



Professor Robyn Richmond wins the coveted Peter Baume Award



Professor Robyn Richmond has won the prestigious and inaugural Peter Baume award for 'significant international impact and career achievement in public health.' For more than a quarter of a century of her academic career, the main areas of focus of Professor Richmond's public health research are:

1. Reduction of smoking among patients attending general practice, and among those attending hospital outpatients clinics
2. Evaluation of the use of a range of pharmacotherapies to assist smokers to quit (nicotine gum, nicotine patch, bupropion, nortriptyline and varenicline)
3. Reduction of risky alcohol consumption among patients attending general practice, and hospital outpatients clinics
4. Improvement of health and lifestyles and reduction in cardiovascular risk factors (smoking, risky drinking, overweight, poor nutrition and lack of physical activity) among high

risk groups in workplace settings and Indigenous people, and among disadvantaged groups such as among those with a mental illness and prisoners

5. Dissemination and evaluation of teaching curricula on tobacco control and smoking cessation in medical schools globally
6. Investigation of centenarian health and lifestyles.

Professor Richmond's research has had a significant impact in changing behaviour and practice in the following public health settings:

- General practice, and the adoption of preventive strategies and brief interventions for smoking developed as part of her research that has had a sustained effect on daily medical practice
- Prison where she leads a research team to develop and research smoking intervention programs for inmates in prisons in NSW and Queensland
- Medical schools globally where she has disseminated a tobacco curriculum which she developed for teaching medical students at UNSW and then has translated and disseminated the curriculum for medical schools globally.

A major focus of her research work has targeted disadvantaged people with high risk lifestyle behaviours including: Indigenous persons, prison inmates and people with a mental illness. She has opened up new fields of research in public health for reducing cardiovascular risk factors, whilst

significantly advancing existing areas of her research focus such as smoking cessation and reduction of risky alcohol consumption. Her involvement in these public health settings and with these targeted groups at risk shows a record of outstanding and sustained research and contribution to the development and expansion of her public health discipline in the wider community. A major theme of her activities is to apply her research and profound understanding of public health issues to teaching and training of medical students and health professionals and into public health service delivery and in policy development. Recognition of Robyn Richmond's leadership in research has led to invitations to join prestigious local and international committees and expert panels to contribute to guidelines for clinical directions in smoking cessation.

Robyn Richmond has worked for over 20 years in the international public health arena. Notably she has carried

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► Peter Baume Award

out a range of public health activities globally including development and evaluation of tobacco curricula, dissemination of tobacco curricula to medical schools worldwide, and was Australia's representative on an international non-government organisation, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases (IUATLD), which focuses on improving population health in low income countries.



The Honourable Emeritus Professor Peter Baume AC was head of the School of Community Medicine at UNSW for most of the 1990s. He was originally a physician, then a Senator for NSW, in which capacity he was Government Whip, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Health, Minister for Education and Minister Assisting the Minister for National Development. He was Chancellor of the Australian National University.

The Peter Baume Prize is given by the School of Public Health and Community Medicine for the person making the greatest public health impact in any year. Most of the money for the Prize came from teaching which was done in the University.

Baume says: "The Research Forum, at which the Prize was awarded, was of high quality and was a credit to the School. Presentations were made from many areas of the activities of the School. They demonstrated, once again, how widespread the interests of School members are, and what a high standard work in the School is at."

STAFF PROFILE

Associate Professor Heather Worth

Associate Professor Heather Worth is a sociologist. While she has a background in French social theory (she has jointly edited three volumes on the application of post-structuralist theory), she has been working on empirical projects in the field of HIV for the past 16 years. She has been at UNSW since 1983, first at the National Centre in HIV Social Research and recently has moved with her research team to the School of Public Health and Community Medicine.

Heather and her team carry out HIV social research and train researchers in Asia and the Pacific. In addition, they have developed a number of partnerships with universities and research centres in the region. Since living in Papua New Guinea in the 1980s Heather has always had an interest in that country and was overjoyed in 2006 when she received funding for a two-year research training program with the PNG Institute of Medical Research. The trainees have now graduated and the majority are working in research on HIV.

Heather is the principal investigator on two projects in PNG - the first is examining sex work and HIV risks in Port Moresby and the other will follow a cohort of HIV-positive women through their pregnancies up until weaning and focuses on why some women do accept treatment to prevent their baby being infected with HIV at birth. In Indonesia the team is training



researchers in HIV social research and carrying out research with women who inject drugs. In the Pacific, Heather's team are partnering with the Fiji School of Medicine in the newly-established Pacific HIV and STI Research Centre, and are mapping sex work across a number of Pacific Islands. In Timor Leste, Heather's team are completing a behavioural surveillance project with a qualitative component. Regionally, Heather has established a network of HIV social researchers who meet annually to share ideas and work on joint research projects.

Heather's own research interests are in global HIV policy. She has just completed a project on HIV financing and harmonisation in the Pacific with a colleague from Sydney University and has worked with colleagues from NCHECR to examine the impact of the global economic crisis on HIV in PNG and Cambodia. She is currently jointly editing a book with Professor Jung Jun of the AIDS Policy Research Centre at Tsinghua University in Beijing on the social aspects of HIV in China.

Gerry Murphy Prize winner

The family of the late Gerry Murphy FAFPHM makes a generous bequest to the Australian Faculty of Public Health Medicine to support an annual prize in his memory. Every year, each Regional Committee in the Australian States and Territories and the New Zealand Committee is asked to select an advanced trainee of the Faculty to make a presentation at the national conference the following year. The Trainee presentations are limited to 10 minutes, with 2-3 minutes for questions, and are judged by a panel of three Fellows. The prize is awarded to the best advanced trainee presentation at national level.

This year's winner was Dr Catherine Bateman Steel from the School of Public Health and Community Medicine whose presentation title was *"Trauma, Mental Illness and Anger in East Timor: the East Timor Mental Health Epidemiological Needs Study - an assessment of mental illness incorporating indigenous indices of distress."*

Dr Bateman Steel managed the study which was carried out by a team headed by Prof Derrick Silove in 2004, four years after the end of the Indonesian occupation and prior to the violence that erupted in 2006. It aimed to measure community mental health needs in the post-conflict environment in a country that had previously had no mental health services. This was one of a small minority of studies that have attempted to bridge the gap in the post-conflict trauma field between mainstream psychiatric epidemiology and more anthropological approaches.



Dr Catherine Bateman Steel on far left side

As such, the study was based on recognition of the need to measure a range of mental disorders that go beyond trauma-related conditions, to incorporate local cultural understandings, and consider broader responses to trauma that go beyond post-traumatic stress disorder. It was a two phase total population survey of a rural and an urban area that incorporated both western and indigenous screening measures.

Bateman Steel says: "Our study found that rates of psychosis and depression were similar to those found in many other developing countries but that sufferers were not brought to the attention of health professionals.

"Local cultural understandings appear to affect help-seeking as those with psychosis often attributed their illness to supernatural or spiritual causes and would see a healer.

"The rates of post traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) were much lower than expected, and also lower than the rates found in an earlier study immediately

after the end of the conflict, which suggested that the years of peace had brought spontaneous recovery to many."

However, the PTSD rates that remained still represented a substantial burden of suffering in the community.

Anger attacks were also commonly experienced, and at a high rate, similar to the rate found in psychiatric clinical samples in western settings, adding weight to arguments that suggest responses to trauma go beyond PTSD.

The results suggested that in the post-conflict development context attention should be focussed on those with ongoing symptoms of post-traumatic stress which do not resolve spontaneously with the establishment of peace, and that those with psychosis should not be overlooked. Anger, and the links to past trauma, and ongoing social frustrations, and the potential for these phenomena to fuel cycles of violence, warrants further investigation.

Professor Siaw-Teng Liaw

Professor Siaw-Teng Liaw has been appointed Professor of General Practice and Director of the Sydney Southwest Area Health Service (SSWAHS) General Practice Unit, based at Fairfield Hospital. Professor Liaw is an academic GP and health informatician. Before taking up his position at the UNSW in February 2009, he was Professor of Rural Health and Professor of Health Informatics at the University of Melbourne. He is married to Gladys and their son, Sean, is currently doing his legal practice course with the Victorian College of Law in Melbourne.

Professor Liaw has expertise and experience with quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, including factorial vignette surveys, data modelling and clinical trials, as applied to clinical, health services, decision support systems and informatics research and education in urban and rural settings. His interests centre on the safety, quality and integration of information and care across primary and secondary care settings in the clinical domains of chronic disease management (especially diabetes, stroke and asthma), therapeutics and prescribing, falls prevention and human genetics – with a focus on indigenous and cross-cultural health in general practice and primary care. He has particular interest in the safe and ethical linkage of routinely collected clinical information for audit, clinical practice and research purposes. He has published widely in his area of expertise which includes health informatics, integrated primary care, chronic disease management, quality use of medicines and research methodologies.

Professor Liaw was the 2005-2007 President of the Australian College



Professor Siaw-Teng Liaw second from the left side

of Health Informatics (ACHI) and currently a Council member and Chair of the ACHI Education Committee. In this capacity he is engaged with the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing in the development of a national strategic work plan on health informatics education and training. He is also currently a member of the NHMRC Human Genetics Advisory Committee, National Prescribing Service Pharmaceutical Decision Support Working Group and the RACGP National Research, Evaluation and Ethics Committee. He sits on a number of peer-review panels for competitive grants and scientific conferences as well as editorial boards of general practice and health informatics journals.

Professor Liaw plans to build on the current track record of the SSWAHS General Practice Unit and establish it as an academic centre of excellence for primary and integrated care informatics, focused on chronic disease management and self-management. A number of informatics projects have been initiated as part of the Sydney South West Integration Project (SSWIP), a collaborative project involving

the SSWAHS, Divisions of General Practice and UNSW and funded by the Australian Better Health Initiative. A collaborative partnership is being developed with the UNSW Centre of Health Informatics, focused on informatics-enhanced chronic disease self-management and the analysis of data extracted from general practice information systems.

As an integral part of the SSWAHS, Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity, local Divisions of General Practice and regional GP training programs, the GPU is strategically placed to develop innovative and test health services and informatics applications relevant and useful to health service, primary care and general practice environments. Constructive collaborations are being developed with units/centres within the University of New South Wales and other Australian Universities.

Consultation Role Play assessment in Primary Care Phase 3 Medicine

Effective communication is one of the graduate capabilities of the medicine program at UNSW. Recognising that communication skills are a crucial part of the overall skills that all doctors should possess, an innovative approach to developing and assessing these skills is being used in Phase 3 Primary Care in the UNSW undergraduate medical program. This involves students spending eight weeks attached to a General Practice. They are supervised by an experienced GP, and are also encouraged to spend some time with local community health services, such as allied health practitioners. The students are able to follow patients through an extended series of consultations, and get a better feeling for the long term relationships that GPs are able to form with their patients.

Students are also exposed to a large amount of general and undifferentiated illness, which requires GP specific consultation and communication styles. In addition, they observe firsthand the pressures that people in the community face with access to health services, and meeting such costs. Dr Meredith Makeham is the Course Convenor for Phase 3 Primary Care. She observes that: "This term is an opportunity for students to consider the challenges GPs and their patients face in terms of deciding when expensive health services or treatments should be used. It is also an opportunity to learn about a wide range of medical presentations and problems that are unique to community medicine, as many common presentations in general practice are not managed in a hospital setting."

One of the assessments that is undertaken during this term is the Consultation Role Play. Students are given 20 minutes to take a history and

manage a patient, played by an actor. They are assessed by an experienced GP, who marks their performance across a range of communication skills and patient assessment and management capabilities.

Dr Makeham says: "The use of an experienced actor is important in order to simulate a real life patient reaction to the communication style and medical management discussion that the student engages in with their patient. The actor and GP discuss the student's performance after the assessment for a few minutes, and then the student is called back into the room and given immediate feedback on their performance. Students generally find this a very constructive assessment, and it is positioned half way through the term to guide their further learning during their remaining four weeks of general practice attachment."

Overall the use of actors from the start of this year to role play the general practice patients has been very successful – actors, GPs and students have all been very happy with this assessment so far.

Dr Makeham says: "It does require an amount of administrative organisation to consider issues like running multiple cases in such a way that students aren't able to have an unfair advantage if they are assessed later in the day and have heard about the topics of earlier cases. This assessment is a good discriminator of communication skills, and I'd recommend it as a method for anyone looking for ways of better assessing this capability."



Dr Meredith Makeham
Senior Lecturer in General Practice

Master of Public Health program revamped

The School's flagship program – the Master of Public Health (MPH) – has been revised to make it even more relevant to public health practitioners as well as being made more flexible to fit in with the busy schedules of people working in the health care area.

The MPH has been widely recognised as essential for a career in such areas as international health, research, infectious disease control, health promotion, primary health care, policy formulation, and management of health programs. Many of our graduates occupy key positions in health services and universities in Australia, the Western Pacific and Asian regions.

This program is designed to address the continuing education needs of specialists in public health as well as providing a general orientation to public health issues and methods for health professionals.

Director of the MPH Program



The director of the Public Health Program, A/Professor Mary-Louise McLaws, is an epidemiologist specialising in infectious diseases

control. Her national study of healthcare associated infection in 1986 was ground-breaking for Australia, as was the first pilot of a standardised surveillance system for healthcare infections developed on behalf of NSW Health, which won her the 1999 Baxter-Australian Healthcare Association Healthcare Innovation Award. She has been a World Health Organization adviser to both the Chinese and Malaysian Ministries of Health on their national surveillance systems for healthcare associated infections and collaborated with the Beijing Health Bureau on a review of the SARS outbreak in Beijing.

Mary-Louise says: "Our MPH has been a strong program and with the revisions we have now introduced it will give students more flexibility to focus on their areas of interest for their professional development and will improve their work readiness. We have ensured our plans focus on the expertise that our academics bring to the program. All the plans have international relevance while fulfilling our country's training requirements. We have reduced the number of cores essential to training in public health which has now allowed health professionals to undertake a wider number of courses that will prepare them with specific knowledge and skills for careers in one of the four focal areas."

MPH Specialisations

Students who wish to specialise may select one of the following focuses of strength within the School:

- MPH in Infectious Diseases Epidemiology and Control
- MPH in International Health
- MPH in Health Promotion
- MPH in Primary Health Care
- MPH in Indigenous Health (proposed)

Program Structure

The revised MPH consists of eight courses - three core and five elective courses - and can be completed in one year of full-time study. It is available in full-time, part-time and distance modes. For most distance courses, there are residential workshops at the Kensington campus twice a year in February/March and July. The program also includes a Graduate Certificate and Diploma in Public Health.

The Core Courses from 2010 onwards are:

- PHCM9041 Foundations in Public Health and Health Care Systems
- PHCM9012 Health Promotion and Social Perspectives in Health
- PHCM9498 Epidemiology and Statistics for Public Health

Electives

Students can study a broad range of electives or focus on areas of interest and professional relevance. Students may also enrol in electives offered by other schools and academic units within the UNSW, as well as approved courses offered by other universities.

Mary-Louise says: "Our academics have previously led the way in teaching via external mode and offshore. They have used workshops, teleconferencing, expert guest lecturers and excellent take-home learning activities. Time appears to be contracting for academics as well as for busy students. Knowledge is not sufficient - the love of learning is the ultimate learning experience. So our current focus is on more creative use of on-line teaching technology that can free up more 'student focused' learning time in the MPH. This technology – such as video presentations from experts in the field - can allow our MPH students to gain invaluable opportunities to learn from a wider variety of experts at their own pace and at a time that best suits their work commitments."

Master of Public Health/ Master of Health Management

There is also the opportunity to undertake a combined degree in Public Health and Health Management which can be completed full-time over 18 months.

Further information

For further information contact us or visit our website:

Email: postgrad-sphcm@unsw.edu.au
Web: www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au

Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Projects Successes

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CROSS CULTURAL ISSUES IN NON-PHARMACEUTICAL PROTECTION OF FRONT LINE RESPONDERS TO PANDEMIC INFLUENZA AND EMERGING INFECTIONS

Prof CR MacIntyre, Prof DE Dwyer, A/Prof PT Nga, Prof NM Ferguson, A/Prof M McLaws, Prof L Maher, Dr H Seale, Dr JG Wood, Dr AT Newall

Collaborating Partner: 3M Australia Pty Ltd
Administering Organisation:
The University of New South Wales

Project Summary: The protection of front line responders in a pandemic is essential to underpin an effective response. This research is the only work internationally which will address a key gap in evidence. This research has major implications for the national stockpile and for management of front line responders in a pandemic. These data are urgently needed, not just in Australia, but globally to inform pandemic planning and disease control policy around emerging infections and bioterrorism

2009: \$37,500
2010: \$67,500
2011: \$55,000
2012: \$25,000

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA, HUMAN RESOURCES AND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEPENDENCIES: MITIGATING THE IMPACT ON HOSPITALS

Prof CR MacIntyre, A/Prof PK Ray, A/Prof S Goldstein, Prof P Barach, Mr RL Itzwerth, Dr JG Wood

Collaborating Partner:
Australian Centre for Health Research
Administering Organisation:
The University of New South Wales

Project Summary: Pandemic planning is conducted from a health-centric model which only considers subsystems within health. This study will determine the impact of a pandemic on the hospital system by failures of human resources and external systems (such as power, finance and telecommunications) which comprise critical infrastructure of society. The results will enable identification of key weak points, strengthening of health systems and resilience in the event of a pandemic or other disruption

2009: \$35,000
2010: \$70,000
2011: \$70,000
2012: \$35,000

SEXUAL HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUNG INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Mr JS Ward, Dr H Worth, Prof A Smith, Ms D Thiele, Prof J Kaldor, Dr J Bryant, Prof MK Pitts

Project Summary: Despite higher notified rates of sexually transmissible infections and blood borne viruses and often negative depictions of young indigenous people, very little is known of the health and well being of young Indigenous people. This project will for the first time provide a national profile of risk behaviours, levels of knowledge and the types of health services young Indigenous people access for sexual health and blood borne viruses. The findings of this research will set the foundations for a longer term strategy to ensure trends and behaviours can be identified among the population and where necessary interventions can be implemented

\$755,000 (ARC) + \$264,000 (partners)

SPHCM success in NHMRC H1N1 “swine flu” grant round SPHCM researchers have won 2 out of 41 grants awarded in this round

Professor Raina MacIntyre of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine was awarded \$337,563 for a clinical trial “Efficacy of face masks against H1N1 swine influenza”, being the third largest grant awarded in the funding round; and Dr James Wood of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine was awarded \$78,050 for a mathematical modelling study, “Optimal use of vaccine to mitigate a second wave of H1N1 2009 influenza in Australia”.

Prof MacIntyre’s study aims to determine the efficacy of surgical masks compared to N95 masks in health care workers in the prevention of H1N1 swine influenza. This is a crucial gap in evidence and builds on her previous work on face masks. Hospital health care workers (HCWs) are in the front line and key to effective pandemic responses. Their protection, therefore is paramount, not just from a disease control perspective, but for maintenance of essential services. Face masks are one of the key non-pharmaceutical interventions for protection of HCWs, although data supporting their efficacy is limited. Hospitals are a setting where respiratory virus outbreaks are amplified. Transmission of influenza within closed institutions is a recognized problem, and one which results in significant morbidity and costs. With her collaborators Prof Dominic Dwyer, Prof Wang Quany and Dr Holly Seale, she will run a prospective, 2-armed cluster randomized trial of mask use in frontline

health care workers during the winter of 2009 to 2010 (December to January) in Beijing, China.

Dr Wood’s study will use mathematical modelling to determine the optimal use of vaccines against H1N1 swine flu. An effective vaccine will provide the greatest reduction of morbidity of any proposed control measures during the 2nd wave of the current pandemic. The Australian government has made a substantial investment by ordering a large quantity of H1N1 vaccine and it is important that this is used to greatest effect. The epidemiology of the current epidemic is likely to differ significantly from seasonal influenza with the consequence that current vaccine recommendations may not be optimal. Our team will develop mathematical models incorporating the most current epidemiological information to aid policy makers in making recommendations for vaccine allocations.

School award winners for 2008

The following staff were recognised for their valuable contributions to the activities of the School during 2008:

PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL CATEGORY:

Evidence of sustained outstanding performance in 2008

1. **Karin Banna:** Innovation and leadership
2. **Bruce Long:** Support for Research Outcomes
3. **Susan Zhang:** Support for Teaching Outcome

TEACHING CATEGORY:

Evidence of excellent student feedback and CATEI scores in 2008

1. **Chris Hughes:** Outstanding contribution to teaching and learning
2. **Edna Koritschoner:** Excellence in undergraduate teaching
3. **Anne Bunde-Birouste:** Excellence in postgraduate coursework teaching

RESEARCH CATEGORY:

Young Investigator Prize: Showing significant research impact in 2008

1. **Dr Anthony Newall**

Peter Baume Public Health Impact Prize – significant international impact and career achievement in public health in 2008

1. **Professor Maree Teeson:** Highly commended
2. **A/Professor Mary-Louise McLaws:** Highly commended

SPHCM PhD prize – for best PhD thesis submitted in 2008

1. **Dr Tim Shortus**

PUBLICATIONS CATEGORY:

Paper published in a peer reviewed journal, taking into account journal impact factor, citations and public health impact

1. **Dr Mohammed Mohsin:** Best peer reviewed publication by conjoint



Bruce Long receiving award from Peter Baume



Maree Teeson receiving award from Peter Baume



Anthony Newall receiving award from Peter Baume

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 editor, Kevin Forde: k.forde@unsw.edu.au

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Opinions expressed in the articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of New South Wales. Information was correct at the time of publication but is liable to change. Please visit the School website for the latest information: www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au

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