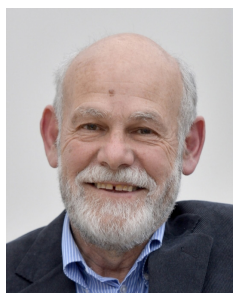


Editorial



John Wakerman



John Humphreys

“A bientôt and thank you”

This is the final newsletter of the Centre of Research Excellence in Rural and Remote Primary Health Care (CRERRPHC). With the demise of the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) Strategy and the consequent closure of the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI), funding for the CRERRPHC ends this year.

The funding provided to the CRERRPHC by the Australian Government has enabled landmark research to be undertaken on key primary health care issues relating to workforce and service provision, and the effectiveness of primary health care in bringing about improved health outcomes for non-metropolitan Australians.

The CRERRPHC has undoubtedly made a significant difference to understanding the factors underpinning the health issues characterising rural and remote Australia, generating more than one-hundred peer-reviewed publications in national and international journals. It has been particularly active in translating these research findings into rural and remote health policy and practice, including several reviews and government strategies.

Importantly too, the CRERRPHC has been extremely successful in research capacity

building, training both primary health care workers in research skills and evaluation, graduating PhD students, and assisting post-doctoral students to gain experience in undertaking policy-relevant work.

The long-term funding enabled researchers to investigate some of the most complex and seemingly intractable issues confronting the goal of providing equitable access to health care in rural and remote Australia. Academic researchers worked closely with rural and remote communities, Indigenous Australians, rural and remote health organisations, professional bodies, policy-makers and health service planners, and the Australian, State and Territory governments to investigate priority issues.

Many CRERRPHC staff have provided advice to government enquiries and task-forces, assisted universities and health organisations to become more strategic in their education, training and research programs, and most importantly, advocated nationally for better rural and remote health outcomes.

During 2015, many stakeholders contacted the CRERRPHC for assistance, to indicate the value of research undertaken, to seek assistance, to join in research collaborations, to participate in reference and advisory groups, and to speak at numerous conferences and workshops.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all these stakeholders for their support and assistance throughout the five-years' of activities comprising the CRERRPHC research program.

Much more rural and remote health research is required, and CRERRPHC researchers will continue to be active in undertaking it, albeit in a more piece-meal manner and without the capacity possible from maintaining a multi-institutional research centre that included staff from the Monash University School of Rural Health in Bendigo and Gippsland, the Flinders and Charles Darwin Universities Centre for

Remote Health in Alice Springs and Darwin, and the University of Sydney Department of Rural Health in Broken Hill.

The CRERRPHC would like to thank the Australian Government for funding its activities over the past five years, particularly those bureaucrats and ministers who have taken so much interest and provided so much support to facilitate the research program. No doubt its legacy will be long-standing, since its outcomes demonstrate how indispensable rigorous research evidence is to generating relevant policies and programs instrumental in bringing about improved rural and remote health outcomes.

Professor John Wakerman

Emeritus Professor John S Humphreys

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A joint centre of Flinders University and
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Telephone: +61 8 8951 4700
Website: www.crh.org.au

Broken Hill Department of Rural Health
University of Sydney
PO Box 457
Broken Hill, NSW, 2880
Telephone: +61 8 8080 1200
Website: sydney.edu.au/medicine/drh/

Conference Presentations

Daly S & Kirby S (2015). Far West mental Health Recovery Centre: a partnership model of recovery focused mental health inpatient care, presentation at the *13th National Rural Health Conference*, Darwin, 24-27 May 2015.

Kirby S, Saurman E, Lyle D & Passey M. (2015). Assessing the evidence of rural palliative care need to inform research design. Presentation at the *2015 Primary Health Care Research Conference*, Adelaide, 29-31 July 2015.

Lavey L (2015). Research Impact Multi-tool - a one stop database for measuring and tracking research outputs. Presentation at the *2015 Australasian Research Management Society Conference* 2 October 2015, Singapore.

Lavey L & McGrail M (2015). Getting research evidence into rural health policies: what does it take? Presentation at the *13th National Rural Health Conference*, Darwin, 24-27 May 2015.

Lavey L, Spooner C & Mukuka C (2015). Research Administration Managers and Research Project Managers - playing a key role in establishing and managing multi-institutional collaborations. Presentation at the *2015 Australasian Research Management Society Conference*, 1 October 2015, Singapore.

Lyle D (2015). PHC Research Matters - Rural and Remote Perspective, Plenary presentation at the *2015 Primary Health Care Research Conference*, Adelaide, 29-31 July 2015.

McGrail M & Russell D (2015). Rural medical workforce pipelines: Unpacking the role of rural origin. Presentation at the *2015 Primary Health Care Research Conference*, Adelaide, 29-31 July 2015.

Spooner C, **Lavey L** & Mukuku C. (2015). Lessons from establishing and managing multi-institution centres of research excellence. Presentation at the *2015 Primary Health Care Research Conference*, Adelaide, 29-31 July 2015.

Reeve C (2015). The challenge of providing fair care. Keynote presentation at the *13th National Rural Health Conference*, Darwin, 24-27 May 2015.

Russell D (2015). Important new empirical evidence to guide rural health workforce retention policies. Presentation at the *13th National Rural Health Conference*, Darwin, 24-27 May 2015.

Wakerman J (2015). Research excellence, knowledge exchange and policy development. Keynote presentation at the *13th National Rural Health Conference*, Darwin, 24-27 May 2015.

Research Projects

The impact and cost of short-term health staffing in remote communities' study

Research is well under way with the *Australian Research Council* funded research project investigating the impact and cost of short-term health staffing in remote communities. The team comprises several members of the CRERRPHC, including Professor John Humphreys (Monash University), Associate Professor Lisa Bourke (University of Melbourne), Professor Terry Dunbar (University of Adelaide), Professor David Lyle (University of Sydney), Professor Tim Carey (Flinders University), Professor Mike Jones (Macquarie University), Associate Professor Steve Guthridge and Dr Yuejen Zhao (Northern Territory Department of Health), and Professor John Wakerman (Flinders University).

The study is examining the impact of the increasing levels of short-term health staffing in remote communities upon service acceptability to patients, workload and attitudes of long-term resident primary health care staff, and the effectiveness and cost of health services.

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Tips for New Players: Establishment and Management of Multi-Institutional Collaborations



Lisa Lavey

Since 2011, APHCRI has funded nine Centres of Research Excellence, with the requirement that they extend across several institutions and jurisdictions. Establishing and coordinating a Multi-Institutional Centre of Research Excellence (MICRE) can be complex and time consuming, and there are limited resources available in relation to their establishment and management.

Lisa Lavey, Project Manager for the CRERRPHC, Catherine Spooner, Project Manager for the Centre for Obesity Management and Prevention Research Excellence in Primary Health Care (COMPARE-PHC) and Chilandu Mukuka, Research Manager for APHCRI, conducted a study to document the issues and challenges experienced by the nine MICREs funded through APHCRI.

With a view to increasing efficiency and reducing preventable problems in planning and implementing MICREs, an experience-based 'tips' document for the establishment and management of MICREs in Australia has been developed.

The document entitled "Establishment and Management of a Multi-Institutional Centre of Research Excellence – Tips for New Players", was presented by Lisa at the 17th Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS) 2015 Conference "Research Management in a Global Context" held in Singapore, 29 September to 2 October 2015. ARMS is the professional society for specialists in management and administration of research. This innovative resource gained considerable attention and acclaim from conference attendees.

The link to the 'tips' document can be found at: www.crerrphc.org.au/node/75

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Awards

Congratulations to Dr Adel Asaid, one of our long-standing research partners from the Elmore Primary Health Service (EPHS), who was this year awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) on Australia Day.

This recognition follows previous success in 2014 when EPHS was awarded Runner-up for Excellence in Services by a General Practice from the Victorian Minister for Health, and in 2013 when Kathy Tuohy received the Practice Manager of the Year award.

Dr Asaid has been one of the CRERRPHC's strongest collaborators in the EPHS longitudinal study. This study has examined how a comprehensive primary health service has sustained high quality performance in the delivery of health care to a small rural community.



Adel Asaid

CRERRPHC Research Streams

During 2015, research continued in all three research streams of the CRERRPHC. The CRERRPHC website provides detailed information on its publications and presentations. A brief summary is outlined below:

Stream 1 - The geography of access

Considerable work was undertaken in the further development of a 'fit-for-purpose' Index of Access for PHC in rural and remote Australia. Unlike previous measures of access that are based solely on aspects of geography, this more sophisticated Index takes account of both residents' needs for health care and their abilities to overcome the problems of distance and isolation.

Two key publications outlining this Index include one international academic peer-reviewed article, and a technical paper which outlines in detail the principles, logic and reasoning underpinning the construction of this new index;

- McGrail M & Humphreys JS, 2015. Geospatial disparities to primary health care in rural and remote Australia, *Geospatial Health*, 10(2): 138-143. Available at: <http://www.geospatialhealth.net/index.php/gh/article/view/358/332>
- McGrail, M. R., & Humphreys, J. S. (2015). Discussion paper: Development of a national Index of Access for primary health care in Australia: Centre of Research Excellence in Rural and Remote Primary Health Care, Monash University School of Rural Health. Available at: www.crerrphc.org.au/

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Matthew McGrail

Stream 2 - The impact of rural and remote context on what primary health care workers do

Further fieldwork was undertaken to collect primary data relating to the funding, infrastructure and human resource requirements of remote PHC services, with a view to establishing benchmarks for appropriate, high-quality, and sustainable models of care. These data are currently being analysed and written up for publication in a paper that builds on our most recent publications detailing core PHC services and their location.

- Thomas S, Wakerman J & Humphreys JS, 2015: Ensuring equity of access to primary health care in rural and remote Australia: What core services should be locally available, *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 14: 111; DOI: 10.1186/s12939-015-0228-1, URL: <http://www.equityhealthj.com/content/14/1/111>

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Susan Thomas

Stream 3 - Evaluating and documenting the impact of different primary health care services and models

Professor David Lyle and his team in Broken Hill have been finalising their research on different models of care and their appropriateness to different rural and remote contexts.

A paper synthesising what has been learnt across a number of evaluations in Stream 3 is in preparation.

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David Lyle

Getting to know the Modified Monash Model - an information session about the Department of Health's new remoteness classification system

The Modified Monash Model has been welcomed by many and has already taken the place of ASGC-RA in some governmental programs.

An information session on the Modified Monash Model for the classification of remoteness/rurality is being hosted by the *National Rural Health Alliance* in Canberra.

Details are noted below:

Date: Wednesday, 2 December 2015

Venue: Common Room, University House
Australian National University
Canberra

Time: 9.30am - 12.45pm

There will be ample opportunity for interested parties to seek clarification about their particular interest in the new classification system.

Presenters:

- *Paul Cutting*, Director, Rural Distribution Section, Dept of Health;
- *Andrew Phillips*, Policy Consultant, National Rural Health Alliance;
- *James Downie*, A/g CEO, Independent Hospital Pricing Authority;
- Representatives from the Australian Bureau of Statistics; and the
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Dr Matthew McGrail and Emeritus Professor John Humphreys have been invited to attend this event as the researchers who developed the Model.

The session will be invaluable for anyone with an interest in programs that use geographic location to determine eligibility for and levels of assistance; those who are involved with data collection or analysis by remoteness or rurality; and the clients of programs administered on the basis of remoteness.

Admission is free and you can find more information about this session at:

www.ruralhealth.org.au/conferences/public-seminar/modified-monash

To register, please email your full contact details to conference@ruralhealth.org.au

National Rural Health Alliance

CRERRPHC Research Capacity Building

One of the most important aspects of the CRERRPHC has been its research capacity building program, in particular that component undertaken with staff from rural and remote primary health care services.

CRERRPHC PhD training

Research in rural and remote Australia has benefited from the graduation of two CRERRPHC PhD students whose work has helped to better understand priority health issues in these areas. Three more PhD students are expected to complete in the coming months.

PhD graduates include:

1. **Deborah Russell**, PhD, Monash University. Graduated December 2014. 'The patterns, determinants and measurement of rural and remote primary health care workforce turnover and retention';
2. **Emily Saurman**, PhD, The University of Sydney. Graduating December 2015. 'Using technology to improve access to emergency mental health care in rural and remote Australia: an evaluation of the Mental Health Emergency Care-Rural Access Program (MHEC-RAP).



Deborah Russell



Emily Saurman

CRERRPHC Early career research training

Throughout the duration of the CRERRPHC, one staff member has excelled in undertaking a detailed investigation into a remote community characterised by some of the greatest health needs in Australia. Working closely with staff from the Kimberley Public Health Unit and Fitzroy Valley health services, Carole Reeve examined the impact of service delivery changes on health outcomes. This study has resulted in several important academic papers being published in 2015.

1. Reeve C, Humphreys JS, & Wakerman J, 2015: A Comprehensive Health Service Evaluation and Monitoring Framework, *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 53, 91-98, Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2015.08.006>
2. Reeve C, Davis S & Humphreys JS, 2015. How good are routinely collected primary healthcare data for evaluating the effectiveness of health service provision in a remote Aboriginal community, *Rural and Remote Health*, 15:2804. (Online) <http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=2804>
3. Carrol, V, Reeve CA, Humphreys JS, Wakerman J & Carter M, 2015: Re-orienting a remote acute care model towards a primary health care approach: key enablers, *Rural and Remote Health*, 15: 2942 (Online), http://www.rrh.org.au/publishedarticles/article_print_2942.pdf
4. Reeve C, Wakerman J & Humphreys JS, 2015: Strengthening primary health care: achieving health gains in a remote region of Australia", *The Medical Journal of Australia*, 202 (9) 483-487.
5. Reeve C, Humphreys JS, Wakerman J, Carroll V, Carter M, O'Brien T, Erlank C, Mansour R & Smith B, 2015: Community participation in health service reform: the development of an innovative remote Aboriginal health care service, *Australian Journal of Primary Health*, <http://www.publish.csiro.au/paper/PY14073.htm>



Carole Reeve

Carole was also a riveting keynote speaker at the 13th National Rural Health Alliance Conference held in Darwin in May 2015, where she discussed the implications of her research for international countries.

Further information contact: carole.reeve@flinders.edu.au

Recent publications

Journal Articles - refereed

Carroll V, Reeve CA, Humphreys JS, Wakerman J & Carter M (2015). Re-orienting a remote acute care model towards a primary health care approach: key enablers, *Rural and Remote Health*, 15(2942): 1-7.

McGrail MR & Humphreys JS (2015). Spatial access disparities to primary health care in rural and remote Australia. *Geospatial Health*. 10(2):138-143.

McGrail MR & Humphreys JS (2015). Geographical mobility of general practitioners in rural Australia, *Medical Journal of Australia*, 203(2): 92-97.

McGrail MR, Humphreys JS & Ward B (2015). Accessing doctors at times of need-measuring the distance tolerance of rural residents for health-related travel, *BMC Health Services Research*, 15(212): 1-9.

Reeve C, Humphreys J & Wakerman J (2015). A comprehensive health service evaluation and monitoring framework, *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 53(2015): 91-98.

Reeve C, Humphreys J, Wakerman J, Carroll V, Carter M, O'Brien T, Erlank C, Mansour R & Smith B (2015). Community participation in health service reform: the development of an innovative remote Aboriginal primary health-care service, *Australian Journal of Primary Health*, online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1071/PY14073>

Reeve C, Humphreys J, Wakerman J, Carter M, Carroll V & Reeve D (2015). Strengthening primary health care: achieving health gains in a remote region of Australia, *Medical Journal of Australia*, 202(9): 483-488.

Saurman E, Kirby S & Lyle D (2015). No longer 'flying blind': how access has changed emergency mental health care in rural and remote emergency departments, a qualitative study, *BMC Health Services Research*, 15(156): 1-11.

Thomas SL, Wakerman J & Humphreys JS (2015). Ensuring equity of access to primary health care in rural and remote Australia - what core services should be locally available, *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 14(111): 1-8.

Wakerman J (2015). Rural and remote health: a progress report: doing better, but we still need to sort out who is responsible for what and strengthen primary care, *Medical Journal of Australia*, 202(9): 461-463.

Ward B, Humphreys J, McGrail M, Wakerman J & Chisholm M (2015). Which dimensions of access are most important when rural residents decide to visit a general practitioner for non-emergency care?, *Australian Health Review*, 39: 121-126.



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The research reported in this newsletter is a project of the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute, which is supported under the Australian Government's Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development Strategy. The information and opinions contained in it do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute or the Department of Health.

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