

LifeSpan

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

Welcome to the Final Issue of the
LifeSpan Project Newsletter.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ◆ Data Analysis Update
- ◆ I ASSID Conference 2008
- ◆ Disability Expo 2008
- ◆ LifeSpan Events
- ◆ Project Manager
- ◆ Mental Health of Older People with ID
- ◆ Mental Health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people with ID
- ◆ Information: Industry Partners Final Meeting
- ◆ Research Team & Contact Details



This will be the final issue of the LifeSpan Newsletter. We hope the newsletters have been a useful and informative way of keeping you up to date with the progress of the project over the past three years.

DATA ANALYSIS UPDATE

The data analysis from over 1,600 questionnaires for the norming study, older people and ATSI people is well underway. Apart from the main outcome of creating norms for the Developmental Behaviour Checklist - Adults (DBC-A) the information collected will hopefully assist in a number of other critical areas such as, support and treatment; individual and organisational planning; policy development and service planning; and future research.

Some preliminary findings include:

- 21% screened positively for psychopathology on the DBC-A
- 42% reported to have a diagnosed mental illness
- 35% sought help for emotional & behavioural disturbances
- 42% take medication for behavioural & emotional disturbances



The LifeSpan Project newsletter is 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.

IASSID Conference 2008



Caroline Mohr presenting on LifeSpan at the IASSID conference in South Africa. The presentation included an overview of the project together with some preliminary findings.

Disability Expo 2008

On Friday 24th October the team participated in the Disability Expo. As well as presenting a broad range of preliminary findings in poster format other information was also available on the day including; newsletters, general project information and information on dual disability. There was a good level of interest from university students, parents and people working in the disability field, some of whom had participated in the project and were pleased to see the results of their hard work .



LifeSpan Events

Conference Attendance & Presentations

Various members of the team have attended and presented papers at a number of conferences including:

- Presented at the IASSID Conference in Capetown South Africa, Aug 2008
- Disability Expo, October 24th 2008
- UNI SA Indigenous Psychology conference in Adelaide in July
- The RANZCP "Creating Futures: Research, Practice and Policy for Indigenous, Rural and Remote and Island Peoples" conference in Cairns and Yarrabah in September
- Presented a project update and initial results to the Aboriginal Disability Network of South Australia in October



Upcoming Conference Presentations

The team will be presenting a number of papers during the latter part of 2008 including:

- The ASSID Conference in Melbourne, November, 2008.
- Disability SA Conference "*Shifting the Paradigms*" in Adelaide, November 2008



A Last Word from
the Project
Manager-
Ann Rymill

I really cannot believe that 3 years has passed since we were first discussing how we were going to tackle this seemingly enormous task and now we are nearly at an end. WOW. This has been due to the efforts of all those involved who were willing to give up their precious time to provide the data we needed.

WE THANK YOU.

But I also want to thank the research team both past and present, here and in Melbourne as without their dedication this project would not have got the great outcomes

The Mental Health of ATSI People

Well now that the collection of data for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) study is over, I've been busy starting to analyse and write it all up. Below are some initial results:



- ❖ ATSI were over 9 years younger than the Non ATSI and 40% were from Non English Speaking Background
- ❖ 29% screen positively for psychopathology (compared to 21% Non ATSI)
- ❖ 10% have been admitted to hospital for emotional/behavioural problems (Double Non ATSI rate)
- ❖ 50% of those admitted to hospital were detained under the Mental Health Act (Double Non ATSI rate of 25%)
- ❖ 65% reported chronic health conditions
- ❖ Double the level of hearing loss of Non ATSI (3.75% compared to 1.7%)

There will be much more information to share over the coming months.

The Mental Health of Older People



Firstly I would like to thank all those who assisted in the data collection process. Our participation rate of about 91% is a reflection of the goodwill and effort of carers.

We have a large amount of data on 322 people aged 55-86yrs: a first for Australia! The preliminary results reveal a picture showing they face similar issues to older people who do not have an ID. Prevalence of psychopathology is less than in younger people but about 80% have chronic medical problems, mostly age related. About 6.7% screen positively for dementia.

They suffer less stress than younger people from life events suggesting that their longevity may have resulted in some emotional resilience. Many have little or no social network and they spend less time in daytime activities. 28% are still able to be supported in small community homes, 8% live in their own home or with family. Nearly 25% live in nursing homes while 30% are still living in larger facilities.

There is a tsunami wave of older people who will require aged care services on the horizon, with the largest group (>70%) being in the 55-64yr age group. Services need to be prepared and hopefully the knowledge we have gained will be of benefit to all.



Information

Industry Partners Final Meeting (IPM) -

The final IPM was held on October 27th which included a presentation by Caroline Mohr. The presentation included an overview of the DBC-A and a range of preliminary findings. Further analysis of data still needs to occur and once this happens these findings and the overall outcomes of the research will be presented. The preference of industry partners for the dissemination of information was through individual agency forums, which will happen early 2009 so stay tuned for further updates for details in the new year.

Ongoing project information

Although the project will officially come to a close at the end of 2008 there is still work being done on the publishing and broader dissemination of the results and outcomes. To ensure that this information is accessible the LifeSpan website will continue to be maintained.

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

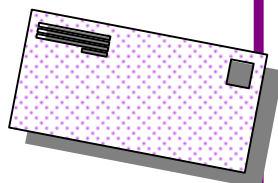
- ❖ Barbara Pennington
barbara.pennington@med.monash.edu.au
- ❖ Phil Flint
phil.flint@med.monash.edu.au

Research Officers

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

Contact Details

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



The LifeSpan Project is a Monash University Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology Research Project. It is funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and APEX Foundation for Research into Intellectual Disability.

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.