



LifeSpan

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

Welcome to the Seventh Issue of the
LifeSpan Project Newsletter.

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Data Collection Update

Although all the data being collected through the mail out process is extremely valuable to the outcomes of the project, the response rate of between 12 - 15 % was not high enough to produce a representative sample. To ensure that a representative sample was achieved the decision was made to intensively focus on 20 postcodes in an effort to gain a 70%-80% participation rate. The targeted postcodes include the following: 5021, 5022, 5039, 5040, 5048, 5051, 5061, 5066, 5085, 5086, 5132, 5152, 5201, 5204, 5211, 5245, 5333, 5341, 5343, 5345. The team is currently in the process of conducting follow up phone calls and emails with very encouraging results.

If you know people with an intellectual disability over the age of 16 who live within these postcodes we need their information.

The data collection for DECS is in the process of being reorganised with the aim of specifically targeting a number of districts/schools. This new process will endeavor to increase the response rate to between 70%-80%.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the parents, guardians and families as well as the staff of both Disability SA/Strathmont and Minda Inc for their ongoing hardwork and cooperation in organising consents and completing questionnaires.

A reminder that if 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.

If you have lost the consent forms or Questionnaire booklet please contact us and we will be happy to send out what you need to participate.

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.

Resource Review

In the NADD Bulletin Vol 10, No 6, Nov/Dec 2007 there was an interesting article "Bipolar Spectrum Disorder Co morbid with Autism Spectrum Disorder." Salpekar, J.A. and Daniolos, P., looking at this challenging co morbidity. With a retrospective review they found 54% of the 41 individuals had a Bipolar disorder. Not surprisingly they concluded that assessment and treatment of people with a co morbidity is complex but considered that Bipolar disorder was under diagnosed in people with autism spectrum disorder.

On a different topic but nevertheless an area of much interest was reported in **Mental Health Aspects of Developmental Disabilities, Vol 10, No 4, Oct/Nov/Dec 2007** and article "Personality Disorders in Intellectual Disability." where the researchers Alexander, R.T., et al, found that out of 29 people diagnosed with having a personality disorder 27 (93%) had a mild intellectual disability and all were being treated with psychotropic medication. They discuss further the formulations of treatment guidelines and suggest standards of practice for treating people with intellectual disability and a diagnosed personality disorder.

Both articles and Journals are available from the Disability SA Library at Strathmont Centre

The **Diagnostic Manual - Intellectual Disability (DM-ID): A textbook of Diagnosis of Mental Disorders in Persons with Intellectual Disability** is also available from the Library.

LifeSpan Events

Conference Presentations



Besides data collection various members of the team have attended and presented papers at a number of conferences including:

- "Cognitive Ageing Down Under" conference, Adelaide, July '07 - Barbara,
- LifeSpan presentation at Australian Assoc for Developmental Medicine conference "Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll" Adelaide, Sept '07 - Ann
- LifeSpan presentation at Psychology and Indigenous Australians conference, Adelaide, July '07 - Phil
- Poster presentation, Mental Health and Ageing Conference, Adelaide, Oct '07 - Barbara
- LifeSpan and Research Presentation to Office of Ageing, Adelaide, Nov 07 - Barbara
- Early Researchers in Ageing Conference, Adelaide, Nov '07 Barbara
- LifeSpan and Research, Aboriginal Health Network (Nunkawarrin Yunti), Nov '07 - Phil
- Mental Health and LifeSpan presentation to CHESS annual forum, Adelaide, Nov '07-Barbara, Ann, Debbie

If you would like any information about any of these conferences please give us a call.

Industry Partners Meeting (IPM)

An IPM was held on 4th February 2008 with representatives from Minda Inc, Disability SA, DECS, the chief Investigators and Project team. New faces were around the table who were able to participate in the discussions and decisions about the project and future planning. Those attending generally have their agency's responsibility for decision making in relation to the project and so we welcome their input.

Two more meetings will be held in 2008; Monday 2nd June 2008 and 27th October both to be at the Child and Youth Specialist Services office (formerly SISS) at Regency Park, 9.30 - 11.30AM.

Staff Profile: Caroline Keating



Caroline has an honours degree in Psychology. She is currently studying the Master of Psychology (Educational & Developmental) program at Monash University.

A strong interest in intellectual disability and mental health has led Caroline to work with us on the LifeSpan Project as a research assistant based in Melbourne.

Caroline is located at the Monash University Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology, Melbourne. At the Centre, Caroline also works on the Australian Child to Adult Development (ACAD) study, a longitudinal study of emotional and behaviour problems in children and young people with an intellectual disability.

She regularly travels to Adelaide to work with the LifeSpan project team, and is always only an email or phone call away!



Welcome to Debbie Collins;

Debbie is our new Research Officer (Sharon Stinson left the Project in Oct 2007) based in Adelaide. Debbie has a degree in Disability Studies and is currently studying for a Bachelor of Psychology.

Debbie has worked in the disability field for the past 26 years as a support worker, accommodation service manager and skills trainer/developmental educator. Many of you may know Deb from her most recent position at CARA and we really appreciate the skills and knowledge as well as energy Deb brings to the team.

BARBARA'S Update

Data collection for the Mental Health of Older Persons with an Intellectual Disability study is progressing well, with approx 220 questionnaires returned including Adaptive Behaviour Dementia Questionnaires (*ABDQ, Prasher et al 2004*). A sample are also being assessed using a new instrument the Dementia Screening Questionnaire for Individuals with ID (*DSQIID*) by Deb et al (2007).

A glimpse at the data so far...

The oldest people in the study are 86yrs, the majority aged between 55-64 years. About 60% are male. Most live in specialized aged care nursing homes and it seems (as would be expected) that they have many more chronic health issues than younger people with an ID.

I am keen to finalize data gathering in order to begin the more exciting task of obtaining some results!!

PHIL'S Update

The collection of data for the Mental Health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adults with an Intellectual Disability project is progressing well. To date there have been approximately 110 questionnaires returned and Phil is busy making follow-up phone calls and visits to collect outstanding questionnaires. As part of the project Phil is also collecting some qualitative data and plans to visit Northern South Australia as part of this process.

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.

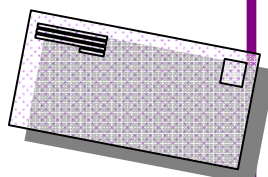
Mailing list - Let us know if you want to be on our mailing list to receive our newsletters and new information via email as it becomes available (contact details below).

Conferences - The team will hopefully be presenting a number of papers at the ASSID Conference in November 2008.

Training/trip - Phil is undertaking a trip to Northern South Australia to do some follow-up work for his project.

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

- ❖ Debbie Collins (Adelaide)
debra.collins@med.monash.edu.au
- ❖ Caroline Keating (Melbourne)
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.