



DARE Newsletter 3

1st December 2008



Welcome to the December DARE Newsletter¹

Over the past few months, the focus of DARE has continued to be firmly focused on recruitment. Revised calculations indicate we need to enlist 196 participants to know at the end of the trial whether relapses of depression can be prevented. Thanks to your generous involvement in this important study, we are close to achieving our target. Recruitment has now finished at the Geelong, Frankston and Alfred sites.

Minimising missing data

While joining the project is fantastic, staying with it for the long haul is critical. One of the most important issues in long-term studies such as DARE is preventing missing data. Missing data can arise through either participant withdrawal from the project or through non-completion of assessments.

A snapshot of progress to date:

- 175 people are enrolled in the project
- 5 people have withdrawn following randomisation
- 6 MBCT groups have been successfully completed
- 24 research interviewers and 24 new MBCT practitioners have been trained

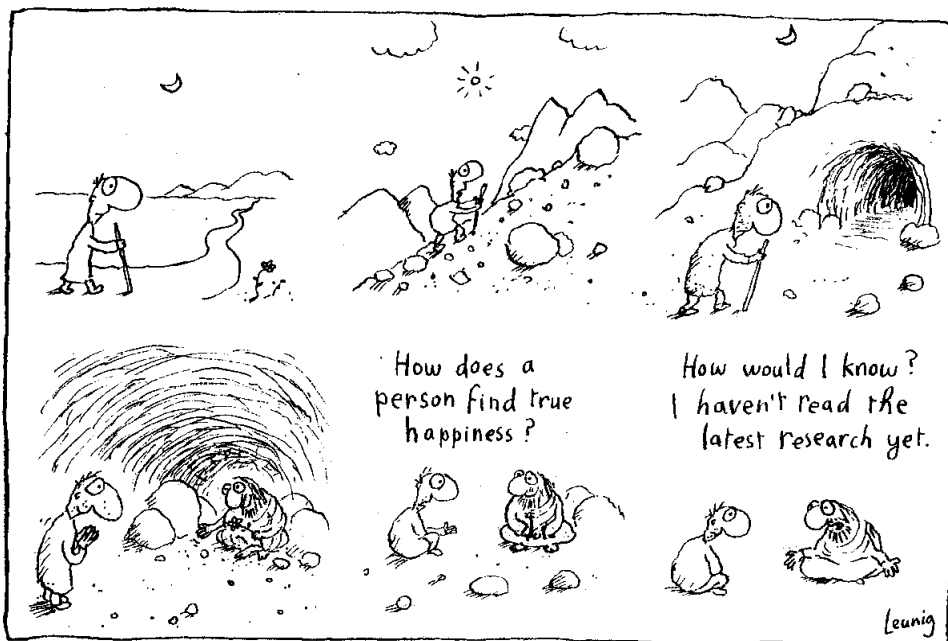
Why is it important to prevent missing data?

Research is conducted to detect real world effects - to demonstrate real relationships with real people. The less data collected the less that can be analysed. This in turn hinders the ability to detect real relationships and can lead to findings that are unclear or even inaccurate.

What can you do to help?

DARE places a lot of emphasis on good data collection. With now over 100 assessments to manage each month, and rising, this is no small task. You can help us by

returning all your assessments as soon as you can after we let you know they are due. It won't always be convenient, you won't always feel like doing them, and sometimes you may even feel like giving up. However, your commitment to completing the assessments for the duration of the project is what will produce meaningful results that can be relied upon to improve outcomes in depression. If you are having any difficulties completing your assessments, please contact us to chat about how we can support you further.



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¹ This newsletter is for everyone involved in the DARE Project, whether you are in the Depression Relapse Active Monitoring (DRAM) group, the Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) + DRAM group or waiting to be assigned to either group. It is our way of keeping you in touch with how the project is going. We aim to produce newsletters every few months during the course of the project. If you don't wish to be kept up to date on DARE by this newsletter, just let us know and we will take you off the mailing list.

Meet the project team

In each DARE newsletter we like to introduce members of the project team. In this newsletter, we feature Bernadette O'Grady, who is Executive assistant to Professor Graham Meadows, and Karen Braga, who is an administration assistant and new to the team.

Berni is a busy mother of four children, two dogs and a cat. She has been working with Monash University in a variety of roles and has been in her current role since January 2006. Her interests include sewing and various handicrafts, scouting activities and spending time with the family.



To help manage the many calls, appointments and 100+ assessments each month, our DARE administration officer, Debbie Lang, has been ably joined by Karen Braga. Karen has been undertaking many of the personal contacts with participants to encourage the return of assessments. Karen said she feels very inspired by the positive and friendly responses she has received to reminder calls! Karen has 4 children and loves spending quality time with the kids. She also really enjoys camping and horse riding and would love to have more time to do these activities.

DARE in the media

We were fortunate to receive some media attention in early November which helped boost enrolments. You may have seen the report in The Age about DARE or heard Professor Graham Meadows being interviewed on 774 (Red Symon's breakfast show) and SYN (Student Youth Network) radio. On SYN radio's Panorama show, Graham talked about DRAM. He noted that "it's a really good idea if people who have had several episodes of depression put some effort into trying to help themselves stay well...if you've got a vulnerability... it's a good idea to keep an eye on it. [DRAM] is a fairly simple intervention which is about people getting an email or a letter once a month and asks them to fill out a questionnaire that alerts them if they're starting to get sick again...they are standard questions that a doctor might ask about depression."

The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers - Everett Mámor

Visiting psychiatrist

We were pleased to welcome Dr Piyadit Jaroensook, a psychiatrist from Thailand, who visited the DARE team on 12th December to learn about our work. Dr Jaroensook is in Australia for a month on an overseas postgraduate specialist training program. Dr Jaroensook commented that he was very impressed with how the DARE project was and wished to encourage participants to make the most of their opportunity of being in the project.



Graham's comments underline the importance of self-monitoring. In August this year Dr Judy Proudfoot, a senior researcher from the Black Dog institute, also commented on Radio National that self-monitoring is a necessary component in the management of mental health conditions. She said that although it's very important, there can be problems with compliance and in the case of depression, lack of motivation. It can also be inconvenient to have to remember to do it.

A major benefit of DRAM is that it helps overcome some of the obstacles to self-monitoring by the provision of a systematised support system.

Newsletter contributions

Please contact us if you would like to contribute items or events to the DARE newsletter that may be of interest to your fellow participants.

Contacting DARE

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We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give - Winston Churchill