



Professor Raina MacIntyre, Alan Hodgkinson, Associate Professor Andrew Cole and Dr Stephen Judd

New Chair in Positive Ageing and Care

In August 2010, HammondCare and UNSW signed a five-year agreement to fund and appoint a new Chair of Positive Ageing and Care in the School of Community Medicine and Public Health, based at Hammondville. This person will be the academic champion of a new unit for research, teaching and clinical care, across multiple disciplines of rehabilitation and aged care medicine and nursing, and allied health services, including exercise physiology and psychology. UNSW SPHCM supports the medical stream, UNSW Exercise Physiology the allied health stream, and UOW nursing supports the nursing stream.

Andrew Cole, Conjoint Associate Professor at SPHCM, says: "The main emphasis of aged care medicine until now has been in the geriatric units and community outreach arms, based in large teaching hospitals. While this has brought a welcome focus on problem-solving in elderly people presenting to hospital with medical problems, it is clearly a reactive system, which deals

primarily with the small fraction of elderly people who develop serious medical issues.

"Once admitted to hospital, it requires a major effort to restore a majority of these people to some semblance of their previous lives, and many never return home, instead requiring admission to aged care facilities for nursing support. In short, a system that deals with many unhappy older people, but still only with a very small percentage of the whole aged care group."

What about the 98% of older people who do not need to use hospital services? How can we help people to age in the most healthy way possible, focusing on health maintenance and healthy exercise and nutrition programs? A small group within SPHCM with interest in these problems convened in 2007, but there seemed little hope of progress until late 2009.

At that time, the Department of Health and Ageing recognised that teaching

hospitals had reached saturation levels for teaching of healthcare students in medicine, nursing and allied health disciplines. At the start of 2010, funding applications to build new teaching facilities in aged care and subacute healthcare centres were submitted, and HammondCare received nearly \$5 million, to be spent between now and mid 2013. A new first-stage building at

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► Positive Ageing and Care

Hammondville costing \$1.35 million will be completed in December 2010. On-site student teaching commences in early 2011.

Individuals living both within the Hammond Village and in the surrounding community will be able to access a suite of preventative and restorative health and treatment services. This will hopefully avoid hospital admission for many, and maintain all in the best possible health, as they live and age in their at-home settings. Research will be aimed at developing the best models of community care and support for the burgeoning elderly population of the future.

The academic who eventually fills the Chair will have a substantial clinical consultant role at HammondCare's facilities, as well as being the champion for the development of community-based aged and disabled care research and teaching of students at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. An appointment is expected to be made early next year.

UNSW SPHCM and HammondCare are privileged to be involved at the leading edge of aged care service research and development, in an academic environment unique on Australia's east coast.



Professor Peter Smith, Dean of UNSW Medicine and Dr Stephen Judd, HammondCare Chief Executive



Dean's Rising Star Holly Seale

Holly Seale was recently awarded the Dean of Medicine's Rising Star Award. Holly's role at the SPHCM includes a large program of research, supervision of students, school service and teaching/course development. In 2010, she was successfully appointed to the position of Co-Director for the Public Health Officer Training Program.

As an infectious disease public health researcher, Holly's research has focused on community and healthcare professional's knowledge, attitudes and practices around viruses and contagion, vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases, and annual/pandemic influenza. She is also involved in a number of clinical trials on the effectiveness of non-pharmaceutical interventions against respiratory infections.

Holly is a Chief Investigator (CI) on an ARC linkage grant and on a NHMRC strategic influenza grant. Aside from being an Assistant Investigator on a number of other studies and trials, she has successfully completed a number of her own research projects.

Holly says: "My most significant work to date was a series of community based surveys during the H1N1 pandemic. In response to the WHO announcement of a pandemic, I designed and developed a study protocol and was proactive in obtaining rapid ethics approval for the H1N1-related survey (within three days of the upgrade). This study was the first to commence and amongst the earliest to be published."

During the pandemic, Holly undertook a number of studies focused on different risk groups including, health care workers in Australia and China, and GPs in Australia. She also initiated an innovative study which tracked student and staff risk perceptions and behaviours during the pandemic.

Since 2009, Holly has published 22 papers, with 14 as the first author. She has a further 5 papers currently submitted or under review. One study she completed on pandemic influenza has been cited 8 times since publication in 2009. In 2010, she was the recipient of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine's Young Investigator of the Year award, and The Public Health Education and Research Trust (PHERT) Immunisation Scholarship, a national award for vaccination research, presented at the 2010 Public Health Association of Australia Immunisation conference. More recently, Holly was successful in obtaining a four year NHMRC post-doctoral training fellowship.

Raina MacIntyre, head of the SPHCM, in supporting Holly's nomination, said: "Holly is a highly productive young researcher, still aged under 30 years, who has an excellent track record of research output. Her publication rate is extremely high, and I am not aware of any other young post-doctoral researcher who has published as much at SPHCM. She also contributes a huge amount of her time to teaching and service, and sits on numerous committees for the school, UNSW and beyond."

Postgraduate Student Research Conference highlights



The 8th Annual Postgraduate Student Research Conference was held on the 22nd of October 2010 at the John Niland (SCIENTIA) Building at the UNSW Kensington Campus and will be the last one to be held in the current format. Next year the postgraduate conference will be held concurrently with the School's research showcase day.

A range of postgraduate students including those enrolled in PhD, DrPH, and MPhil, from the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical research, Australian Institute of Health Innovation and Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity were involved. Seventeen presentations were given in four sessions which covered improving health outcomes, drug and alcohol, diverse public health challenges, and health service management and delivery. Nine of the trainees enrolled in the NSW Public Health Officer

Training Program presented in two dedicated sessions. The last session of the day involved the oral presentation finalists. In a pre-judging session, the top five abstracts were selected for this session. Five very high quality presentations were given by Paul Nelson (PhD), Tuan Anh Nguyen (PhD), Ben Polkinghorne (DrPH), Jan Gralton (PhD) and Deborah Debono (PhD).

Congratulations to the following presenters who were recipients of prizes:

- **First prize:** Jan Gralton - *Coughing and breathing produces airborne particles containing viral RNA*
- **Highly commended:** Deborah Debono - *Using workarounds to "get the job done"*

As a special bonus for the students, this year's conference included a discussion session on 'How to get published'. Chaired by Anthony Zwi and with panel members included Raina

MacIntyre, Juliet Richters, Jan Ritchie, and Jo Spangaro, common concerns and issues around publishing were debated and tackled.

Thank you to everyone involved for making it such an enjoyable and interesting day, particularly those of you who came along to support the students. Special thanks go to the staff members who acted as chairs, discussants, pre-judges and judges: Kristy Martire, Alan Hodgkinson, Niamh Stephenson, Anita Heywood, Mary-Louise McLaws, Sarah Jacob, Matt Dunn, Anthony Newell, Nick Zwar, Catherine Webster, Rod O'Connor, Siranda Torvaldsen, Lynne Madden, David Muscatello, Holly Seale, Lisa Jackson-Pulver, James Wood, Juliet Richters.

Thanks also go to Anthony Zwi, Raina MacIntyre, Jan Ritchie, and Jo Spangaro for the informative publication session.



Filling the Gap

Most Aboriginal people do not have the opportunity to enjoy the same level of oral health and dental care as most other Australians. In fact, the majority of Aboriginal Australians have not seen a dentist in many years. Muru Marri Indigenous Health Unit at SPHCM – recognising the dire consequences to health of not having a healthy and operationally sound mouth, contribute to the workings of the volunteer-based ‘Filling the Gap’ Indigenous Dental Program by providing academic support and being members of the Filling the Gap board of directors.

The program started when a local Sydney dentist was talking about volunteering overseas and was asked simply: “Why go overseas, when there is great need here?” So - to meet a community identified need, several Sydney-based activists began exploring the possibility of recruiting volunteer dentists.

A partnership was established between the Wuchopperen Health Service based in Cairns, a number of community advocates based in Sydney, and ourselves, with the aim of reducing the more than 12-month wait for dental treatment. An additional aim was to provide continuity of care until the needs of the community could be met through recruiting and training permanent dental staff.

From its beginnings in January 2006 to December 2009, the program, which provides services from the Base Clinic of Wuchopperen’s Oral Health Unit in Cairns as well as a mobile dental van, has recruited over 125 dentists and



The Wuchopperen Board of Directors, with Lisa Jackson Pulver (far right) and Marion Norrie (centre)

several dental hygienists from across Australia who together have provided more than 6,000 episodes of care.

The original 12-month wait to see a dentist at Wuchopperen has long gone, and for most of 2008 and 2009 there has been an almost full-time dental service provided at the Base Clinic in Cairns. Wuchopperen’s Mobile Outreach Dental Van has also been able to sustain and expand services to communities on the Atherton Tablelands, Innisfail and beyond.

A significant benefit of the program has been its capacity to provide volunteer dental professionals the opportunity to ‘give something back’ of their knowledge and skills to others, and to gain a powerful experience of the critical health issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples first-hand.

A secondary effect has been the mentoring available to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dental assistants who have trained at

the service, with one having entered university to study dentistry, and others since qualifying as dental hygienists or completing further training.

The Oral Health Unit’s Practice Manager, Ms Marion Norrie, is also now a valued conjoint academic at the SPHCM

Muru Marri has just finished and printed the first of many ongoing and inbuilt evaluations of this program. In fact, Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver presented the first printed evaluation to the Wuchopperen Board on the 18th November. The community report will be launched in early 2011.

The report and associated papers are available at: www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/sphcmweb.nsf/page/mmihuh



Marion Norrie with the 2010 planner showing just how full the clinic was with volunteer dental health professionals



Marion Norrie with the 2011 planner showing how many dental visits are already booked

Promoting effective eye care



From 18 – 22 October 2010, the School of Public Health and Community Medicine hosted a five day workshop on health promotion presented in partnership with the Fred Hollows Foundation. The course was attended by 18 international health professionals from Laos and Cambodia. All participants work within the field of eye health and are involved in developing health promotion strategies for reducing preventable blindness in remote areas of Laos and Cambodia.

This course was aimed at developing the participants' capacity for designing best practice health promotion initiatives to reduce preventable blindness and unnecessary vision loss among disadvantaged population groups in their countries.

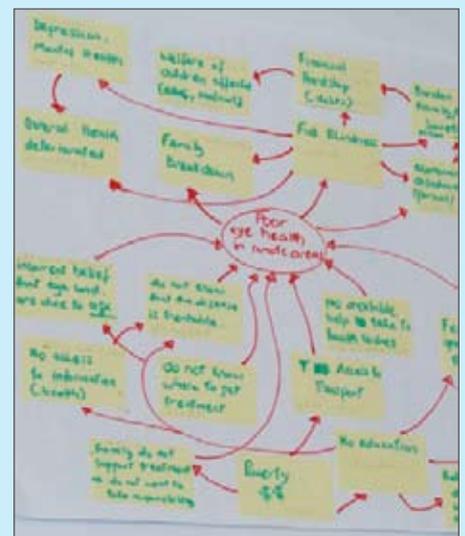
The course was designed and delivered by Anne Bunde-Birouste and Dr Husna Razee. Husna says: "A key outcome of this course was the preparation of proposals by participants based on best practice health promotion principles that were targeted at addressing a priority eye health issue. These proposals were presented at the end of the workshop and participants will develop these proposals further when they get home and seek funding to implement them."

Each participant group identified key issues related to effective eye health care in their provinces or regions. A major challenge identified in Laos was the role of gate keeper, which in this case is the Village Chief. Participants felt that ownership by the Village Chief of any Eye Health Program would be crucial to its success. Consequently, they applied their learning of best practice health promotion strategies in community empowerment and advocacy from the course to design a health promotion intervention that would be endorsed by the Village Chief.

Husna says: "Evaluation of the course suggested there was a high level of satisfaction with its content and delivery. Key strengths identified

by participants were the diversity of experiences of participants themselves, the multidisciplinary perspectives presented in the course, and the range of topics covered."

The genesis of this course emanated from relations developed between the Fred Hollows Program Coordinator and Anne and Husna when she was studying at SPHCM as a Master of Public Health student. This is an excellent example of the impact of our programs and the lasting relationships which develop with our students.



Improving the quality of human resources for health information

The latest publication of the Human Resources for Health (HRH) Knowledge Hub at SPHCM is titled: *A focus on the providers of maternal, neonatal and reproductive health care and services at community level in selected Asia and Pacific countries*. This discussion paper, written by Dr Angela Dawson, highlights the need for information about the health workforce to make assessments concerning HRH productivity, their competence and responsiveness to patient needs.

Angela says: "A profiling exercise of personnel involved in maternal, neonatal and reproductive health (MNRH) at community levels in 10 countries in the Asia and Pacific regions identified a number of significant knowledge gaps concerning the management of this workforce, their education and training, and the relevant policies guiding all of these processes."

The information gathered was pieced together from a range of sources that were often different in their perspective and contained conflicting information. The quality of the information was also variable, which is reflected in the range of methods employed in project evaluations, consultant reviews, research studies as well as regional and national health data. This highlights the fact that HRH indicators for staff engaged in MNRH at the community level are not well defined and that information is not routinely or systematically collected, analysed and managed.

To improve access to, and the quality of, community level HR information, the information needs of health workers engaged in MNRH provision must be considered, as well as the information requirement of managers with responsibility for planning and coordinating service delivery. This will enable the development of an

information system that is tailored to the requirements of the health system and the particular socio-cultural context. In a decentralised setting this needs to be accompanied by the development of appropriate indicators, training and partnerships with those engaged at community level, and stakeholders across the state and non-state sectors.

Angela says: "A number of recommendations were made regarding what HRH information is needed at community level in all aspects of MNRH and the indicators that are most useful in this context. In addition, some suggestions were made concerning how this HRH information should be collected, shared and supported. For example, it is clear that appropriate training in data collection, management, analysis and reporting should be planned, along with protocols for delivery and the application of required information. This will assist the development of key indicators to specify information to achieve standardisation and a systematic approach to collection and analysis."

To guarantee timely, reliable, detailed and consistent community-level workforce data, HRH information systems need to be strengthened at district, provincial and national levels. This involves the collaboration of the public, private, faith-based and NGO sectors. A coordinated effort by the Ministries of Health, Finance and Education ensures that information from all indicator areas across the public sector can be collated. In many countries in the Asia and Pacific region there is an active private, faith-based and NGO sector whose data collection systems are not always apparent or included in national systems. Standard indicators as well as regular dialogue with these sectors will improve the quality and sharing of HRH data.

This highlights the need for donors and NGOs to take on the responsibility of quality HRH data collection, management and exchange as a routine part of their country programs. In addition, donors have a responsibility to contribute to the strengthening of national information systems through direct investment in health systems research and development work that is rigorously documented and widely disseminated to all stakeholders.

A web version of this paper can be downloaded from www.hrhub.unsw.edu.au/HRHweb.nsf/page/Publications

The HRH Knowledge Hub would like to thank and farewell Dr Angela Dawson who is leaving to take up a research position in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at UTS. Angela has been a senior research fellow within the Hub since 2008. She has been one of the Hub's most avid researchers, using her expertise to generate a wealth of knowledge and publications in the area of maternal, neonatal and reproductive health. She has also been supervising three PhD students: Ellie Black, Ponndara Ith and Rachel Nichols.

Described by her colleagues as 'a breath of fresh air, energetic, innovative and fast', Angela leaves big shoes to fill and will certainly be missed.

Cleaner hands in Viet Nam

Sharon Salmon, a PhD candidate in the SPHCM, is currently conducting a research project to improve hand hygiene compliance in a sample of nine health care facilities across Viet Nam. Sharon's supervisors are Professor Didier Pittet, who leads the WHO First Global Patient Safety Challenge, and Associate Professor Mary-Louise McLaws from SPHCM.

This exciting research project is the first to evaluate the implications of hand hygiene on health care associated infections across Viet Nam. Sharon has developed excellent working relations with Dr Nguyen Quoc Anh (Director-Bach Mai Hospital, Hanoi), Dr Nguyen Viet Hung (Hospital Epidemiologist, Bach Mai Hospital) and Dr Le Thi Anh Thu (Hospital Epidemiologist, Cho Ray Hospital, Ho Chi Minh City). Sharon says: "We are also looking forward to having the eminent infectious diseases physician and infection control expert Dr Paul Anantharajah Tambyah from Singapore who will be collaborating with us over the next few years."

On 30 September 2010 the project was launched with a conference in Hanoi attended by over 250 delegates. Presentations were delivered outlining the need for the current research and the importance of improving hand hygiene in health care facilities. The climax of the event was the formal pledge signed by representatives from the chosen 9 project sites from tertiary and provincial health care facilities.

In addition to the project launch conference, a 4-day technical hand hygiene and health care associated infection training program was provided to the selected participants from project



Associate Professor Mary-Louise McLaws (second from left) and Sharon Salmon with other members of the project team

facilities by the WHO World Alliance for Patient Safety, in collaboration with the UNSW and Bach Mai Hospital.

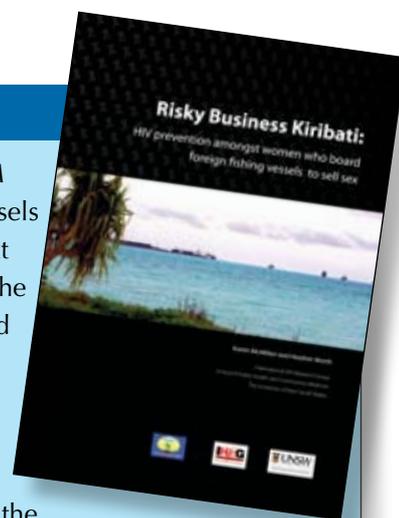
Sharon and the team from Bach Mai Hospital will now begin their journey across Viet Nam to start implementing the protocol and start collecting data for analysis using WHO hand hygiene and locally developed tools.

Sharon says: "This research project would not be possible without the support we received from the Ministry of Health, Viet Nam which has a commitment to improving hand hygiene across Viet Nam; Bach Mai Hospital for administration of the support received from the US-Singapore intergovernmental organisation Regional Emerging Diseases Centre, B-Braun Asia-Pacific Medical Industry and SDS Viet Nam Medical Industry for providing funding to support training and project launch events, and for supplying medical products for use during the project period."



Risky Business Kiribati

Karen McMillan and Heather Worth from the International HIV Research Group at SPHCM have published a report on HIV prevention amongst women who board foreign fishing vessels to sell sex. This report documents the findings of a qualitative investigation into the context of HIV vulnerability and risk for women who engage in sex work on board foreign boats. The research aims to inform HIV prevention strategies and programs for this group, and is based on fieldwork carried out between February and August 2010 in Tarawa, Kiribati. In-depth interview data were gathered from 25 young women in South Tarawa who talked about their lives with a specific focus on their experiences and sexual relationships with foreign seafarers on board fishing vessels. Heather says: "The research contributes to a larger regional project investigating sex work, HIV prevention and transmission risk behaviour in the Pacific that is currently being undertaken by the International HIV Research Group of the University of New South Wales."



Recent research grants

Dr Niamh Stephenson of SPHCM has been successful in receiving two ARC grants. One with Dr Catherine J Mills is for *An analysis of foetal imaging and the ethics of the selective termination of pregnancy* and is for \$193,000 over 2011-2013.



The other grant of \$293,000 over 2011-2013 is with Dr Mark D Davis and Professor Paul Flowers and is titled *Using a biosocial approach to advance pandemic influenza control*. This Discovery Project will examine how Australia responded to H1N1 2009 (Swine flu) and similar outbreaks, so that we can better prepare for future pandemics. Using in-depth interviews with everyday Australians and policy-makers, document analysis, and policy research workshops, the Project will investigate the conditions of everyday life that influence how Australians think, feel and act with regard to pandemic influenza.



Professor Robyn Richmond from SPHCM is part of a team which received a \$436,085 NHMRC grant to *Follow-up of Healthy Lifestyles Intervention for Cardiovascular Disease among People with a Psychotic Disorder*.

Congratulations to both Niamh and Robyn for the hard work they have put in to obtain these grants.

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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