield

is a Senior Research Officer looking at the performance of the Uranium Association 1977 to 2010 (with Angus’s group). Lindy started with us in July this year.

Patrick Aboagye-Sarfo

Patrick has taken up a position as a Research Associate and will be working on Alison Reid’s successful 2009 NHMRC grant. Patrick recently completed his PhD at Edith Cowan University. His PhD was on HIV incidence in Ghana. OPE would like to welcome both Patrick and Latha to the Occupational Respiratory Epidemiology Research group.

Latha Samuel

is our new Database Administrator, replacing Rob Minna who left for New Zealand earlier this year. She has a long history in IT and database work and is on (long-term) secondment from Planning Services at UWA. Latha has made noises about doing a PhD with our group, something that we are strongly encouraging her to do!

Pamela Broadley

has received the PhD at UWA under the supervision of Konrad Jamrozik on the long-term outcomes of coronary artery bypass graft surgery in WA. She worked as the cardiovascular clinical trials coordinator at Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital until taking the opportunity to pursue her interests in cardiovascular epidemiology by undertaking post-doctoral studies at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) in Toronto. On her return to Australia she was appointed a Research Fellow in SPH and has worked on several grants in cardiovascular epidemiology including Aboriginal cardiovascular.

**Changed Admin Roles**

Student Desk Assignments - Di Repairs, Facility Management - Tammy Publication Submissions - Rhiit Website alterations - Rhiit and Fiona
health. After several short-lived retirements she is back part-time working on the use and outcomes of cardiac pacemakers.

Michael Nguyen is currently consultant interventional cardiologist at Fremantle and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Director of Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory at Fremantle Hospital. Michael is completing his Master of Philosophy at Sydney University and was recently appointed Clinical Associate Professor with SPH at UWA. His research interest involves outcomes research in the area of cardiovascular disease, acute coronary syndromes and percutaneous coronary revascularization.

Deborah Butcher is a Registered Nurse at Princess Margaret Hospital, working part-time in the Anaesthetics & Pain Management Department as a Research Nurse and part-time in the Intensive Care Unit. Deborah's particular interest in nursing has been haematoic health and accordingly she has completed a Diploma of Paediatric Nursing. Deborah also joined the SPH last year to commence the Masters in Research (Nursing). Deborah is working this semester in the School as a lecturer for the Maternal & Child Health Nursing unit in the Masters of Nursing Science program, and will also be undertaking a clinical supervisor role for nursing students during their clinical practicum at PMH.

Karen Martits commenced working at CBEH on the Child's Play project with Dr Lisa Wood in March 2010. Karen completed her PhD at SPH-UWA earlier this year; her thesis investigated children's school time physical activity, and her research focus continues to be children's physical activity and health. She was a chief investigator on the 2008 Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (CAPANS) and worked previously on ‘Treat or Trap’, a project investigating children's food consumption at school. Karen has undertaken consultancies for government agencies on the benefits of physical activity for children's physical, mental and social health, and learning capacity. She has a keen interest on how the current culture of extended sedentary activity is impacting upon children's well-being and is passionate about creating opportunities for children to play in outdoor and natural settings.

Suzie Turner is currently studying towards a Graduate Diploma of Urban and Regional Planning at UWA. She worked for 6 years as a Landscape Architect for a Perth landscape design and construction company, and designed a number of public open spaces around Perth. As part of her diploma she has undertaken a research project investigating the influence of policy on public open space design to determine the quality of spaces provided in Perth by the current government planning policy, Liveable Neighbourhoods. Interested in all aspects of creating more sustainable cities and communities, Suzie is particularly interested in bridging the gap between academic research and industry practice. At CBEH she has been able to work on several research projects, including Child's Play and RESIDE II and gain valuable experience and knowledge of current research directions and practices.

Sandra Nijenstein is a masters student from The Netherlands and has come to Australia to undertake a practicum at CBEH for three months as part of her masters program. She has a Bachelors degree in ‘Innovation Sciences’ and has been a member of the board of her study association for one year. Sandra is now in the second year of her masters as ‘Human-Technology Interaction’ and ‘Architecture, Building and Planning’ at her home university Eindhoven University of Technology. She is combining these two study areas because she is interested in matters including both human-related and urban planning aspects in relation to urban environments. As CBEH is concerned with these kinds of matters, she is pleased to be here to undertake a research project as part of her masters program. She will work with GPS data to investigate the relationship of walking behaviour with the environment until the beginning of November this year.

Adjoint appointments

Gavin McCormack Now at the University of Calgary, was appointed an Adjunct Senior Research Fellow. Gavin was formerly a PhD student of the School and before moving to Canada was Research Associate with CBEH. Gavin is actively involved in a number of major CBEH projects including the TRED study and RESIDE and two studies exploring the economic utility of more walkable neighbourhoods in Perth (Eco-RESIDE) and in Calgary (Eco-Eutaria).

Trevor Shilton Long-standing collaborator Trevor Shilton has been appointed Adjunct Associate Professor. Trevor is the Cardiovascular Director of the Heart Foundation and until recently, the National Physical Activity Manager of the Heart Foundation. For more than a decade he has been an active collaborator on physical activity research projects and has contributed to the research translation work of CBEH.
Conferences and travel

The NPS National Medicine Symposium: Anne McKenzie was a plenary speaker in the opening session of the NPS National Medicine Symposium in Melbourne in May. Anne presented on the consumer and community participation work at SPH that she led relating to medication safety in August. Emery from General Practice also presented on the same work in another plenary session. Both presentations highlighted the issues raised by the Seniors Consumer Panel regarding labelling and packaging of prescription medicines and how poor practices may have implications for adverse medicine events. Following the symposium Anne has been invited by the NPS to present on other issues raised by the Seniors Consumer Panel relating to medication safety in August. Anna Kemp also gave a presentation at the symposium on “determinants of cost-related underuse across seven countries” as well as having three poster presentations on a range of medicine related topics.

The consumer participation work at SPH was highlighted recently at a conference workshop in Darwin. Caroline Bulsara and Anne McKenzie co-presented with two community members Beth Solich (Seniors Consumer Panel) and Michael Pui (Insurance Commission WA Panel Member). The workshop outlined the two different models of consumer and community participation used in the two projects and Caroline, Beth and Michael talked about their perspectives of being involved and Anne talked about the learning from each project and barriers to consumer and community participation. The audience then discussed barriers and ways to move forward on increasing consumer and community participation. Anecdotal feedback from people who attended the workshop was very positive and in particular people commented that having presentations by Beth and Michael was a highlight of the session.

Max Zang recently had the opportunity to show Max and Caroline Bulsara and Anne McKenzie around her home town in Hangzhou Province China. Anne and Max were invited by Prof Xie of Zhejiang University to visit China as part of the Lu Cha Sino-Australian Research Collaboration. Anne, with translating support from Min and note taking from Caroline, had the privilege of conducting two focus groups in Hangzhou and Shenyang cancer hospitals with women who are taking part in research projects on breast cancer. It was an interesting and humbling experience and the clinical staff who sat in on the focus groups commented that this was the first time the women had been asked questions like this. Max also gave presentations on his work in the TARGIT projects at the same two hospitals. By Anne McKenzie

Student Scholarships - Congratulations!

Nursing scholarship winners
Desi Aji - 2010 Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship provided by Department of Health, WA.
Thomas Coffey – Department of Health Scholarship
Nathan Bowen – Department of Health Scholarship
Dante Giacomin – Country Week provided by CUCRH
Liz Templeman – Department of Health - Nursing and Midwifery Office

Student training opportunities

PG Teaching Internship Scheme - call for applications

The Teaching and Learning Committee is calling for applications to the Postgraduate Teaching Internship Scheme for 2011. The deadline for submissions is 6th September 2010.

The Postgraduate Teaching Internship Scheme allows promising doctoral research students to develop teaching skills in their field and to undertake a program of professional development activities during the course of their PhD candidature.

The Scheme, introduced and funded by the Teaching and Learning Committee, has run successfully since 2000. In 2007 the Scheme was awarded an ALTC (then Carrick) Award for Programs that Enhance Learning. Every year the Scheme has been reviewed and refined. The Scheme continues into 2011 with the aim of enhancing the future employment prospects of Interns, assisting in attracting and retaining outstanding students at UWA and enhancing the nexus between teaching and research.

A teaching Internship is an opportunity for a school to tap into the enthusiasm, energy and genuine commitment to teaching and learning of an Intern. Please discuss the opportunities provided by a teaching Internship with your PhD and professional development students and come along with them to the information session. Prospective Interns and Internship Supervisors are strongly encouraged to attend.

Guidelines

The guidelines, application form and associated documentation for the Postgraduate Teaching Internship Scheme are available on the web at: http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/students/postgraduates/internship/what_is_involved_in_a_uwa_postgraduate_teaching_internship

Any queries should be directed to Caroline Mitchell on ext.8197 or email: caroline.mitchell@uwa.edu.au.

Conferences and travel

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Max also gave presentations on his work in the TARGIT projects at the same two hospitals. By Anne McKenzie

Pictured above: Anne McKenzie, Beth Solich, Caroline Bulsara and Michael Pui.

Above: Min and Anna in Hangzhou
Middle: Presentation by Max on TARGIT Technique
Below: Anne and Anna
Bottom: Focus group in Hangzhou
Congratulations to Professor Fiona Bull and the Toronto Charter for PA Writing Team

The CBEH team attended the 3rd International Physical Activity and Health Conference held in Toronto on 5th-8th May. It was an excellent meeting, and our research was very well received. Our colleagues had a very high profile at this important meeting in both plenary and symposium sessions, as well as posters.

However, perhaps the highlight of the conference was the closing ceremony at which our own Professor Fiona Bull presented for endorsement the Toronto Charter for Physical Activity, which has been working behind the scenes for the last two years, to develop a global charter for the promotion of physical activity. Given that globally 1.9 million die annually because they are insufficiently active—this is not a trivial issue. The Charter is wide ranging, involving all major sectors—health, sport, and recreation, transport, planning, and education. The process of development has involved regular teleconferences at all times of the night to accommodate the time zones of an international group. It has involved consultations with global experts and a process of consensus building that has had input from 55 countries globally, nearly 500 individuals providing nearly 2000 comments.

Along with her Co-Chair Professor Lise Gauvin from University of Montreal, Fiona shared the process for the development of the Charter and how comments had been sought and integrated before inviting the 1200 conference delegates to show their endorsement for the Charter by waving their “Charter paddles” (all done to music and dance). Importantly, the Charter outlines a process that involves mobilizing partners and networks, and seeking adoption and implementation of the Charter globally. While in Australia we are well advanced along these lines, the Charter will hopefully provide an important framework for other countries, particularly in the developing world.

It was an impressive close to the conference, for which Fiona received a (very well deserved) standing ovation. A great reward for two years of hard work for the Toronto Charter writing team. We were all very proud of her and the other Toronto Charter writing team members, a number of whom are very well known to us as friends, colleagues and collaborators.

The next part of the process will be the official release of the Charter with endorsement being sought from groups and institutions globally. However, the process has already commenced with the City of Bogota, now famous for its infrastructure reform designed to encourage walking, cycling and public transport use, already endorsing the Charter.

Please join me in congratulating Fiona, Trevor and Adrian for their excellent work—We are indeed fortunate to have such a dedicated team of colleagues and collaborators, who (often late at night) are regularly on teleconferences working with international teams devising strategies that are seeking to make a difference globally.

By Billie Giles-Corti

ICO Stockholm

Billie Giles-Corti and Nicole Edwards recently attended the International Congress on Obesity in Stockholm, Sweden. Nicole presented findings from her PhD on “Activity-friendly environments for adolescents” and Billie delivered a presentation titled “Building active communities”. More than 3000 delegates attended the 5 day programme that covered a broad range of topics including diet, physical activity and behaviour, public health and policy, physiology, treatment and co-morbidities.

Highlights of the trip included a ferry ride thorough Stockholm’s archipelago to the sustainable community of Hannamby (photo below) and dinner at the magnificent Stockholm City Hall (photo above), to sample the atmosphere of the place where the annual Nobel festivities are celebrated.

Prior to the Sweden meeting, Billie visited Copenhagen to experience for herself, this internationally renowned city known for being cycling friendly. A notable feature of this city is at peak hour there are more cyclists than drivers waiting at traffic lights (photos to right). In Copenhagen, everyone cycles: parents are regularly seen transporting their children in multi-purpose bicycles (http://www.citycopenhagen.dk/gmt-facts.htm). These bikes make it possible to shop, transport children, boxes or even furniture. With around 2.7 million inhabitants within a 50 km radius, Copenhagen is one of the most densely populated in Northern Europe. This compares with Perth, with its population of just 1.7 million spread 120 km along the coast line! A key feature of Copenhagen is it is so quiet — this is because it has a fabulous underground system, most people walk or cycle, and there are very few motor vehicles in the city.

By Billie Giles-Corti

ICO Stockholm

Paula Hooper, Hayley Christian, Sarah Foster, Billie Giles-Corti and Fiona Bull from CBEH recently travelled to Toronto, Canada, for the 3rd International Congress on Physical Activity and ... presentations. The conference program was jam-packed - the major difficulty was selecting which sessions to attend.

Paula and Billie presented results from the RESIDE study as part of the symposium: ‘Methods for Researching the Physical Activity Impacts of Natural Experiments in Modifying the Built Environment’. Lee thanked her colleagues for helping her to achieve this success. Briefly, Lee’s research found that despite declines in age-standardized incidence rates of heart attack, the incidence of non-fatal attacks is increasing in females aged 35-54 years. This has important implications for addressing cardiovascular prevention in females.

Others from the Cardiovascular Research Group also presenting at the meeting were Tie-Hwa Teng with three mini-orals on heart failure, Judy Katzenellenbogan (Heart disease in Aboriginal Australians) and Tom Britta (primary prevention of heart disease) each with a poster.

By Tom Britta

Congratualtions to Lee Nedkoff:
Joint winner of the Allied Health & Technologies Prize

Lee was jointly awarded the “Allied Health & Technologists” Prize at the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand annual scientific meeting in Adelaide for her oral presentation “Differing gender and age-specific trends in the incidence of acute coronary events in Western Australia, 1996 to 2007”. She was presented with her award at the Societies AGM, receiving a certificate and an equal share of $1,000 prize money. Beyond the science of Lee’s presentation was her meticulous preparation which was highlighted by the apologist with which she fielded questions from the floor immediately following her talk. Lee thanked her colleagues for helping her to achieve this success. Briefly, Lee’s research found that despite declines in age-standardized incidence rates of heart attack, the incidence of non-fatal attacks is increasing in females aged 35-54 years. This has important implications for addressing cardiovascular prevention in females.

By Tom Britta

Country Week

Every year the Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health (CUCRH) organises an event called Country Week. This year the event took place at Nallan Station on the northern side of Cue, 647km north-east of Perth. We set off on Sunday 6th June and returned on Friday 2nd July. This year’s theme was “sense of place” with the week’s programme geared around that concept. Most of the time was spent at the station or at Cue but we also spent a day at Meekatharra and paid a visit to the abandoned town of Big Bell.

Over 30 students studying health related degrees were chosen from applicants from all five of Western Australia’s universities. Most of the selected students came from Perth, one Curtin student was from Queensland, several were from Bunbury and one from Denmark (studying in Albany). There was also quite a variety of degrees being studied with nursing being one of the most popular as well as physiotherapy, pharmacy, health promotion, etc.

We were accompanied by four mentors from CUCRH, with three having extensive experience living in country WA. Two of our mentors, Simon and Hamish, conducted the lectures that took place during the week. The lectures were conducted in the shearing shed and covered topics such as Aboriginal culture and the concept of third space. Third space being the overlap of Aboriginal and Western culture. Simon and Hamish made the lectures so interesting because they could use so many of their personal experiences to get the message across. To complement the lectures each student was required to keep a diary of events and to reflect on those events. The only piece of assessment we had to do was a group presentation that demonstrated what we had learnt during the week. We were divided into four groups with each group named after fauna found in the area (eagle, emu, echidna & kangaroo) and the presentations took place on our last day in Cue.

Throughout the week we met many white and Aboriginal people who call this part of WA home. Michael, the station owner, and his wonderful family made us feel very welcome and kept us very well fed. It was fascinating listening to all the people we met and finding out why they live in the area even though they face many challenges that we don’t face in Perth, especially with regards to health services. I don’t think many Perth residents would tolerate a health system where services only come every few weeks or months, where all pregnant women at week 35 have to travel to Geraldton for the remainder of their pregnancy because there are no maternity services in the area. Most of these country people just go with the flow.

I thoroughly enjoyed Country Week and I could go on and on about my experiences but I still wouldn’t be able to do it justice. I strongly recommend students who didn’t go this year to apply to go on next year’s Country Week. It will introduce you to a different world that will enrich your experiences and have a positive impact on your work in your chosen profession.

by Dante Giacomin

Master of Nursing Science student

Pictures below: Talk at Meekatharra Hospital; My accommodation for the week; Cooking demo in Cue
Country Week was a great opportunity to work in an interdisciplinary team to investigate rural and indigenous health issues. I definitely came away from the week with a heightened awareness and appreciation of the issues faced by rural and/or indigenous health consumers. Lastly, the program also gave me the chance to consider the opportunities and challenges that are experienced by rural health workers.

by Melissa Burford

The Edward and Patricia Usher Student Vacation Research Scholarships

Applications are invited from students who are studying disciplines related to cancer control, including biological science, medicine, behavioural science or public health, for a scholarship to conduct research relating to cancer during the coming summer recess period. A total of $3,000 is available for each research grant awarded.

Closing date for applications is Tuesday 31 August 2010 at 5pm

How to Apply:
For application forms and guidelines see http://www.cancerwa.asn.au/research/funding

Further enquiries email:
Anna Nankivell on 9388 4354 or anankivell@cancerwa.asn.au

Cancer Council Western Australia’s Research Program is funded by donations from the WA community. We thank our donors for their generous support.

Relay for Life

Well done to the Nursing Students who took part in the Relay for Life! Photos below - great effort everyone.

Next: Mont Blanc Charity Climb

In September Simon Roebuck will be in a team of 20 WA climbers climbing Mont Blanc to raise money for the children’s cancer ward at PMH, where his son has to spend far too much time.

Above: Courtney making tapping sticks.
Top: Ghost mining town
Left bottom: Doing presentations at Nallen Station
Below: Hannah tests Cue’s physical facilities
Hi Everyone

To the wonderful staff and students at our School who have sponsored me to sleep out in the open tonight on a piece of cardboard with just a bowl of soup, a huge THANK YOU for your much appreciated messages of encouragement and donations to the St Vincent de Paul CEO Sleepout. They are a great charity doing important work, especially for the homeless people in our State.

Your generosity has contributed to over $4,261 as my sponsorship tally. It’s a fantastic result for a public sector entrant and I was very proud to be there tonight as UWA’s ‘representative.’ I did make it through the night, but it was cold, damp, uncomfortable, dirty and noisy – the real thing, day after day, must be totally bereft of human dignity.

The organisers were overwhelmed by the response from the WA community and your generosity has made a real difference. Here are a few pics for the record. Sorry I don’t look my best in the morning, but it was definitely worth it. Thanks again everyone for the fabulous support. It’s meant a great deal to me.

Kindest regards,
D’Arcy

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TMB Travel Study

Tour Mont Blanc (TMB) offers a fairly challenging alpine trek through France, Switzerland and Italy to circle Mont Blanc past glaciers and pine forests. The wildflowers and rivers make this a photographer’s paradise and each day ends by sampling the local cuisine and wines – each one better than the last.

The TMB would seem to be synonymous with Public Health which is defined as ‘the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health...’ (Winslow 1920). Based on the theory that the TMB does all this we set out with a sample size of 6 (not randomly selected) to test the hypothesis. In order to remain unbiased we chose a 2 sided hypothesis and to optimise health outcomes we included no control group. Visibility and splendour was measured subjectively (self report) and objectively (camera and video). The incidence of rain was close to zero although we were also able to prove causally between buying expensive rain gear and zero rainfall during trekking hours.

Prevalence of snow was low, but sufficient to provide endless speculation concerning the robustness of snow bridges (a bridge of snow spanning a crevasse). Risk factors were common, including vertical ladders, slippery river crossings and narrow ridges accompanied by steep drops. However the propensity to reduce the risk was substantial (watching one’s feet was most statistically significant). Fortunately the case fatality in our sample size was zero and mortality was low, albeit demonstrating an inverse proportion with age. Regression analysis was undertaken to assess the relative value of parameters relating to overnight stays. There was no significant difference between Chamonix, Courmayeur, Les Contamines, Chamix and LeArgentiere, despite relative advantages such as the option of a trantragial crossing (via a cable car from Italy to France over the glacier), spectacular views of Mont Blanc and live entertainment. Statistically, the TMB climbs almost 10,000m more than twice the height of Mont Blanc, but without the altitude effects) reaching a high point of 2537m just before the Swiss border. Economically the TMB demonstrated a cost effective intervention, since the health benefits easily outweighed the invested cost (ratio 10:1). The results strongly supported the hypothesis. Recommendations are to invest in further pilot studies to test the potential for prevention of a range of diseases of affluence.

However this is after all circular reasoning, since we arrived back at our starting point after 11 days. Rothman says that ‘If a test refutes a hypothesis, then a new hypothesis needs to be formulated’. I’m working on that one for next year – Butan perhaps!

By Liz Geelhoed
Materials, dog and owner pedometers) and will target dog owners who do little or no walking with their dog. A pilot study will test a number of minimal intervention techniques tailored to dog walking (veterinarian advice, education and activities) and will standardize the vet advice minimal intervention arm, and test the pre and post- evaluation survey items.

Industry partner, the Petcare Information and Advisory Service, has also contributed a total of $115,000 over the next 3 years to assist with project costs and funding of a PhD scholarship. Details of the PhD scholarship can be found at:

http://www.scholarships.uwa.edu.au/home/postgrad/medicine/dog_walking

ICCWA Student Award - Congratulations to Sarah Foster!

Dr Sarah Foster has been awarded the 2010 Injury Control Council of Western Australia (ICCWA) Student Award for her PhD study. This award recognises the achievements and leadership of students in a community safety study program. Sarah’s PhD was titled ‘The relationship between suburban design and fear of crime’. The overall research aim was to investigate the urban design factors related to perceived safety and walking in the local neighbourhood. This research was prompted by: (1) the need for a comprehensive examination of crime-related safety as a barrier to walking; and (2) the comparative absence of empirical studies exploring the relationship between suburban design and fear of crime.

Chris Pock (ICCWA President), Deborah Costello (ICCWA CEO), Dr Sarah Foster, Dr Tarun Weeramanthri (DOH)

We just received the letter of approval from SHRAC today stating we were successful in obtaining a SHRAC grant of $115,000 for the BHS project. To investigate the potential cost-savings with use of Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation in treatment of high risk patients with severe aortic stenosis.

SHRAC grant, $115,000 awarded for 2010-2011, 12 month project timeline

Title: To investigate the potential cost-savings with use of Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation in treatment of high risk patients with severe aortic stenosis.

CIs: Dr Gerald Yong (RHInterventional cardiologist), Liz Geelhoed, Dr Jamie Rankin (RH Interventional cardiologist), Dr Frank Santilippo.

Ass: Paul Innes (RH business manager), Dr Rob Larbalestier (RH cardiac surgeon), Dr Michael Muhlman (SCGH Interventional cardiologist).

Summary: Aortic stenosis (narrowing of the aortic valve) is the most common valvular heart disease in the western world. It is seen in 2% of the population over 65-75 years of age and in 4% of the population over 85 years of age. Progression is not good, and with the onset of symptoms including angina, syncope or congestive heart failure, median survival is limited to 2-3 years. There is no medical treatment available that can prolong survival or delay progression of symptoms.

Surgical aortic valve replacement (AVR) is the only effective treatment for prolonging survival in symptomatic severe aortic stenosis in adults. However, surgical AVR is a major operation requiring cardiopulmonary bypass with associated complications and mortality. Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI) is a recent innovation that involves minimally invasive percutaneous implantation of a stented tissue valve via a catheter approach. TAVI is currently performed in patients with severe aortic stenosis who have a high risk of surgical complications.

We hypothesise that TAVI will be cost-saving compared to surgical AVR and to medical therapy in high-risk patients with severe aortic stenosis in WA. We will compare 3 cohorts of patients: (i) those who had TAVI; (ii) high-risk patients who had surgical AVR; and (iii) medically treated patients.

Dr Hayley Christian, Dr Lisa Wood and Professor Billie Giles-Corti have been awarded a HealthyWork Starter Grant ($30,000) to translate the results from prior dog walking prevalence research into an intervention study designed to increase community levels of dog walking as a means of increasing physical activity among dog owners. Since dog owners constitute 38% of the Australian population, they are an important and viable target group for physical activity intervention.

The study targets veterinary clinics as a setting for reaching a significant proportion of dog owners. The study design is based on the GP-setting intervention model which has been shown to be an effective intervention for increasing physical activity over the short-medium term. This study will use a mixed methods approach, using the results of qualitative research with non-dog walking owners to tune intervention techniques and guide the development of items for pre- and post-intervention surveys. This efficacy trial will test a number of minimal intervention techniques tailored to dog walking (veterinarian advice, education

Congratulations to Rosemary Saunders!

Course Coordinator Master of Nursing Science – Rosemary Saunders is congratulated on being awarded two grants (“Establishment of multidisciplinary placements in ambulatory care settings” and “Establishment of multidisciplinary placements in residential care and community ‘own home’ settings”) totalling nearly two and half million dollars. Rosemary is still awaiting the outcome of Clinical Infrastructure Grant application.

Preliminary results of the community study show that 38% of the Australian population, they an important and viable target group for physical activity intervention.

Physical Activity Minimal Intervention Targeting Dog Owners Grant
C_BEH happenings

CBEH’s going for a mixed cricket team

CBEH is gathering a competitive team list to field a mixed cricket team with more recruits on the way! Adding to the growing list of CBEH babies over the years, Hayley (left) and Gina (right) are both expecting additions to their families in August. This is good news for the potential netball team of young CBEH recruits who will welcome two new team members and can now contemplate diversifying their sporting talents to the cricket field. We look forward to sharing Hayley & Gina’s good news arrivals in the next newsletter.

Child’s Play: From little things big things grow!

“Child’s Play”: Factors that encourage play in neighbourhood parks and playgrounds study

Research team: Dr Lisa Wood, Dr Karen Martin, Dr May Carter, Dr Hayley Christian

This project evolved out of concerns about children’s sedentary lifestyles, diminishing backyards as outdoor play spaces, and the growing tendency towards ‘plastic fantastic’ playgrounds that sometimes lack opportunities for imaginative free form play and contact with nature. The study is looking at child, parent and stakeholder perspectives on ‘what makes good spaces to play’, and seeks to address voids in the literature relating to opportunities and barriers to play within parks and playgrounds. The methodology comprises qualitative research methods (both interviews and focus groups).

Left: A nature based playground Right: Child’s Play Focus group

The study had small beginnings, commencing with a UWA RDA grant of $10,000 received in late 2009. The Kings Park and Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority read about the study in The West and provided a further $12,000 to undertake additional focus groups, providing some formative research for ‘Naturescape’, a new Kings Park nature-based children’s area currently being developed. The Child’s Play study seems to have tapped into a void both in research and in guidelines for those involved in planning play spaces for children, hence we expanded the scope and methodology of the project and applied for a Healthway starter grant; this was successful and $30,000 was awarded to the project team. The Healthway funding enables the study to have a strong research translation focus; with the aim of producing evidence-based guidelines for those responsible for park design and infrastructure.

Child’s Play has commenced and five child and two parent focus groups have been held. Children and parents have enthusiastically imparted their views on play areas they inhabit and what they desire from parks and playgrounds.

WA pet related research goes international....

There is growing international interest in research that has been undertaken within our School relating to the role of pets in encouraging people to be more active, as well as the way in which pets can facilitate neighbours getting to know one another and sense of community. Hayley (Christian) and Lisa Wood presented on these topics at the recent 12th International Conference on Human – Animal Interaction in Stockholm. Human Animal interaction research has traditionally focused more on therapeutic and individual level outcomes, so extrapolating the community level population health benefits is a unique angle that has generated a lot of overseas interest in terms of conferences, publications and funding.

While there, Hayley and Lisa also checked out the parks and walkable streetscape of Stockholm, searching in vain for evidence of ABBA or Princess Cake (aka Miss Maudie’s Swedish specialty) and trying to avoid eating reindeer.

SPARColl sparks a lot of interest

The Scottish Physical Activity Collaboration (SPARColl) is based at the University of Strathclyde and is funded by the Scottish Government. The focus of the SPARColl work plan is on encouraging walking and Professors Billie Giles-Corti and Fiona Bull are both part of an international advisory board that provides strategic advice to SPARColl’s Director, Professor Nanette Mutrie. The SPARColl advisory board met in Toronto during June 2010, 3rd International Physical Activity and Health conference (see pic below), and Billie Giles-Corti also visited Glasgow-based SPARColl team in July while en route to the 11th International Obesity Conference where was an invited speaker. During her visit to Scotland, she presented a talk in Edinburgh for one of SPARColl’s collaborators, OPENspace http://www.openspace.ac.auckland, a joint collaboration between Landscape Architecture, Edinburgh College of Art and the School of the Built Environment, Heriot-Watt University.

A CBEH team lead by Fiona Bull, recently published a chapter for a book edited by OPENspace’s Director Professor Catherine Ward-Thompson entitled ‘Innovative Approaches to Researching in Landscape and Health’ (negotiations are currently underway for this book to be published in Chinese).

While in Glasgow, Billie also spent time at the Medical Research Centre Social and Public Health Unit which is affiliated with University of Glasgow (http://www.sphsu.mrc.ac.uk/). Here she discussed potential collaborative activities with Director, Professor Sally Macintyre. Sally’s team has been involved with important evaluations of government policy designed to improve the health of socially deprived people (i.e., natural experiments). Plans are underway for Sally to visit the School of Population Health in mid-2011. She will participate in a Satellite meeting of the International Society of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity conference to be hosted by a CBEH team lead by Fiona Bull and PhD Candidate Paula Hooper) during which we she will present a couple of talks on the need for natural experiments of government policy, and how to do natural experiments. This is an important new area for the School and we hope there will be opportunities for members of the School to spend time with Sally during her visit.

Pic: Billie and the SPARColl team in Toronto Canada, May 2010
In other good news, this week I’ve won my first post-doc grant, to conduct an internet survey of freshwater dive parks ... well for future applications. No word on the UWA Faculty of Medicine Fellowship yet. Fingers crossed for that one too.

We were both short of breath collecting our bags, at 3am, and the hotel wasn’t open when we got there at 5am so we made a cushion out of our clothes and huddled in a doorway in the alley. It was zero degrees inside the door opened and we checked in. Alah La Paz, what a fantastic place. Then I came down with Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). Not too badly though, just blinding headaches and some pulmonary oedema, but with enough bed-rest and plenty of water I was up and about again in no time, and even felt fit enough to volunteer for a couple of medical experiments.

I’ve wanted to collaborate with the High Altitude Clinic in La Paz for two years so it was quite exciting when they replied to my e-mail saying “sure, come on over for a visit”. Cheryl and I fertilised, got a taxi, and dropped ourselves off outside the University of Bolivia Faculty of Medicine, opposite our main hospital. The clinic was nearby on the same road and is a self-funded private clinic, treating people with AMS. Staff fund their own research projects through private medical practice. We discussed a number of potential collaborative projects, after I’d finished holding my breath. Space and Environment Medicine suggesting they lower the cabin pressure inside the International Space Station.

Soon enough I was hooked up to an ECG, oxymeter, BP monitor and was running at 4mph on a treadmill at a 10-degree incline (my pulse remained over 175 for the last 6-minutes). What with the high altitude, I was so knackered afterwards I woke up back at the hotel with the ECG patches still on. In other good news, this week I’ve won my first post-doc grant, to conduct an internet survey of freshwater dive parks worldwide. It’s only small, just $5,000 (mainly for me as a research assistant), and I’m not the staff yet so I had to put myself down as CIB, but it was competitive and the reviewers said they were impressed with my lucidity, which bodes well for future applications. No word on the UWA Faculty of Medicine Fellowship yet. Fingers crossed for that one too.

All the best, Peter

Yvonne Hauck - Health Mother-Infant Relationship Project launched

Healthy Mother-Infant Relationship: assessment of risk in women with serious mental illness

Research into attachment between infants and their mothers indicates that it is protective against poor developmental outcomes. Disorganised patterns of attachment occur in 10% of the general population, but this can rise as high as 80% in high risk populations, including women with a serious mental illness (SMI).

The Healthy Mother-Infant Relationship project has been developed by the Clinical Applications Unit based at Gascoyne House, Greylands Hospital. It is a continuation of last year’s Healthy Babies for Mothers with Serious Mental Illness resource [Head2Head issue 1], developed by Professor Yvonne Hauck and launched by Professor Fiona Stanley.

Professor Yvonne Hauck said, “The provision of specific support by mental health clinicians to pregnant women with SMI is an important primary prevention strategy. Our goal is to improve obstetric and neonatal outcomes for these women and their children.”

The Healthy Mother-Infant Relationship project has also produced a practical resource for community mental health clinicians, focusing on a dynamic model of risk identification and appropriate referral within existing services. The resource, entitled Healthy Mother-Infant Relationship: assessment of risk in women with serious mental illness, will be officially launched by the Minister for Mental Health, Hon Dr Graham Jacobs MLA on 12 May.

The project has involved clinicians and researchers from across a range of disciplines, including psychology, psychiatry, mental health nursing, midwifery and paediatrics, as well as community stakeholders and consumers. It also addresses the COAG objective of providing coordinated care to people with SMI and complex needs who are at risk of failing through the gaps in the system.

Project developer Dr Johana Stefan said, “Our project is mostly a service project, involving mapping of services and developing a framework for case managers of mothers with serious mental illness.”

The key elements incorporated in this framework are:

- Recognition of the vital role of the case manager in the assessment of risk and incorporation of the mother-infant relationship in the care management of these clients;
- Early risk assessment for disrupted mother-baby relationship, prioritising of risk and appropriate referral using a dynamic model through consultation with other health care professionals; and
- Creating a professional support network by creating communication pathways and linkages with specialist services, with focus on referral, consultation and education for more effective use of existing resources.

Dr Stefan said, “We have a check list/prompt list for clinicians, to be used for detection of risk of disrupted attachment.”

Copies of the resource, will be available at the launch, and will also be available for download at the NMAHHS website.

“I see this project as a first step in raising awareness among mental health clinicians of babies with seriously ill mothers,” said Dr Stefan.

Collaborative Research in China

Professor D’Arcy Holman and A/Professor Min Zhang hosted a visit by six prominent Chinese professors to The University of Western Australia at the end of April 2010. The Chinese professors’ visit was in relation to their collaboration with the School of Population Health on a large NHMRC project grant concerned with the genetic epidemiology of psychiatric and cardiovascular disease. The project is entering the second of four years, is running well and has expanded to multiple hospitals in three Chinese provinces as represented by the delegation.

The team attended an investigators’ review meeting of the various teams, to discuss additional research initiatives and PhD supervision with Professor Holman and his team.

The professors shared their perspectives on ‘international academic collaboration in China and how best for Australians to approach’ by providing a seminar in the New Roberts Lecture Theatre.

Their schedule included a meeting with the Vice Chancellor Prof Alan Robson and a meeting with the Deputy Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry and Health Sciences, Professor John Newman. They also met with officers from the Department of Health.

Adjunct gossip

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Professor Philip Wein-stein as Dean of Graduate Studies. Professor Weinstein is currently Professor of Public and Environmental Health and Acting Head of the School of Population Health at the University of Queensland. He holds a BSc, MBBS and PhD from the University of Adelaide, a Master in Applied Epidemiology from the Australian National University and an MA from the University of Western Australia (UWA). He is a Fellow of the Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. Among his numerous past appointments he has been Professor and Head of the School of Population Health at UWA and Associate Professor in the Department of Public Health and Associate Dean (Research) at the Wellington School of Medicine, University of Otago. Philip’s research spans entomology and freshwater ecology, epidemiology and environmental health, and the study of vector eco- systems to develop a better understanding of the relationship between human and ecosystem health. He has over 150 publications in these areas, mostly of a multidisciplinary nature.

Philip has supervised 15 PhD students to completion and over 20 honours, masters, medical science and other research students as either principal or associate supervisor.

The Dean of Graduate Studies plays a key leadership role in the Univer- sity’s research education program and in shaping recruitment strategies to attract the brightest and best research students to work at UniSA.

The role of the Dean is particularly important as the University responds to the imperative to build a highly skilled research workforce that will support a vibrant culture of innovation in Australia. In such a context, it is particularly pleasing to have attracted a Dean of Professor Weinstein’s calibre to UniSA. Phil will join the University in October this year and I know that you will make him most welcome. Sincerely

Professor Caroline Morrill, DVC Research and Innovation, UniSA.

At large with Peter Buzzacott

Having finally submitted my thesis, I’ve set off with my wife to circum- navigate the globe whilst it’s being examined, aiming to return in Octo- ber, just in time to revise it Christmas. That’s the plan anyway.

To start we landed in beautiful Buenos Aries and spent a few days visiting art galleries, museums, gardens, and watching the world cup in bars with the locals (they love their “futball”). One day, on our way to the botanical gardens, we passed the University of Buenos Aires Faculty of Medicine, opposite their main hospital. They have many international students, from South America. I was inter- ested to see that their ambulances, when not collecting road trauma, are simply parked in the street. It was Argentina’s Independence Day holiday and the locals were still celebrating at 6am the next day, shout- ing, singing and falling into the path of traffic.

From there we moved to north Argentina and stayed in a lovely B&B we’d booked on the internet, not more than a kilometer from the near- est paved road. We could have sworn the website said “three blocks from the centre of town” but we didn’t mind; whenever we walked back at night (so the power went off we just used a torch). We crossed back and fore to Barilo a couple of times and visited Igua cu Falls, which was probably the most awesome thing I’ve seen, then we flew from Para- guay up to La Paz in Bolivia, the highest capital in the world.

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- pathways and linkages with specialist services, with focus on referral, consultation and education for more effective use of existing resources.
- prioritising of risk and appropriate referral using a dynamic model through consultation with other health care professionals; and
- incorporation of the mother-infant relationship in the case management of these clients;

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Then on Tuesday I am visiting the Bolivian Navy School of High Altitude Diving, the highest Navy Diving School in the world. They are keen to see my dive gear because it is the latest and best, and I am hoping they will lend me a couple of tanks and some weights so I can go for a dip,(and set a personal best for altitude-diving).
Social Committee news - Pop Goss

Relay for Life Morning Tea (April)
Courtesy of SPH’s Master of Nursing Science student RFL team, an excellent morning tea was put on to support them in their fundraising. $58.50 was raised through the morning tea alone.

Cancer Council Biggest Morning Tea (May)
The Social Club putting on morning tea to raise funds for the Cancer Council. Delicious blueberry and plain scones were provided and $130 was raised for a very worthy charity.

SPH Soup Kitchen - Food Bank Carry a can to work/Blanket appeal
With the cold weather upon us in June, we thought donating to the St Vincent blanket appeal would be appropriate. We put on hot soup and SPH supported this by buying a good blanket or some cash towards buying one, which will then be distributed by Vinnies to those who most need them this winter.

The menu showed what a team effort this was:
- Anna’s Leek and Potato Soup
- Fiona’s Pumpkin and Sweet Potato Soup
- Vicky’s Confused Pumpkin Soup
- Ania’s Moroccan Chicken Soup
- Marg’s delightful white bread
- Rhett’s “Up all night baking” multigrain treat
- Georgie’s bread surprise

We combined this with “Carry a can to work”, a charity function we ran last year with great success. Running over a number of days, the food collected was donated to the Food Bank, which deliver food to various community groups to those who need it. We donated a big box of food, some blankets, and over $140 towards more. Just $50 buys a good blanket for 10 people so well done everyone! ...

...and personally if anyone is interested
I had a trip to Sydney to watch my granddaughter in an international figure skating competition. And in 8 weeks time I am leaving for a 13 week round the world trip. I am considering having a morning tea with a power point presentation of the places I will be visiting if there is enough interest.

By Georgie Dolphin

Coming soon! Cupcake Day for the RSPCA
Sometimes in September Ah we love cupcakes. Last year we collected food and donations for the Shenton Park Dog Refuge. This year we’ll collect food, toys and donations for both dogs and cats, perhaps the home for distressed gentlefelines too. So bake some cupcakes and/or bring your appetite and join in the fun and frivolity. See if you can beat Rhett in the extreme cupcake eating challenge.

Melbourne Cup Tuesday 2nd November
You know the drill - the first Tuesday in November we don silly hats and bring in good food. The details are still being worked out but it seems like a pretty good plan so far.

UWA Staff Sports Fun Day
Friday 5th November
Rhett has volunteered to be the faculty coordinator for the UWA Staff Sports Fun Day. He will be calling for volunteers soon in volleyball/soccer/netball/tennis/table tennis/squash and bocce. There will many novelty events in the afternoon, including the prestigious 100m dash.

The money raised will go to the Amanda Young Foundation, who was a UWA student who died of meningococal at 19.

SPH Christmas Lunch
Tuesday 14th December
The fabulous SPH Christmas Lunch will take place again this year at the UniClub. Menu details will be coming out soon as will details about the wishing tree, which was a great success last year so we’re likely to run it again.

On a glorious warm and sunny day in April, CBEH’s Gina Wood became Mrs Gina Trapp. The beautiful wedding ceremony and relaxed cocktail-style reception was held at the Quarry Amphitheatre in City Beach. It was such an emotional and exciting day – one that Gina and husband David will cherish forever. The special day extended into an amazing month long European honeymoon! With their first baby due any week now, it’s been a big year for the Trapps!
Global Health Short Course

FREE 7 week lecture series

An exciting opportunity to LEARN AND ACT on Global Health issues

Week One: Introduction to Global Health; Climate Change
- Dr Jenny Stedman - Chair, International Humanitarian Law Board Red Cross (Aus)
- Mr John Davis - Climate Change and the Developing World

Week Two: Sanitation, War and Conflict
- Mr Dan Loden - Engineers without Borders - Sanitation in Cambodia
- Mr Graham Forward - War, Conflict and Displaced People

Week Three: Aid
- Professor Peter Devereux - International Aid
- Sr Joan Westblade - Health Promotion and Education in East Timor

Week Four: Health and the media
- Dr Norman Swan - Radio National Health Report - Global Health and the Media
- Dr Trevor Cullen - HIV/AIDS in SE Asia and the Role of the Media

Week Five: TB/HIV/Malaria
- Professor Michael Blakney - Patents, Antiretrovirals and Big Pharma
- Ms Jayne Martin - TB/HIV - Personal encounters in Sudan, Uganda and Sri Lanka

Week Six: Indigenous/maternal health
- Professor Mike Daube - Indigenous Health Policy - Challenges and Successes
- Ms Kathy Webster - Indigenous Maternal and Child Health

Week Seven: Refugee health
- Mr Jim Sharp - VP of Amnesty Australia - Refugee Health in Australia
- Dr Carmen Lawrence - Refugee Health in Australia

Every Tuesday from August 10th 5.30pm -7pm at Social Sciences Lecture Theatre UWA for 7 weeks

5.00pm-5.30pm: Over 14 volunteer organizations will have stalls offering specific volunteering opportunities to suit you.

Register at www.interhealth.org.au/ghsc

SPH in the news

NEW SURVEY TO UPDATE HEALTH OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

Six years after a ground-breaking project to study the health and wellbeing of 1,800 people moving into new housing estates in the Perth metropolitan area, researchers from The University of Western Australia will back in the field in a fresh effort next year to re-interview residents as they plan to grow seven of the neighborhoods in 2011

Lead researcher Professor Bangladesh O’Callahan, Director of UWA’s Centre for the Built Environment and Health, said new HealYway funding for RESIDE II would enable researchers to assess the longer-term impacts of how neighborhood design affected physical and mental health and community wellbeing.

“The risks from the study will inform policymakers and housing developers when planning new communities. This information will assist the residents have a stable growing population, a housing shortage and environmental pressures,” Professor O’Callahan said.

RESIDE II will involve almost three-quarters of the initial participants from 2004 who had an average age of 40, were typically working parents and many spent a considerable amount of time commuting.

Those surveyed will be asked about topics such as the provision of style and footpaths, safety, gate ownership, community involvement and access to local amenities including schools, food outlets, public open spaces, parks and sports facilities. Participants will also be given a questionnaire to monitor their daily physical activity.

“We will use this information to enable government bodies to make the right decision about how to help increase housing density with high-quality lifestyles for residents,” Professor O’Callahan said.

The seven neighborhoods from across the metropolitan area to be surveyed include 18 estates created according to the new ‘Liveable Neighborhood Guidelines’, with another a blend of conventional and hybrid plans.

RESIDE established an international reputation because of its unique long-term follow up of residents in new estates and its strong partnership with policymakers and practitioners working in health, planning and transport,” Professor O’Callahan said.

Parents must wait for results of Kwinana child health study

By ANITA MINNIE

KWINANA parents may have to wait another month before the results of a child health study are made public.

As a Community in Industry Forum on Tuesday evening at UWA researcher Dr Franklin gave an update on the study carried out by the Australian Institute for Child Health Research.

Dr Franklin told the audience that the study, funded by the Commonwealth Children’s Respiratory Health study, had been completed with data gathered by the Australian Centre for Health and Disease.

“Data collection was ongoing with the final cohort of the study to be reviewed over the next six months,” Dr Franklin said.

He said 16.7 per cent of Kwinana children involved in the study had been diagnosed with Asthma.

“I would (be reluctant) to make any conclusions until we can compare symptoms with the ACCAPR,” Dr Franklin said.

The study cost $8 million and was supported by the Commonwealth Children’s Respiratory Health study.

“Researcher Dr Franklin said that there were many benefits to the study.

Most of the children interviewed were under 6 years old and some with asthma and allergies.

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The study was supported by the Commonwealth Children’s Respiratory Health study and was carried out by the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare.

Fast furious

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The study was supported by the Commonwealth Children’s Respiratory Health study and was carried out by the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare.
There are mixed messages coming from the state government’s Physical Activity Taskforce report, the Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (CAPANS). Childhood obesity levels have remained steady since the original survey in 2003 – a positive move in a society where almost a quarter of Western Australian kids are overweight or obese – but around twice as many primary and secondary school aged girls (or 10%) are now classified as under a healthy weight.

There’s no doubt some TV shows, movies and models would have an effect, but that’s only my personal opinion. It’s been good recently to see a general push to try and get away from stick figure type girls in advertising. What we really need is a healthy body, not a skinny or overweight body to be healthy body. We need to do more research to find out how to go about this.

The government has put its money where its mouth is in finding more study to plumb the data in greater detail to identify trends and their causes. The task is to see if the curves are moving in the expected directions.

Despite this, says Australia’s got to take it seriously. Now it’s on the front page and we want answers. Let’s start putting the research funding in.

However, 2003 seems a long time ago and can we afford to wait another five years?

Call to action still

“I’m a little cautious about the message ‘more research is needed’ because it seems like we never get to do anything,” Fiona agrees.

“The data should stimulate action now, not a call for more research. We have enough to act. We know some government funding, we know we want to maintain and create some public space for kids to be active. We’re very concerned about low levels of physical activity in girls. The drop-off from age 10 is marked. What opportunities are we providing for girls to do physical activity?”

One answer might be to look beyond labels like ‘overweight’ and ‘underweight’ and present a more positive view of health to young girls.

“This is outside Fiona’s expertise. She cites the QUT Campaign as a good example of an approach that helped reduce smoking and change attitudes around society because of its high levels of health.

“Certainly, we’ve needed to do research in parts of the population and we’ve done so. Often we only get funding to only do part of it and that’s why CAPANS is one of the few surveys to have collected dietary, physical activity and body weight of children together. Our data and our actions should be far more holistic because we know there’s interrelated. More active kids are less likely to be overweight and may have better eating habits. That’s what CAPANS was set out to tell us.”

Noelene Swain

Mushroom Mania has become one of Australia’s most popular food campaigns, inviting millions of people around the country to get out of the kitchen and try mushroom dishes at their local restaurants, cafes and pubs.

Running nationally from July 1-31, and with more than 2000 businesses taking part this year, Mushroom Mania is set to reach record numbers in 2010.

According to Australian Mushroom Growers’ Association (AMGA) general manager Greg Seymour, Mushroom Mania is a great chance for people to try new mushroom dishes.

“Australia is one of the few countries that has a high profile chef, Lauren Martindel, of chef’s choice, who has been named Mushroom Mania Ambassador for 2010.

Each year, Australian Mushroom Growers invite a leading chef with a passion for mushrooms to take on the honor of Mushroom Mania Ambassador.

Lauren said she was excited to take on the role of Mushroom Mania Ambassador and challenged other chefs to get creative with mushrooms.

“I love creating dishes that make the most of the great texture and taste of the variety of mushrooms that we have available” she said.

“If we think they are a healthy focus of great tasting dishes provides even more reason to include them on the menu. Willie Mushroom Mania focuses on people dining out and eating mushrooms. It’s also an important month for people to learn more about the health benefits of mushrooms.

According to Mr Seymour, independent study by Dr Min Zhang, of the University of WA, highlighted how powerful mushrooms are in maintaining good health.

He said the research indicated that women who consumed fresh mushrooms were about two-thirds less likely to develop breast cancer compared to those who did not consume mushrooms.

That was based on 10g of mushrooms, or less than an ounce of button mushroom, per day.

To find Mushroom Mania participating restaurants visit www.mushroommania.com.au.

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Health Informatics Workforce: the next big wave

We hear much about the future of Australia and global healthcare in the age of health informatics and health. There is evidence that electronic decision support systems can improve the quality of health services. Advancements in telemedicine have allowed us to deliver health care in ways that were not thought possible before. Daily, we struggle with maintaining our knowledge of this rapidly changing technology and look to telemedicine to provide assistance.

Electronic messaging has improved communication between healthcare providers. Around the world, national health informatics have evolved to improve health information flow, analysis, and processing. The health informatics workforce is certainly upon us.

One of the discussions that does not yet get as much attention, but is no less critical than the technical aspects of the staff, is the health informatics workforce. To achieve the vision of integrated, high-quality data, information, and knowledge in health systems and to understand the potential value of health informatics, we need a workforce that can make the health informatics workforce a reality.

The health informatics workforce should be based on well-defined roles in information management and have a defined area of practice in healthcare. This implies, effectively, the workforce must understand and work with healthcare professionals.

It seems sensible that people arrived with information and knowledge would be able to improve health information processes better than those trained in only one discipline. The needs of the discipline should be met in the health informatics workforce.

We have a crucial task to define what health informatics will mean for our workforce and how we can improve our current workforce to meet the needs of the health informatics workforce.

The workforce needs to be supported by an educational framework that provides a basis for understanding the needs of the health informatics workforce. This educational framework must be developed to address the needs of the workforce.

References

Author: Assistant Professor Kath Lui is an academic health informatics at the University of Sydney, Dentistry and Health Sciences. The University of Sydney, a medical practitioner and Chair of the Western Australian branch of the Health Informatics Society of Australia.
Exercise goes to the dogs

Scientists at the University of Western Australia (UWA) have identified that the decrease in physical activity that occurs when a person loses a dog is significantly greater than the increase that occurs when they get one. They found that people who obtained a dog walked approximately 31 minutes more each week than they had in the past. However, dog owners who lost their dog decreased their walking by as much as 44 minutes per week.

Clearly, this research shows that the level of physical activity a person undertakes is adversely affected by the loss of their dog but the reality is that if you have been walking your dog, there is every reason to keep walking," says A/Prof Hayley Christian from UWA.

Dr Christian also says that taking the dog for a 30-minute walk each day will also mean that you are achieving the recommended level of physical activity sufficient for good health. These results do not surprise health and fitness expert Michelle Bridges, who says she knows firsthand the motivation a dog provides for exercise.

Winter is the perfect time to start a regular walking program, even if you don’t have a dog. You might be able to help a friend or neighbour out by walking their dog, or just join them on their daily walk. By summer, you’ll be reaping the benefits," says Michelle.

Australia is a nation of pet lovers. It is estimated that 63% of Australian households have some type of pet, with 53% of households owning a dog or a cat.

Over many years, Australian and international research has shown that owning pets can help improve a person’s mental and physical health, reduce the effects of stress, help children learn about responsibility, facilitate social interaction between people and build a sense of community.

Winter Exercise program...

Take one Weetbix. Take an Aero chocolate bar. Crumble the Aero over the Weetbix. Voila! AEROBIX!
MEDIA STATEMENT
Friday, May 14, 2010

NEIGHBOURS’ RESPONSES TO AFFECT TOWN-PLANNING

Six years after a ground-breaking study analysing the well-being of 1,800 people about to move into 74 new Perth metropolitan housing estates, researchers from The University of Western Australia are set to re-interview those surveyed in 2004 to find out how they feel about their neighbourhoods in 2010.

Lead researcher Winthrop Professor Billie Giles-Corti, Director of UWA’s Centre for the Built Environment and Health, said the Healthway-funded study, RESIDE II, will assess how neighbourhood design affects residents’ physical and mental health. The information will be used to inform policy-makers and developers planning new housing as the nation faces a rapidly growing population coupled with environmental pressures.

RESIDE II will involve almost three-quarters of the initial respondents who in 2004 had an average age of 40, were typically parents, worked more than 37.5 hours a week and spent a considerable amount of time commuting.

Residents will be asked to fill out a questionnaire covering aspects of their neighbourhoods including their use of pedestrian and bike paths, safe walking/cycling access to schools and amenities, food outlets, safety, graffiti, public lighting, public open spaces and parks, sporting facilities, pet ownership, neighbourhood aesthetics and community involvement. They will also be given a pedometer to monitor their daily walking. Their weight will be recorded and their mental health and eating behaviours assessed via standard measures.

“We will use all this information to enable government bodies to make the right decisions about how to intensify housing density while also providing residents with a good lifestyle,” W/Professor Giles-Corti said.

On the northern, southern and eastern fringes of the metropolitan area, the 73 neighbourhoods are a mix of 18 estates created via the new ‘Liveable Neighbourhood Guidelines’, with the remainder a blend of conventional and hybrid plans.

“RESIDE II is unique internationally because it involves a long term follow-up of new home builders and a strong partnership with policy-makers and practitioners working in health, planning and transport,” W/Professor Giles-Corti said. “It’s results will inform the planning, design and use of the built environment to improve health.”

Exercise goes to the dogs

If there is an excuse for not doing an exercise, one thing is certain - some one has already used it.

However, the latest research from the School of Population Health at The University of Western Australia would suggest we really are going to the dog with our reasons for not getting off the couch.

Scientists at The University of Western Australia (UWA) have identified that the decrease in physical activity that occurs when a person loses a dog is significantly greater than the increase that occurs when they get one.

“During the research, we found that people who owned a dog walked approximately 31 minutes more each week than they had in the past. Dog owners who lost their dog decreased their walking by as much as 44 minutes per week,” says Dr Christian from UWA.

“Clearly, this research shows that the level of physical activity a person undertakes is adversely affected by the loss of their dog but the reality is that if you have been walking your dog there is every reason to keep walking,” says Dr Christian.

These results do not surprise health and fitness expert Michelle Bridges who says she knows first hand the motivation a dog provides for exercise.

“I don’t really have a problem with lack of motivation, but there are times when I could perhaps be temptation to put off going for a walk or a run. However, my dog Paddy accepts no excuses so I just have to get out there!”

Michelle says, “The great thing about this is that simply taking your dog for a half hour walk every day will give you the opportunity to lose up to a kilo every nine weeks. It is fun and a great way to burn calories!”

Dr Christian says that taking the dog for a 30-minute walk each day will also mean that you are achieving the recommended level of physical activity sufficient for good health.

Dog owner Sophie Kenyon agrees with Michelle about the daily motivation for walking that a dog provides.

“I used to think I was pretty active but, in reality, weeks would go by without doing any walking. Then was always a reason – OK, an excuse – for why I couldn’t go for a walk. Too hot one day, too cold the next, too busy, too tired or I’d convince myself I needed time out.

“None of those reasons cut it with Cash, our chocolate Labrador who really needs a daily walk. Just the way he looks at me if I head to the couch it enough of a reason to change my mind and put on my walking shoes,” says Sophie.

The UWA research is being presented at an international conference in Sweden in July.

Other research being presented at the same conference includes Walk 2 Work, Leisure in Pounds, a 2007 University of Missouri research project involving shelter dogs and walkways.

Participants in this research increased their walking from less than five times a week to 30 minutes a day of moderate exercise five or more days a week.

“Winter is the perfect time to start a regular walking program, even if you don’t have a dog. You might be able to help a friend or neighbour out by walking their dog, or just join them on their daily walk.

“By summer, you’ll be seeing the benefits,” says Michelle.
MEDIA STATEMENT

Wednesday, April 28, 2010

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 NOON SUNDAY, 2 MAY 2010

UWA STUDY QUESTIONS QUALITY OF CARE FOR MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS

The fact that people who are using mental health services have a life expectancy in their 50s is not due to inadequate access to general practitioners (GPs) but is more likely to represent a need for improved quality of primary health care.

The findings by researchers at The University of Western Australia’s School of Population Health, published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, follows on from the 2001 *Duty to Care* study which highlighted the very poor physical health outcomes in those who use mental health services (MHS).

The study cohort included people with moderate to severe mental health problems, including schizophrenia, manic depressive illness and chronic alcohol-related mental problems, representing about eight per cent of the population of Western Australia.

Lead author Dr Qun Mai and her team sought to identify whether users of MHS lack access to GP services. In fact, it found that users of MHS from all categories of mental disorders visited GPs more often than non-users.

Dr Mai said although it was encouraging that most users of MHS seem able to gain access to GPs, the poorer physical outcomes in this group may mean that they have not benefited from their higher use of GP services.

“The research suggests we would do better to focus on how to improve the quality and preventive value of existing contacts between patients with mental illness and their GPs.”

“However, relying solely on GPs to provide preventive services might not be enough and a system-wide multidisciplinary and coordinated approach together with building a strong community-based MHS system, may be part of the solution to health inequities in this vulnerable and sizeable population,” Dr Mai said.

The exception to this, which was consistent with other studies, was the four per cent of MHS users of no fixed address, who seldom visited GPs at all. For this group the study suggests the need to consider outreach programs to deliver basic preventive primary care to homeless people.

IF there is an excuse for not doing any exercise, our bodies certainly need exercise.

However, the latest research from the School of Population Health at The University of Western Australia would suggest we really are going to the dogs with our reasons for not getting off the couch.

Scientists at the University of Western Australia (UWA) have identified that the decrease in physical activity that occurs when a person loses a dog is significantly greater than the increase that occurs when they get a dog.

“During the research, we found that people who obtained a dog walked approximately 31 minutes more each week than they had in the past. Dog owners who lost their dog decreased their walking by as much as 41 minutes per week,” Dr Christian from UWA said.

Clearly, this research shows that the level of physical activity a person undertakes is adversely affected by the loss of their dog but the reality is that if you have been walking your dog, there is every reason to keep walking,” Dr Christian said.

These results do not surprise health and fitness expert Michelle Bridgford, who says she knows firsthand the motivation a dog provides for exercise.

“I don’t really have a problem with lack of motivation, but there are times where I’d probably be tempted to put off going for a walk or a run. However, my dog Paddy accepts no excuses so I just have to get out there,” Michelle said.

“The great thing about this is that simply taking your dog for a half-hour walk every day will give you the opportunity to lose up to a kilo every nine weeks.”
Good news on mental illness and GP access

RESEARCH into how often Australians with mental illness visit their doctor has delivered some positive as well as negative news. The West Australian study showed those with mental illness made 1.6 GP visits for every visit made by those without mental illness.

Researchers assessed trips to the doctor made by 250,000 people who had also used a mental health service alongside an equivalent group with no mental illness, from 1990 to 2006.

"Contrary to our hypothesis, we found that users of mental health services from all categories of mental disorders visited GPs more often than non-users," said Dr Quin Mai from the University of Western Australia.

"Those with more severe mental illness visited GPs more often than those with less severe mental illness (and) the results were similar in metropolitan, rural or remote areas.

As the first study of its type in Australia, the result runs counter to two major US studies that showed how people with mental illness typically had poor access to a doctor. Homeless Australians with mental illness were the exception, Dr Mai said, because they were found to have "seldom visited a GP at all."

The research is published in the Medical Journal of Australia.

EDS: EMBARGOED UNTIL 1200 AEST ON SUNDAY, MAY 2.

By Danny Rose, Medical Writer

SYDNEY. May 2 AAP - Research into how often Australians with mental illness visit their doctor has delivered some positive as well as negative news.

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As the first study of its type in Australia, the result runs counter to two major US studies that showed how people with mental illness typically had poor access to a doctor. Homeless Australians with mental illness were the exception, Dr Mai said, because they were found to have "seldom visited a GP at all."

Further work is required to assess the need for outreach programs to deliver primary care to homeless people with mental illness," she said.

The research is published in the Medical Journal of Australia.


**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**STUDENTS TACKLE HEALTH ISSUES ON CAMPUS**

Drink spiking and unwanted sexual contact, alcohol consumption, men's sexual health and mental health are some of the issues to be highlighted at tomorrow’s Health Day at UWA.

The annual event involves UWA health science students forming teams to promote issues of particular relevance to students.

This year’s event includes a ‘drink-spiking ninja’ to raise awareness of unwanted sexual contact. Student Alex Clark said victims of drink spiking had been identified as generally being 24 years or younger, which was the age of many university students.

“Sexual assault related to drink spiking is often perpetrated by offenders known to the victim and this highlights the importance of an awareness-raising intervention,” he said.

A ‘Jedi mascot’, highlighting sexually transmitted infections, will make a special appearance at the men’s sexual health stall, where Courtney Taylor’s student team will promote safe sexual behaviour.

Through our research on campus, we found there was a low awareness of the dangers of STIs and how to prevent them,” he said. “We also found that students were less likely to seek information or treatment due to ignorance, fear or inexperience.”

A clinical nurse from Fremantle Hospital Sexual Health Clinic will be at Health Day with the team to provide expert information and advice.

There were many ways to boost mental wellbeing, including healthy eating, physical activity and building strong social networks, student Claire Taylor said.

Her team’s project, Fitness, Food and Friendship – Inspiring a Mentally Healthy U-WA, will give away fresh fruit, run quizzes on step counts and promote sporting clubs and societies on offer to students.

Ms Taylor said her team would present a petition for a bicycle-sharing scheme on campus to UW A Guild President Emma Greenery. “We want environmentally friendly solutions for the future that will encourage students to ride rather than drive to and around campus,” she said.

A mental health stall will also focus on reducing stress among university students by promoting resources and developing skills to help students seek help.

Student Jodi Kirstein said her team aimed to ensure students felt positive about making changes to reduce stress in their lives, for the longer term.

“Stress has many detrimental effects on students including social isolation, poor academic performance, interrupted sleep patterns and even clinical depression or suicide,” she said. “It’s essential for students to learn how to manage and reduce stress levels to help achieve their goals and a successful career.”

Health Day, Tuesday, April 27, 2010, 12-2pm, Oak Lawn, UWA campus.

**MEDIA REFERENCE**

Janine MacDonald (UWA Public Affairs) (+61 8) 6488 5563 / (+61 4) 32 637 716

“Learn from my mistake”

If the cat doesn’t want to eat the odd smelling bacon you are offering her, don’t assume she is being “fussy”, and instead, eat it yourself. The cat is only proving herself the smarter of you both when you wake up in the middle of the night with stomach cramps and then proceed to camp out in the bathroom all night. #LFMF

If you pick up and move your young children from New England to New Mexico, teach them the difference between lobsters and scorpions. #LFMF

If the cat doesn’t want to eat the bacon you are offering it, don’t assume she is being ‘fussy’, eat it yourself. The cat is only proving herself the smarter of you both when you wake up in the middle of the night with stomach cramps and then proceed to camp out in the bathroom all night. #LFMF

Late night emergency room staff are often overworked and grumpy, but the words “I felt off my shoes” will totally make their night. Especially if you’re a guy. #LFMF

When running to open a door, make sure you have time to actually turn the knob. #LFMF

You know that sticker on the top step of a ladder that says “This isn’t a step”? It turns out that there’s a reason why they put it on there. #LFMF

If your wife comes home and asks you where the children are, the correct response is not “I don’t know”. Nor is it “Where ever you left them”. And it is certainly not “I’ve been playing Call of Duty all day”. She will smack you loud enough for your friends to hear and they will laugh at you and you will remember two seconds too late that you dropped them off at your mom’s earlier. #LFMF

Falling asleep on your hand after getting it tattooed at an Indian wedding will result in weird orange patterns on one side of your face that will not wash off for a week and refuse to fade under your dermatologist boss to give you forced leave for that week so that the clients don’t get the wrong idea. #LFMF

You’ve put on a shirt thousands of times. You’ve walked down the stairs thousands of times. Doing both of these at once, however, is still a bad idea. #LFMF

If it is a bright summer day and a girl comes into the store wearing sunglasses and with a dog, don’t assume that she is blind and offer to help her shop. You will turn bright red when she points out of the store because dogs are not allowed. Turns out she did have a disability, it just wasn’t blindness. #LFMF

If you are taking a test in class, and you see the biggest spider you’ve ever seen walking in your direction, NEVER look away from it. It will not be there when you look back. #LFMF

Always buy a plunger BEFORE you require it. Finding a plunger in the middle of the night is not an easy thing to do. Nobody wants to lend people plungers. #LFMF

If you have surgery to repair a tendon in your wrist after a drunken accident, and are in a splint for about a month, NEVER high five someone with that hand to celebrate getting the splint off. #LFMF

If you aren’t used to do-it-yourself projects, make sure of the exact name of what you need before asking for help in Home Depot. Apparently, there is a major difference between a PVC pipe and a PCP pipe. #LFMF

Professors within a program talk. “My kitten fell in the toilet” can only be used once EVER as an excuse for being late to class. After that, your grade WILL be lowered as Not-Remembering-To-Leave-Your-Toilet-Lid-Down-While-Doing-Makeup stupidity-tax, or so says my newest professor. #LFMF

If the cat doesn’t want to eat the bacon you are offering her, don’t assume she is being ‘fussy’, eat it yourself. The cat is only proving herself the smarter of you both when you wake up in the middle of the night with stomach cramps and then proceed to camp out in the bathroom all night. #LFMF