

School of Public Health and Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, UNSW Sydney, Australia



## SPHCM farewells Raina MacIntyre as Head of School

Raina MacIntyre completed 10 years as Head of School (HOS), School of Public Health and Community Medicine (SPHCM), on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2018.

She is a public health physician, educator, researcher, and academic leader; who has led by example in education, innovation, and research. She successfully achieved quantum organisational transformation of the School, while simultaneously being an internationally-recognised research leader in infectious diseases epidemiology. She continued to win category 1 grants; as well as lead a large research team in infectious diseases, vaccinology, and epidemic response. She won a NHMRC Principal Research Fellowship commencing April 1st 2018, and will move to a research-only role at UNSW Sydney's Kirby Institute with this fellowship.

She commenced as HOS in April 2008; recruited from the University of Sydney, where she was a research-only professor. She was tasked with organisational change. The SPHCM was created in 2002 from a merger of the Schools of Community Medicine, Health Services Management, and Medical Education. As HOS of the large SPHCM, she created coherence within the School, drove research excellence, and led major and continual growth in teaching programs at UNSW Sydney – including at times when external economic factors saw a downturn in student numbers nationally and within UNSW Sydney.

She pioneered a range of highly successful and innovative new teaching at the School; including programs, specialisations, dual degrees, and courses – in both fully online and fully face-to-face modes.

For example: the elite Doctorate of Public Health Program; the most popular Masters of Public Health (MPH) specialisation in infectious diseases (along with specialisations in Indigenous health, health economics, epidemiology and other areas); a new Master of International Public Health in 2010; the Master of Infectious Diseases Intelligence; and the first PLuS Alliance programs across UNSW Sydney, Kings

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College London and Arizona State University. The SPHCM has offered all masters degrees face-to-face or fully online for a decade, and is the clear leader at UNSW in online learning. As Raina leaves, the innovative online PLoS Alliance Bachelor of International Public Health has enrolled its first students, taking the School into a new area of online undergraduate education.

In 2008, the SPHCM had about 400 postgraduate coursework students (compared to over 1200 in 2018), and low research outputs. Now, the School has attracted and retained top talent from around the world; and enjoys regular category 1 research grant success, and growth in Higher Education Research Data Collection publications and Higher Degree Research completions. Raina began her first HOS term with wide consultation and a strategic planning retreat, including with key research centres in UNSW Medicine. This was followed by biennial strategic planning retreats for SPHCM staff; with the last of these in 2016, resulting in the SPHCM strategic plan aligned with the UNSW 2025 vision. She recognised and nurtured the important and unique role of Community Medicine at the SPHCM; and created a School General Practice Unit, with a leadership role for a professor of General Practice and close ties to the UNSW Sydney Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity.

She consolidated the areas of research strength at the SPHCM; creating flagship research themes, and aligning them with MPH specialisations to create a research-teaching nexus. She has made a significant footprint in India

and China through research and educational initiatives. The SPHCM now has an international reputation and the largest MPH and Master of Health Management in Australia. She identified strategic international opportunities and pursued and created new initiatives in education; including a highly coveted partnership with Apollo Health in India, an international leader in online medical education. With Apollo, she led the creation of a MPH for the Indian market, which launched in 2016. Her partnership with Apollo has been featured as a major success story in India by Austrade, and has resulted in numerous other Australian universities following her example and seeking similar partnerships in health education with Apollo. Through her work and relationships in China, she created the opportunity for a memorandum of understanding for UNSW Sydney with Renji Hospital of Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU), and was appointed an adjunct professor at SJTU. The SPHCM now runs regular executive education for health leaders from SJTU hospitals and other hospitals in China, and UNSW Sydney awards seed grants for Renji-UNSW joint projects.

She also created a radical new approach to applied workplace-readiness in all of the School's educational offerings. She conceived and drove numerous innovations, including: the first workplace internships in public health internationally; a pioneering elite workplace-based professional doctorate program, the UNSW Future Health Leaders; and, in 2015, a new concept of fully online Summer School. She has also been



hands-on in designing new courses; including conceiving and designing an online course on bioterrorism for the PLoS Alliance, which includes an innovative web movie as a teaching tool that was shortlisted for 4 awards at the Melbourne Webfest.

She created and led extensive and targeted marketing of programs aligned to research strengths; led a complete overhaul of the PhD program, structures and processes (moving SPHCM from low to high completion rates); brought the first National Health and Medical Council Early Career Research fellows to the School; increased research grant success; and conducted targeted recruitment of top talent at all academic levels. She created and enhanced collaborative opportunities, along with career development opportunities and continuing education, for staff. This included: regular staff meetings and communications, the Globe newsletter, an interactive and enhanced website showcasing the SPHCM, weekly research seminars, quantitative and qualitative research seminars, journal clubs, publishing workshops, small grants for early career researchers, grant support, and a career café for early career academics. She continually supported staff with leadership development opportunities, including the Academic Women in Leadership program, where she has been a regular speaker and mentor. She chaired the Faculty's Women's Employment Strategy Committee from 2010-2016, and secured the Apte Scholarship for Medicine for women returning from maternity leave after years of advocacy for such support. The School is one of

the most diverse schools at UNSW Sydney, and Raina commenced a monthly Language Lunch to celebrate cultural diversity.

As a researcher, she has an international reputation in infectious diseases research; reflected in membership of expert groups, including: the US Institute of Medicine and the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as national expert groups; editorial board membership for *BMJ Open*, *Vaccine*, and *Epidemiology and Infection*; and regular plenary invitations to international conferences in her field. She has won many national and international prizes for her research, including: the Sir Henry Wellcome Medal; the Prize from the Association of Military Surgeons of the US; and the peak national prize in infectious diseases, the Frank Fenner Award. She and her team were a finalist in the 2017 Eureka prizes and won the 2017 Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australia Research Team Prize. She has pioneered a national network of emergency response capability in international epidemics, the ARM network, which was shortlisted for an Australian Innovation Award in 2014. She is a co-director of ARM, and ARM members and have deployed to many disasters (including Typhoon Hayan and the West African Ebola epidemic). She also secured membership for UNSW Sydney with the WHO Global Outbreak Alert Response Network (GOARN) on the basis of infectious diseases expertise, for which she is the lead. She is looking forward to research in applied epidemic response with her aforementioned NHMRC fellowship, and within a NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence she leads in Epidemic Response.

She leaves the SPHCM as a sought-after leading School nationally and internationally in research, teaching, and innovative education; and looks forward to watching it grow from strength-to-strength as she moves into her research-focused role at Kirby.

## PUBLIC HEALTH IN UGANDA



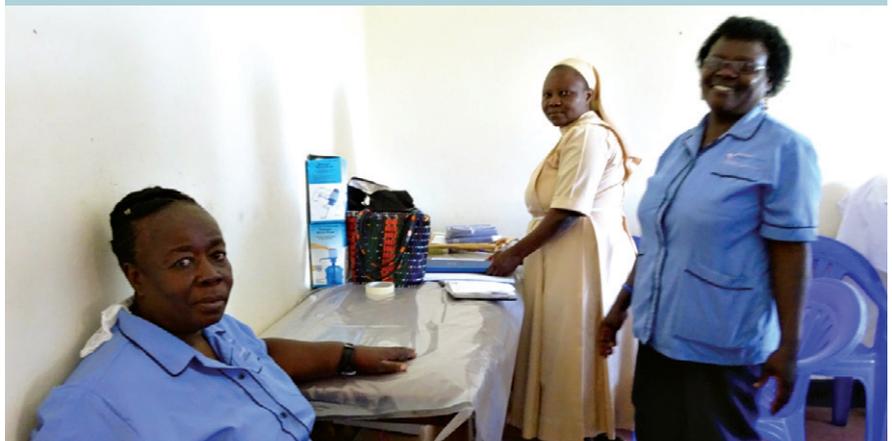
### Transforming Community Health Project: Establishing a cancer service for women

Ugandan women suffer very high rates of cancer. Cervical cancer is the most common form and is the leading cause of cancer death. Its incidence is 48/100,000 and increasing, whereas in Australia it is 7/100,000 and decreasing. The 5-year survival rate for Ugandan women is 13%, whilst among Australian women the survival rate is 72%. Breast cancer is the second most common female cancer in Uganda and it is also increasing. Incidence doubled from 1961 to 1995, and doubled again to 45/100,000 in 2015. Although incidence is much higher in high income countries, the 5-year survival rates are also significantly higher; 52% survival in Uganda, compared to 90% in Australia.

In April 2017, Professor Robyn Richmond from the School led a scoping exercise to Uganda to examine the feasibility of

establishing screening clinics for women living in rural settlements in northern Uganda. This geographical area has suffered from decades of civil war and unrest, and health services are scarce. The scoping exercise included meetings that Professor Robyn Richmond and the two Deans of Medicine at Gulu University, Dr Felix Kaducu and Associate Professor Emmanuel Moro (current and former Deans), had with various people. Including: government ministers, the Director-General, and commissioners from the Ministry of Health in Kampala; numerous nurses and midwives in the settlements in northern Uganda; 30 key stakeholders; and more than 20 senior academic staff and IT specialists from the Faculty of Medicine, including the Department of Public Health, at Gulu University.

Following the scoping exercise in April, Professor Robyn Richmond



returned to Uganda in November 2017 to set up the Transformative Community Engagement Health Project: breast and cervical cancer screening and treatment. Professor Richmond was accompanied by Professor Heather Worth from the School; Dr Terri Foran from the School of Women's and Children's Health; UNSW Sydney postgraduate students, Drs Sue Clarke, Eleanor Black and Helen Fry; and Hannah Sheridan, Senior Project Manager of the UNSW Institute of Global Development. This team worked with academic staff and postgraduate students from Gulu University on transforming the community health of women living in rural communities near Gulu Town. During this visit, Fiona Docherty, Vice President External Relations, met with the Senior Deputy Vice President of Gulu University, and accompanied the UNSW team to the settlements.

One of the major activities conducted during the UNSW November 2017 visit to northern Uganda was to establish new services for screening women for cervical and breast cancers in five health centres.

A high prevalence of human papillomavirus (HPV) among Ugandan women, combined with low screening uptake, has resulted in a high incidence rate and advanced stage disease when detected. To prevent cervical cancer deaths in Uganda, identification and treatment of precancerous lesions and early disease is vital. Screening in Uganda is erratic, opportunistic, and frequently absent; due to lack of resources and financial commitment. Lifetime screening varies by location, but rurally is as low as 5%. Pap smears are impractical in low-resource settings like Uganda, and visual inspection - followed by immediate treatment of precancerous lesions with cryotherapy - has the greatest impact and is the most cost-effective cervical cancer prevention strategy.

Similarly, although there is a national breast screening program



in Uganda, uptake is low. The lack of early detection and awareness results in a high percentage of women presenting with late stage disease, and subsequently a low survival rate. Mammography is not applicable as a means of mass screening in Uganda. There is one mammography machine in all of Uganda. It broke in 2016 and was only recently replaced. Breast self-examination is the most practical and affordable screening method. However, education is essential as women believe a breast cancer diagnosis is tantamount to a death sentence, and are unlikely to seek further investigation on finding a lump.

Capacity building was achieved in the project through the training of nurses from five health centres in northern Uganda. Staff from the Uganda Women's Health Institute (UWHI) in Kampala carried out the training. UNSW Vice Chancellor and President, Professor Ian Jacobs, established the UWHI in Kampala in 2005. UWHI staff trained 30 nurses from five health centres to be able to screen women for cervical and breast cancers. Nurses and midwives received theoretical and practical training over 2 weeks in the health centres. The training included ongoing monitoring and quality assurance. Two cryotherapy machines were purchased and donated for the immediate treatment of precancerous lesions. There were 250 women screened for cervical and breast cancer and those with precancerous lesions were treated using the new machines.

In summary, the overarching objective of this Gulu University-UNSW Sydney partnership in the Transforming Community Health project is to improve the health of women living in northern Uganda. The project's 5-year plan has a focus on women's health for the 5 years, children's health for 4 years, and mental health and non-communicable diseases for 3 years. The UNSW Sydney visit with Gulu University partners in November 2017 was the start of the significant positive impact on the health of northern Ugandan women, partly via the increased capacity of staff working in health centres in the region. The Ugandan Ministry of Health and the District Health services have been very enthusiastic about the project.

Photo on previous page at top from left to right: Fiona Docherty, Vice President External Relations UNSW; James Henry Obol, Head of the Department of Public Health in the Faculty of Medicine at Gulu University; Professor Robyn Richmond, UNSW Co-Lead of the Transforming Community Health Project; Associate Professor Emmanuel Moro, former Dean of Medicine at Gulu University and Co-Lead of the Transforming Community Health Project.

Photo on previous page at bottom: Uganda Women's Health nurses, Rose and Anet, with Dr Elizabeth from Lacor Hospital in northern Uganda

Photo on this page top: Women waiting to be screened for cervical and breast cancer at one of the health centres where the new women's cancer service was initiated

# UNSW-Indonesia Seed Grant



The UNSW-Indonesia Seed Grant was awarded to Drs Maria Agaliotis and Jerico Fransiscus Pardosi from the School; Dr Reece Hinchcliff and Dwi Linna Suswardany from the University of Technology, Sydney; and Dr Chriswardany Suryawat from Diponegoro University, Unidip. (Funding: Agaliotis, M., Pardosi, J.P., Suswardany, D.S., Hinchcliff, R.A., & Suryawati, C. "Exploring Conventional and Traditional Practices among Women with Postnatal Danger Signs in Indonesia" UNSW - Indonesia Seed Research Grant, \$10,000. Funding Period: 2016 – 2017).

The grant enabled research and teaching collaboration between group members, as well as with international agencies. The agencies involved were: the Indonesian Ministry of Health, the Indonesian Public Health Association (Ikatan Ahli Kesehatan Masyarakat Indonesia, IAKMI), and two universities (Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, UMS; and Diponegoro University, Unidip).

Such collaboration aimed to enrich public health research, education, and teaching pedagogy.

At the start of the collaboration, in October 2017, four workshops on how to carry out systematic reviews were conducted by the School in Indonesia at the Ministry of Health, IAKMI, UMS, and UniDip. These workshops involved information on planning and carrying out a basic systematic review, understanding the appropriate methods for complex data analysis, and interpreting results. The workshops also included material on disseminating and publishing systematic reviews as a processes of informing policy decision-making to important stakeholders. The collaborative group replicated these workshops in a pre-conference one-day workshop at IAKMI's annual conference in Manado. Dr Maria Agaliotis was also invited to be a guest speaker at the opening of this conference, discussing the 'Opportunities of Universal Health Care: The Australian Experience'.

Then, in November 2017, academic researchers from UMS and Undip were invited to visit the School to examine teaching (academic and clinical) and research practices. These researchers also had the opportunity to discuss their research interests with other academics in the School. During the week-long visit, current and future collaborative research projects were also discussed.

To date, the collaboration is currently in the process of finalising three publications: 1) a systematic review 'Exploring Conventional and Traditional Practices among Women with Postnatal Danger Signs', 2) a survey examining health care workers' perceptions on the barriers to postnatal care services in Indonesia, and 3) an evaluation of the workshops conducted in Indonesia. We hope that these manuscripts will be the bases of developing research proposals to target suitable research funding to continue our collaborative work.



## NEW STAFF PROFILE

### Adam Craig

My name is Adam Craig. I started at the SPHCM last November as part of the team working on the Bachelor of International Public Health (BIPH). I come to the School with 16 years of field epidemiology experience, the last nine of which have been spent working in Asia and the Pacific Islands.

After completing my undergraduate science degree, I moved to Alice Springs to take up a position with the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. This role provided me with the opportunity to travel to some of the most remote parts of Australia and work with some fantastic people – both community members and health professionals. It was in this job that I was first exposed to the principles of public health, and to social development and justice. Subsequently, I moved to Sydney where I completed a Master of Public Health at the University of Sydney; and a few years later, my public health training as part of the NSW Health Public Health Officer Training Program.

In 2009, on the wave of activity surrounding the 2009 influenza pandemic, I was fortunate enough to find a role as an epidemiologist with the World Health Organization (WHO)'s regional office in Manila, supporting the organisation and national governments in the region to upscale emergency surveillance and response systems in response to the threat. This experience provided the foundation for almost a decade of international work with agencies including the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Bank, the WHO, Abt JTA, the United Nations Development Program, the



Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and directly with a number of national governments. Since 2006, I have worked on issues related to early warning surveillance system design in the Pacific Islands, most closely with folk from Honiara (Solomon Islands), Port Vila (Vanuatu), Suva (Fiji) and Tarawa (Kiribati).

My academic career started in 2015 when I enrolled in a PhD at the University of Newcastle, later transferring to the Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney. My research interests relate to surveillance system design and health system strengthening, with a focus on small island developing state contexts.

I bring a passion for finding solutions to the development, resourcing, and systems challenges that inhibit the delivery of public health programs to populations of developing nations and look forward to working with colleagues at the SPHCM, and the UNSW Sydney more broadly, on these and other pursuits.



### CAPHIA 2017 Team Award won by Professor Raina MacIntyre's team!

Raina MacIntyre, Anita Heywood, Holly Seale, Abrar Chughtai, Bayzidur Rahman, James Wood, and Tony Newall from the School won the 2017 Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australia (CAPHIA) Team Award for Excellence and Innovation in Public Health Research.

This was for their research into personal protective equipment, which included five randomised controlled trials on facemasks respirators (five in healthcare settings, and 1 in a community setting); and a total of 25 multidisciplinary research studies (epidemiologic, behavioural, health economic, policy), the majority in A/A\* journals. CAPHIA is the peak body representing all major Australian tertiary education institutions teaching and researching public health. CAPHIA's mission is to improve the public's health by advancing public health education, research and service.

Photo From left to right: Dr Anita Heywood, Dr Holly Seale and Professor Raina MacIntyre from the School; and Professor Colleen Fisher, CAPHIA President and Chair

## WHO consultation meeting on the development of an influenza disease burden estimation tool

The impact of seasonal epidemic influenza on the populations is poorly understood, particularly in low and middle-income countries. Dr David Muscatello's research program around estimating the epidemiology of influenza in populations has led to a continuing relationship with the Global Influenza Programme of the World Health Organization (WHO). In recent years David and other international partners have been collaborating with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States in a joint project with WHO aimed at estimating global deaths and hospitalisations due to seasonal influenza. So far, the project has led to a revised annual global mortality estimate of 290,000 to 650,000 deaths associated with influenza each year.

Dr Muscatello of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine,

UNSW Medicine, joined a consultation meeting at the World Health Organization in Geneva in April 2018. The purpose of this meeting was to advise on the development of an influenza disease burden estimation tool. The tool will aim to support countries in quantifying various levels of poor health outcomes arising from annual influenza epidemics, from mild illness to death.

One of the challenges this project will face is lack of data. Even in more developed countries, there is little information on some of the health outcomes caused by influenza, such as primary care visits, hospitalisations and deaths. If it succeeds, though, the project will further support the case for influenza control in numerous countries. Further introduction of influenza vaccine may lead to hundreds of thousands of lives saved each year globally.



The meeting was for two days, and David says that he spent more time flying there and back than he did in Geneva!

## Shakif Shakur, current Masters student of the School, wins Westpac Future Leader Scholarship!

Three exceptional UNSW students have been awarded Westpac Future Leaders Scholarships worth up to \$120,000 each to undertake postgraduate study. Joseph Rowlands and Grace Constable of UNSW Science, and Shakif Shakur of UNSW Medicine, will also receive a nine-month bespoke leadership development program and international experience as part of the program, aimed at helping young Australians become future leaders.

Shakif is a junior doctor and University Medallist who is pursuing a Masters of Public Health/Masters of International Public Health with the aim of helping to improve the

health outcomes of communities experiencing disadvantage. His areas of interest include antibiotic resistance, infectious diseases, and immunisation.

"Being a migrant doctor, I hope to form relationships with research facilities overseas, perhaps paving the way for exchange of information between countries and increasing the skills of other doctors and health professionals," he says.

"The Westpac Future Leaders Scholarship sets me on an exciting journey with an incredibly motivated group of individuals. A wealth of opportunities will open up as I network with individuals and industry leaders from a range of different disciplines –



people that I would not otherwise have had a chance to meet."

An expanded version of the above text originally appeared at UNSW Newsroom.

# Dr Nicholas Osborne delivers talk on human health and climate



The Vice President of Vietnam, Her Excellency Dang Thi Ngoc Thinh, along with the Ambassador of Vietnam in Australia, His Excellency Ngo Huong Nam, visited UNSW Sydney. Along with colleagues Prof Stephen Sherwood (UNSW Climate Change Research Centre) and Prof Greg Leslie (Global Water Institute), SPHCM MPH director Dr Nick Osborne was invited to give a talk to the delegation on human health and climate, highlighting the multiple health effects from climate change in a tropical country. Her Excellency's interest in establishing a Climate Change Research Centre in Vietnam led to her wanting to visit the UNSW Climate Research Centre. Nick

Osborne has been interacting with researchers at the Climate Change Research Centre including A/Prof Donna Green, where they are planning to launch the Climate Health Partnership which aims to bring together a multidisciplinary team of climate and human health researchers across the campus to enable linkages between health and our changing climate to be explored, both in Australia and globally. A range of potential collaborations were spoken of, highlighting the existing SPHCM projects in Vietnam involving infectious disease and hospital management that could be extended to enable a climate change context to be introduced, as well as introduction of new research themes.



## Let's hear from you

We would like to keep in touch with former staff and students of the School. Please send your contributions to the editors Dr Rebecca Reynolds: [rebecca.reynolds@unsw.edu.au](mailto:rebecca.reynolds@unsw.edu.au) or Dr Christine Linhart: [c.linhart@unsw.edu.au](mailto:c.linhart@unsw.edu.au).

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