Transitions

Two key members of staff in the Department of General Practice have indicated their intention to relinquish their current positions. A/Prof Neil Spike, who has been Head of the Department of General Practice for the past five years has stepped aside from that position and will continue in a fractional appointment taking charge of the International Medical Graduates (IMG) programme. The School owes Neil a great debt of gratitude for the excellent work that he has done in the field of postgraduate education particularly in relation to vocational training, support for international medical graduates and in undertaking a major review of the undergraduate general practice curriculum within our faculty. His position will shortly be advertised and a wide search undertaken to find a suitable replacement for this prestigious role in our School and Faculty.

Special thanks to Dr Andrew Beveridge who does a stirring job looking after the busy 4th year of GP teaching and whose work has increased significantly since the departure of Neil and also Dr Mee Yoke Ling.

Prof John Murtagh AM, an iconic figure not only at Monash but in the world of general practice at large, has announced his retirement from his half-time position at Monash. He will assume the role of Emeritus Professor in the Department, enabling him to continue to deliver a number of lectures, revise his seminal texts and conduct the Annual Update Course, which in its 32nd year has broken all records for longevity sustainability and recognition.

In early November we welcomed Prof Grant Russell, originally from Western Australia but more recently from Canada, who has assumed the position of Professor of General Practice Research based in Dandenong. This is a unique role created jointly by the Dandenong Casey General Practice Association, Southern Health and Monash University. Grant brings a wealth of experience in general practice research particularly in the area of health services research. He will provide valuable leadership in research and research supervision to staff and students in the Department.

A big welcome also to Dr Andy Morgan and Dr Peter Barton, our new UK GP academics who have joined our team.

Major Research Grant Outcomes

I am delighted to report that Prof Colette Browning (HARU) and A/Prof Chris Trotter (Department of Social Work) have been successful in gaining an ARC linkage grant examining the management of ageing offenders in the Australian criminal justice system. Colette was also part of a successful team in another ARC linkage grant in conjunction with the Arts Faculty - examining the connecting of younger second language learners and older bilinguals. Our school is also part of a team that has successfully tendered for the creation of the Berwick Superclinic. When it is fully operational, this clinic will provide a valuable multidisciplinary teaching and research environment with a strong emphasis on the interprofessional approach to managing patients with chronic disease. It is anticipated that construction, which will occur on Monash’s Berwick Campus site, will be completed by mid 2011.

Berwick Superclinic

Together with the Dandenong Casey General Practice Association and the Victorian Metropolitan Alliance, Monash University is part of the team that has successfully tendered for the creation of the Berwick Superclinic. When it is fully operational, this clinic will provide a valuable multidisciplinary teaching and research environment with a strong emphasis on the interprofessional approach to managing patients with chronic disease. It is anticipated that construction, which will occur on Monash's Berwick Campus site, will be completed by mid 2011.

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the School of Primary Health Care newsletter. These past six months have been an incredibly busy period for staff in each of the departments, centres and units within the School. Funding bodies have announced grant success stories, individuals applying for promotion have heard of the outcomes, those developing new programs and curricula have been notified of their applications for accreditation, and everyone engaged in teaching and research has been fulfilling their obligations to our undergraduate and postgraduate students and to grant writing.
Course accreditation
I am pleased to announce that the Qualifying Master of Social Work degree has received provisional accreditation from the Australian Association of Social Workers. This new qualifying degree will provide a graduate entry pathway into social work and place our Social Work Department in a favourable and competitive position with other departments around the country who are moving towards graduate entry degrees. The first intake will occur in 2010 and the flow of applications already seems to be very strong.

In addition, our Physiotherapy degree has received comprehensive five-year accreditation by the Australian Physiotherapist Association. This is a major achievement and Prof Jenny Keating and her team are to be congratulated for their efforts in reaching this milestone.

Postgraduate students
The number of higher degree students and international fellows undertaking training in the School is constantly growing. As a consequence, additional space has been negotiated at the Notting Hill campus to accommodate this expansion. There are now some 68 students within the School of Primary Health Care undertaking higher degrees (mostly PhD) by research. This number is growing at a rate of 15% per annum and is accompanied by a similar growth in research income, which now exceeds $4 million annually. Under the leadership of Prof Shane Thomas, seminars, workshops and a journal club are conducted to actively engage our postgraduate students with each other and within their research fields.

We continue to have an influx of overseas Masters students from Gulf countries and Malaysian Fellowship students undertaking special training in areas such as Aged Care, Rehabilitation, Addiction Studies and Sexual and Reproductive Health.

Overseas visitors
The School continues to have a regular flow of overseas visitors. Most notable over the past few months have been Korean visitors examining the operations of our Gambling Research Centre, visitors from Peking University with an interest in healthy ageing, a team from Queens University in Ontario Canada with a strong interest in chronic disease management and vocational training, and Prof Dan Engelhart from the Hadassah Medical Organisation in Israel, who has spent time in Melbourne examining our response to the H1N1 epidemic.

Refugee health
With the support of the Dandenong Casey General Practice Association, and under the guidance of Dr I-Hiao Cheng, the School is participating in the Refugee Health Consortium focusing on the Dandenong region. Dr Cheng, who has recently relinquished his PHORED Fellowship to take up a lectureship in the Department of General Practice, was awarded the prize for the best presentation at the recent VicPHCRED Conference.

Centre for Developmental Disability Health (CDDHV)
A/Prof Bob Davis has just returned from a three-month outside studies program which has taken him to a number of leading sites specialising in Developmental Disability Health, in Canada and the United States. This visit has reinforced Monash’s position as an international leader in education, training and research in this field.

Notable achievements
Since the publication of the last newsletter, School staff and students have achieved important milestones. They include the following:

Promotion to Associate Professor
Jan Coles (CAPRA)
Ted Brown (Department of Occupational Therapy)
Philip Mendes (Department of Social Work)

Award of higher degrees (PhD, MD)
PhD:
Leanne Boyd (Department of Community Emergency Health and Paramedic Practice)
Malcolm Boyle (Department of Community Emergency Health and Paramedic Practice)
Catherine Flynn (Department of Social Work)
Alex Phillips (CDDHV)
Philip Siebler (CAPRA)
Erin Smith (Department of Community Emergency Health and Paramedic Practice)

MD:
Greg Goodman (Department of General Practice)
Leon Piterman AM (Head, School of Primary Health Care)

M SocWk
Edward Gallagher (Department of Social Work)
Janise Mitchell (Department of Social Work)

NHMRC fellowships
Terry Haines (Department of Physiotherapy)
John Dixon (Obesity Research Unit and Baker IDI)

New Joint Appointments … Welcome
Prof Grant Russell (Department of General Practice, Dandenong Casey GP Association, Southern Health)
A/Prof Helen McBuney (Department of Physiotherapy, Latrobe Regional Hospital)
A/Prof Fiona McDermott (Department of Social Work, Southern Health)

Special thanks to all our staff, with my particular and personal thanks to Jenny Green who keeps me afloat.

Complements of the Season, and a Merry Christmas and Happy Healthy and Safe New Year to you all.

Professor Leon Piterman AM

School Manager’s Report

SPHC Growth at Notting Hill
It has been another year of growth for the SPHC. We have had a number of new staff join and some old staff have left. Overall we are now literally bursting at the seams in Building 1 and a lot of office shuffles have been occurring over the last few months as we try to accommodate all the extra staff and students. This growth is expected to continue next year and in order to cope with planned growth we have secured another Building at Notting Hill.

The new space, ‘Building 3’, is adjacent to Building 1 and will accommodate roughly 35 people. Building 3 will be ready for the new year and at this stage we will most likely be setting up part of the new space as the ‘postgraduate office’. Tours of the new building will begin prior to Christmas.

The SPHC has had a tough year on the financial front and planning is now on in earnest to improve our finances for 2010 and beyond. Unfortunately not a lot of time has been available to move the SPHC Restructure and Portfolio Development project forward. This will be a high priority for 2010.

The SPHC has pioneered the Notting Hill campus and several other groups from the Faculty will be joining us at Notting Hill early next year.

Dr Keith Nelson
Professor Michael Georgeff holds the position of Adjunct Professor in the Department of General Practice, School of Primary Health Care.

Professor Georgeff is currently leading a number of initiatives in Australia to establish networks of broadband-based health technologies and services, including:

CDMS: Chronic Disease Management System

CDMS is a broadband-based health service to assist health care providers and consumers to continuously monitor and manage chronic disease. The features of CDMS include:

- Creation of electronic, personalised, best-practice care plans.
- Distribution of care plans and record to the care team and the patient.
- Tracking compliance with care plans by the care team and the patient.
- Monitoring of key patient health parameters such as blood glucose, blood pressure and body weight.
- Assurance of the care team and the patient adhere to the care plan by sending alerts, reminders, and notifications.

ICCM: Intelligent Collaborative Care Management

ICCM proposes a unified model for managing the provision of care to consumers across the full life cycle of care delivery and the realisation of that model using service oriented architectures. This research includes the following research contributions:

- Identification and formalisation of domain-independent, key concepts in collaborative care management.
- Unification of the key concepts in goal-directed, multi-agent systems and context-dependent service oriented architectures.
- Introduction of a context-dependent, goal-driven service composition technique.
- Development of a framework for domain specific service (task) negotiation and assignment.
- Development of a framework for plan adherence support and failure prevention.

As previously mentioned (in the Head of School Report), Professor Georgeff is part of the successful Victorian Science Agency (VSA) grant team, examining the effectiveness of a web-based multidisciplinary care plan in the management of diabetes (CDM-Net) in the south eastern region of Melbourne.

In 1983, as Program Director in the Artificial Intelligence Center at SRI International, Professor Georgeff and his team created one of the first implementations of an intelligent software agent, deploying it on NASA's space shuttle. In 1988 he was invited back to Australia by the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, to establish the Australian Artificial Intelligence Institute.

Professor Georgeff is a principal advisor to government and industry in the US, Europe and Australia on information technology strategy in health care and business and serves on the boards of various companies. He is a founding member of the Australian National Consultative Committee on e-Health and a member of the Health Informatics Society of Australia. He was elected Fellow of the American Association for Artificial Intelligence in 1995 and is also a Fellow of the Australian Computer Society. In 1990, the Bulletin proclaimed Professor Georgeff one of Australia's "national assets".

Professor Grant Russell has moved to Melbourne from Canada to take up the position of Professor of General Practice Research and Director of Primary Care Research, Dandenong and Casey Region and Southern Health.

He is a graduate of the University of Western Australia and completed his GP training with the Family Medicine Program in 1989. He subsequently worked as a GP in Perth WA, setting up a small, independent general practice with colleagues prior to leaving for Canada in 2005 to work as an academic family physician and clinician investigator at the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Ottawa, Canada.

Professor Russell's research program is directed towards understanding and measuring the impact of primary care reform on patients, clinicians and general practices. While in Canada he received a President's Award from the North American Primary Care Research Group as part of his leadership in several national investigations of research capacity in primary care. He was the inaugural Director of the RACGP Research Unit (WA) and holds a Masters of Family Medicine from Monash University and a PhD from UWA.

Forthcoming Publication

Physical Punishment in Childhood: The Rights of the Child
Bernadette J. Saunders and Chris Goddard

Providing a wide spectrum of views, the authors explore the fine line between normalised physical punishment and illegal or unacceptable physical and emotional abuse of children. It builds on the emerging field of research that provides opportunities for children to speak for themselves about their views and experiences.

The book, to be published by Wiley/Blackwell, will be launched next year by the Hon Alastair Nicholson AO RFD QC, former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia.

Reviews

"How refreshing to see this topic thoughtfully discussed from the child’s point of view. Using the voices of children, parents and professionals Bernadette Saunders and Chris Goddard demonstrate that children have a right to live in environments where they are loved, nurtured and valued rather than in an environment where their development is overshadowed by the fear of physical punishment. An important book”

- Kim Oates MD DSc FRCP FRACP, Emeritus Professor, University of Sydney

“This is an excellent comprehensive account, not only of the issues relating to physical punishment, but of the views and feelings of parents and children about it. It should be compulsory reading for those who are concerned with overcoming this problem because of the insights it gives into the motivation of parents and others who continue to use physical punishment of children. Importantly it stresses the need for education and support and confirms my view that any legal solution should be seen as part of that education process.”

- The Hon Alastair Nicholson AO RFD QC, former Chief Justice, Family Court of Australia; Chair, National Centre Against Bullying (Australia); patron of EPOCH, Tasmania; Honorary Professorial Fellow, University of Melbourne.
The conference gave particular attention to the vulnerabilities of children in the 21st century and to new and emerging challenges to their rights and best interests. Child refugees, children escaping war and trauma, new forms of child victimisation (such as children as soldiers), the pervasiveness of child sexual abuse as well as children harmed by child abuse and family breakdown, all require more effective responses from governments and national systems responsible for their care and protection. Keynote speakers, roundtable sessions and individual papers addressed these issues within the conference themes:

- The protection of children under the law, in child welfare and family law;
- Children as citizens and their vulnerability; including indigenous children and the global movement of children, as refugees, child trafficking, child soldiers;
- Youth justice;
- Family and health impacts on children.

This conference was extremely popular, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees, and as always, the Centre and historic Prato provided the ultimate in conference venues.
3rd Annual Victorian Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (VicPHCRED) Conference
Monash Conference Centre - Melbourne, 9 November, 2009

The 3rd Annual Victorian Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (VicPHCRED) Conference was recently held in November at the Monash Conference Centre, Melbourne. The conference, attended by 70 delegates, focused primarily on the research conducted by 18 of the 2009 Researcher Development Program Fellows from Monash University’s Department of General Practice and Department of Rural & Indigenous Health, and The University of Melbourne Department of General Practice.

The diversity of topics reflected the extensive range of research in primary health care at Monash and the other partner University campuses. Populations researched included refugees and asylum seekers, drug users, CALD populations, the elderly, children and young women. Other presentations focused on chronic disease, practice-based research networks and clinician attitude.

As well as providing a great opportunity for networking and collaboration between researchers, practitioners and policy makers, those present were inspired and challenged by the award for ‘best paper presentation’ to Dr I-Hao Cheng (Dept of General Practice, Monash University), who presented a paper entitled ‘Refugee and Asylum Seeker Monash University), who presented a paper entitled ‘Refugee and Asylum Seeker...’

Mr Chi-Wen Chien with Dr Ted Brown

Mr Chi-Wen (Will) Chien, a PhD candidate in Department of Occupational Therapy at the Peninsula campus of Monash University, was awarded the ‘Outstanding Paper Awards for graduate students’ while presenting his research work in the Pacific Rim Objective Measurement Symposium (PROMS) in Hong Kong in July 2009.

The PROMS conference focuses on recent advances of objective measurement in education, psychology, linguistics, and healthcare fields. It aims to provide an international forum for discourse on the latest research in using Rasch measurement as a tool for scientific progress. At the PROMS, Will presented his preliminary PhD research results. The title of his presentation was ‘Examining construct validity of a naturalistic observational assessment of children’s hand skills: A Rasch analysis’.

Will’s new test will enable occupational therapists to visit a child’s home or school, instead of a child being assessed in an office or clinical setting. Will’s co-supervisor Dr Ted Brown said the new assessment tool would result in a more realistic indication of children’s abilities. “Measurement of a child’s hand skills and coordination can tell us a lot about their learning abilities and daily functional skills,” Dr Brown said. “Will has developed a measurement tool that, when completed, will be a wonderful asset to occupational therapists around the world – it is an outstanding achievement.”

Will’s presentation was awarded one of only three Outstanding Paper Awards for postgraduate students where there were up to 20 competitors. This is an outstanding achievement for Will and evidence of the high quality of his doctoral research work. Will enrolled in the Monash Department of Occupational Therapy in 2007 as its first full-time PhD student. He was also awarded the Endeavour International Postgraduate Research Scholarship and Monash Research Scholarship.

Dr Jane Sims, and A/Prof Ellen McIntyre (Flinders University), Mr Edward Cocks (DoHA) presenting the award for ‘best paper presentation’ to Dr I-Hao Cheng

Annual Australian College of Ambulance Professionals Pre-hospital Conference

A contingent of staff and students from the Department of Community Emergency Health and Paramedic Practice, led by Prof Frank Archer, descended on the SkyCity Convention centre in Auckland New Zealand, for the Annual Australian College of Ambulance Professionals Pre-hospital Conference. The conference was held on the 16th and 17th of October and was the first time the conference had been held in New Zealand.

Many staff attending presented papers, together with some of the first and second year students. The free paper sessions covered themes of trauma, pain, clinical, workforce, stroke, public health, resuscitation, and education, with a session specifically for student oral presentations. Several of the staff and students also presented posters.

Monash did very well, with the best paper prize awarded to Mal Boyle and Brett Williams for their paper ‘An assessment of undergraduate paramedics’ empathy levels: attitudes to patient’s medical condition’. The best undergraduate student paper prize was awarded to first year BEH students Nicole Robertson and Coco Giddings for their paper ‘When pressure is positive: a literature review of the prehospital use of continuous positive airway pressure’. Two of the posters, by Brett Williams and Gavin Smith, also made it to the final four, and incorporated a five minute presentation and five minute question and answer session to decide the best poster presentation.

The students stated that they very much benefited from attending the conference, with those that presented papers realising they can compete with other presenters. The students are looking forward to the conference next year in Perth, Western Australia to further their pre-hospital knowledge.

DCEHPP Staff and Students
National Australian Physiotherapy Conference Week

The Department of Physiotherapy was well represented at the National Australian Physiotherapy Conference Week. Papers presented included:

- Doctoral candidate Sue Slade: “Enablers and barriers to participant engagement in exercise programs for non-specific chronic low back pain: a qualitative study”.
- Neurology lecturer and specialist neurological physiotherapist Prue Morgan: “New graduates’ self perceived competence in neurological physiotherapy practice”.
- Doctoral candidate Carol Hodgson won the Clinician Award for Best Oral presentation for “A randomised controlled trial of staircase recruitment manoeuvres, high PEEP and low airway pressure (PHARLAP)”.

Outstanding Physiotherapy Achievement

At the recent national conference of the Australian Physiotherapy Association held in Sydney, Prue Morgan, lecturer in the Department of Physiotherapy, was recognised as a Fellow of the Australian College of Physiotherapy.

Fellowships of the Australian College of Physiotherapists are national awards, granted to members of the Australian Physiotherapy Association in recognition of exceptional standards of clinical practice and scholarship. Prue attained her Fellowship by a process of clinical specialisation in neurology after completing both oral and clinical examination components, and is now entitled to call herself a Specialist Neurological Physiotherapist.

Our congratulations go to Prue who is one of only 5 neurological physiotherapy specialists in Australia, and the only neurological physiotherapy specialist in Victoria.

First Occupational Therapy Graduates

It was a very special time for the Fourth Year Occupational Therapy students when they celebrated their last class on 14 October. After four years of hard study, there was a sense of sadness mixed with excitement as the students reflected on their past four years at Monash and considered their future careers in occupational therapy.

The class took the form of a lunch and included presentations by both staff and students. Two of the students wrote and performed a song to mark the occasion, to thank their lecturers and tutors for their teaching over the last four years. Each student was presented with their own Monash University china mug which included the names of all students in the Monash University Bachelor of Occupational Therapy Class of 2009. Staff also received some very personalised photo boards from the students.

These students are the first group to complete the full four years of the Bachelor of Occupational Therapy at Monash, and we wish them all the very best in their occupational therapy careers.
First year Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy students from Monash University Peninsula Campus recently spent three days in Gippsland participating in a bushfire workshop to advance their knowledge and awareness of how communities respond to a disaster. Students assembled in the Moe Town Hall to hear people describe their experiences in the Black Saturday fires in Gippsland. They listened intently to moving, and often very personal, accounts from representatives of the CFA, Red Cross, DHS, local government and the local community. They were particularly touched by the policemen who spoke about the difficulties of ‘policing’ in their own community - turning friends back at roadblocks who were desperate to reach their properties, and the heart-wrenching events that occurred in places they drive past every day. Key messages from the presentation were the crucial role of community volunteers and the importance of support services that enable communities to lead and sustain their response to disaster.

The students enjoyed the catering of the Bowls Club and then spent a night sleeping on the Moe Town Hall floor, experiencing a small taste of life without familiar comforts.

On the second day of the camp, students did what they could to assist fire affected communities in Labertouche, Callignee and Boolarra. They helped with activities including cleaning a large multi-purpose hall at Boolarra primary school, tidying up fallen trees and branches at properties, gardening and rebuilding a cattle pen. They were able to hear first-hand about the struggles of community members trying to rebuild their properties and their lives.

Students reflected positively on the camp experience:

“The speakers on the first day... were all very touching and genuine, and really brought home to me the wide ranging impact the bushfire had not just on individuals, but entire communities and regions. Recalling that such a fire has an impact on the wider population will also, I think, make me a better therapist in the future”.

“I loved hearing the stories of the people’s experiences. It took a lot of courage for them to tell their stories and it really opened a lot of our minds to the life changing reality that the fires had on people’s lives”.

“Seeing how much our help was appreciated and needed really made sweating it out carrying logs all day very easy. The feeling of making a difference in someone’s life was amazing, a feeling I hope to have many times throughout my career”.

“We were able to help a farmer complete work that would have taken him one month, in one day!”

The community in Gippsland did not get the media attention that focused on the tremendous losses at King Lake and Marysville. Many have no-one to help them and have lost everything. There were many teary eyes of gratitude as the students left. There is still a huge need for practical help and some students are planning to return.
**National Health Fusion Team Challenge (Oz HFTC)**

The competition will be run again next year with the hope of more Australian universities participating.

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**Happy Life Club**

Happy Life Club participants

The Happy Life Club is a clinical trial initiative that uses doctor and nurse coaches to help patients better manage their chronic illnesses using a motivational interviewing framework to assist with behaviour change in key target health behaviours. The Club is presently focussed on Chinese adults with diabetes from the Fuzhong area in the Fengtai District.

In November, staff from the School of Primary Health Care and the Australian Psychological Society went to Beijing to monitor progress in the trial. Data from the first 100 patients were presented and the outcomes discussed in the trial. The Happy Life Club has achieved national prominence in China as it was the sole innovation project featured by the China Ministry of Health as part of the 60th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the People’s Republic. Various other sites in China and Australia will soon come on line.

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**A BIG THANKYOU to General/Professional Staff**

I would like to thank all of the professional (non-academic) staff for yet another year of extremely high performance. A number of staff have continued to provide support well above what can reasonably be expected, and have done so without complaint.

Without this fantastic effort the SPHC would not continue to function and run as smoothly and efficiently as it does. Hopefully, throughout 2010 the SPHC will be better able to acknowledge the individuals who excel and also try to alleviate the huge workload some staff have had to cope with.

Keith Nelson
School Manager