



LifeSpan

Investigating the Mental Health of people
with Intellectual Disability across the LifeSpan

Welcome to the Fourth Issue of the
LifeSpan Project Newsletter.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR READERS!

Data Collection Update

The LifeSpan Team celebrated its first birthday in October last year and our progress has been consistent. To date we have rolled out 4 mail-outs to 2226 people inviting them to participate in the study. These mail-outs have encompassed all of the southern and part of the western metropolitan areas. So far this has yielded 318 consents to participate and we have already received 222 completed questionnaire booklets.

If because of the Christmas mayhem you have not had the chance to fill in your questionnaire booklet(s) it is not too late to do so. We will be happy to receive them as soon as you are able to spare 45 minutes to fill them in and send them off. Remember to use the reply paid envelope to save yourself the postage cost.

The tentative schedule for the 2007 mail-outs is as follows:

Jan - remainder of western metropolitan area
 Feb - Hills, Southern Fleurieu, Kangaroo Island
 April - Northern Metropolitan area including Barossa Valley
 June - Eastern Metropolitan area including Strathmont Centre
 Aug - Riverland, Kadina
 Oct - Pt Augusta, Pt Pirie, Pt Lincoln, Whyalla
 Dec - Mount Gambier, Naracoorte

All of us here in the LifeSpan Team would like to say a very big thank you to all who have participated in our research or have supported us in any way during 2006. We look forward to working with many more people during 2007.

The LifeSpan Project newsletter will be a quarterly publication with updates about the progress of our research, useful information relevant to research participants, information about our team members and their extensive experience in the fields of intellectual disability and mental health, and upcoming events.

Mental Illness - An Issue For All Of Us

Did you know that.....?

1. At any particular point in time 3% of the general population will experience a serious mental illness:
 - In South Australia that equates to 45,000 people.
 - 18% of the South Australian population can expect to experience a mental illness in the next year and for 3% it will be a serious mental illness.
2. people who have an intellectual disability can also suffer from a diagnosable and treatable mental health issue. Estimates of the prevalence of mental illness among adults with intellectual disabilities varies widely depending on how the research is conducted.

There is a vast amount of literature available on the prevalence of mental illness in this population. Take a look at the latest:

Mental ill-health in adults with intellectual disabilities: prevalence and associated factors (Cooper, Smiley, Morrison, Williamson, and Alan) In the British Journal of Psychiatry (2007), 190, PP 27-35.

News Alert.....

The LifeSpan team is giving DBC-A packages to say a big **THANK YOU** to participating agencies and services who have demonstrated extra commitment in assisting with our research. Because of your efforts it may be coming to a team near you!

It pays to get your agency involved!

LifeSpan Events

Farewell to Rafaela; Rafaela is the SA team's very important person "on the ground" in Melbourne. She has been with us, as Research Officer, since we began and has been a very valuable team member through all our initial struggles of finding a name and logo to now, the more complex task of setting up the data base and many, many other bits in between. We will miss her cheery voice from Melbourne at our regular teleconferences but wish her well in her future studies.

Expo Displays

Did you catch us at the DisAbility Expo at Morphettville on November 10th? You may have had trouble finding us up on the second level at the far end. It was estimated that over 5000 people attended the event facilitating the opportunity to raise the profile of LifeSpan in SA.

We made some great network connections in the industry and met some of the individuals and service agencies participating in our research.

Industry Partners Meeting

Many thanks to our Industry Partners for their ongoing involvement and support during 2006.

The following dates have been set for the 2007 meetings:

- * February 2nd,
- * June 1st,
- * October 19th.

We look forward to working with all of our industry partners again this year.

*****Gift Vouchers*****

For all those who have consented to participate in the past and for those who will do so in the future there will be a lucky draw for each mail out and the winner will receive a voucher.

You've got to be in it to win it so give your consent now.

Staff Profile:

Ann Rymill - Project Manager

As Project Manager, Ann brings a great deal of experience to the LifeSpan Team. She has previously worked for many years as a Social Worker in both Disability SA (formerly IDSC) and mental health services.

For the last 10 years, Ann has worked as a Senior Practitioner with the Dual Disability Programme (Specialist Intervention Support Service). Within that programme she has been involved with clinical consultations, training, research and development of interagency cooperation.

Many readers may be familiar with Ann via her involvement with the 1996 statewide 'Dual Disability Prevalence Survey' and her involvement with the 'Working in Partnership to Meet the Challenge of Dual Disability' trainings which she convened with Dr Caroline Mohr and Dr Jenny Curran during 1998, 1999 and 2000.

Aside from Ann's vast range of professional experience other team members also benefit from her wonderful sense of humour and exciting stories of her ongoing travels around the world, which in more recent years has included Namibia, Botswana, South America, Antarctica and Ethiopia.

In March this year Ann is heading to Bhutan in the Himalayas (nestled between India, Tibet and Nepal), and then to Japan.



Above: Project Manager - Ann Rymill

Older People with ID

I attended some interesting presentations about issues facing older people in the general population who may have mental health problems while attending the Psychology Conference in New Zealand in October. What became obvious was that the problematic issues faced by older people with an ID which result in confusion about the prevalence of mental health problems mirror issues faced by older people who do not have an ID. Older people may show symptoms without a diagnosis of a psychiatric disorder. Many emotional or behavioural issues are wrongly attributed to ageing itself and are therefore not diagnosed.

There is conflicting information about the prevalence of mental illness in older people, eg 61.9% over 65yrs in the UK while in New Zealand 25% over 50 years. This research will contribute valuable information about the prevalence and nature of mental illness in older people with an intellectual disability who live in SA.

Barbara Pennington

ATSI Project Taken from Presentation given by Phil Flint:

- * Nationally recognised that there is an under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with an intellectual disability in health-care data (*Littlewood, 2006*)
- * WA Study into social and emotional wellbeing found 1:4 indigenous people with mental health issues, compared to 1:6 in Australian population
- * In context of other impacting factors, disability is not a high priority (*Smeaton, 1998*)

More from Phil in the next issue.

Information and Upcoming Events

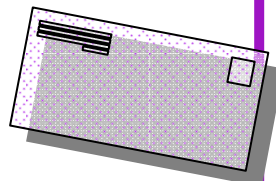
Information Packs - containing information about the project and details about your involvement with the research can be obtained from the address below.

Information sheets - covering details of our mail-out sequences and corresponding electoral boundaries for the metropolitan and country regions are available (contact details below).

Mailing list - Let us know if you want to be on our mailing list to receive our newsletters and new information as it becomes available (contact details below).

Contact Details

Ann Rymill
LifeSpan Project
PO Box 34
Ferryden Park SA 5010
Ph: 83486500 Fax: 83486599
ann.rymill@med.monash.edu.au



Research Team

CHIEF INVESTIGATORS

- ❖ Professor Bruce Tonge
- ❖ Professor Stewart Einfeld
- ❖ Dr Caroline Mohr

Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology, Monash University

RESEARCH TEAM

Project Manager

- ❖ Ann Rymill
ann.rymill@med.monash.edu.au

Higher Degree Research Students

- ❖ Barbara Pennington
barbara.pennington@med.monash.edu.au
- ❖ Phil Flint
phil.flint@med.monash.edu.au

Research Officers

- ❖ Sharon Stinson
sharon.stinson@med.monash.edu.au
- ❖ Caroline Keating
(Melbourne Office)
caroline.keating@med.monash.edu.au

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This project is consistent with the Federal Government's National Research priorities and the Third National Mental Health Policy.

Check out our Webpage - www.med.monash.edu/spppm/research/devpsych/lifespan.html
and find out more about the project. It will be updated regularly as the research progresses.