



# Healthy Ageing Research Unit (HARU) News

November, 2010

## Welcome



Hello and welcome to our new look HARU newsletter. The aim of this newsletter is to provide you with an update about some of our recent activities and projects. Established at Monash University in June 2006, over the past four years HARU has positioned itself as a premier Australian research Unit with a mission to conduct research that will inform the development of evidence based services and interventions to improve the quality of life of older people in Australia and the Asia-Pacific Rim. HARU is a part of our wider University initiative known as Monash Research for an Ageing Society (MonRAS). We hope you enjoy reading about our work, and please do contact us if you would like any further information.

Associate Professor Susan Feldman  
Director, Healthy Ageing Research Unit (HARU), School of Primary Health Care

### Working together essential to caring for ageing ethnic population

On 26 August 2010, Janice Munt MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Health launched a research report entitled Practising Positive Partnerships (PPP) in the Ethnic and Multicultural Community - Networking, Coordinating, Cooperating, Collaborating?'. This project, conducted by Dr Harriet Radermacher and colleagues, was done in collaboration with Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria and the Southern Metropolitan Region HACC Cultural Diversity Network. This report documents the first stage of the PPP project, which consisted of a pilot study to explore the experiences of partnerships within the ethnic and multicultural aged care sector. Integral to the project is the dissemination and translation of the pilot study findings to various key stakeholders, which forms the next stage of the project. This will be achieved through community forums, workshops, debriefings and discussions. This engagement with stakeholders will inform the development of a future collaborative work plan, which may include the development of practice



L-R: Professor Colette Browning, HARU, Ms Janice Munt MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, A/Professor Susan Feldman, HARU.

guidelines or extending the empirical data collection to other geographic regions. For a copy of the report go to [www.eccv.org.au](http://www.eccv.org.au)

### Farewell to MELSHA after 16 years

*"I have really enjoyed being a part of the research studies over the past 16 years. How the time has flown!"* (MELSHA participant)

Over the past 16 years, we have been working with a group of older people in the Melbourne Longitudinal Studies on Healthy Ageing (MELSHA). We'd like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all our wonderful participants. The study provided invaluable knowledge for improving the health status and independence of older people, in planning health programs, and for better understanding of how people age.

While data collection for the MELSHA study is now complete, our analysis of the data and writing publications is still ongoing. In the coming years we hope that many of the older people and their families who have assisted us with this program will join our HARU volunteer register, to assist with other research we are doing in the Unit.



L-R: PPP Project Steering Committee (not all members present) - Mr Ahmed Zeed, New Hope Foundation; Dr Harriet Radermacher, HARU; Dr Irene Bouzo, ECCV; Ms Barbara Antas, Polish Community Council of Victoria; Ms Maria Tancredi, New Hope Foundation; A/Prof Susan Feldman, HARU.

## Research at a Glance

### Veterans

The veterans who have been involved in our MELSHA study are about to be interviewed for another study, funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs. By investigating their health service usage, needs and patterns, we hope to be able to better plan services and programs for them.

### Ageing across the generations

We have just got the go ahead to invite people who have children over the age of 60 to help us with a study of the perceptions of ageing across different generations. So far, we know that unrelated people of different ages – say from 60 to 100 - have different views of ageing. We are interested to see how similar and different these views are when you compare parents and children's perspectives.

### Wicked Widows play

Thanks to those of you who took part in an evaluation of the Wicked Widows play. Most of you thought that the play was true to life, enjoyable, high quality, and a useful learning tool, which confirmed the importance of using performance to promote healthy ageing in older adults. This research has also resulted in an upcoming publication in Educational Gerontology.

### Older men's health

We have been speaking to health and community service providers in the Greater Shepparton Region about how they can provide more appropriate services for older men from different cultural backgrounds. We are also in the process of interviewing older men from Macedonian, Greek, Albanian, Turkish and Italian backgrounds living in the Shepparton area.

### Golden Language Guru Award Ceremony

On 25 October, we were delighted to celebrate the participation of senior community volunteers and language students in the Monash University project entitled 'Connecting younger L2 learners and older bilinguals: Intergenerational, intercultural encounters and second language development'. The Vice-Chancellor of Monash University, Professor Ed Byrne AO, was pleased to present participants with their awards. The first year of this 3-year ARC-funded project is now complete, and we look forward to the next stage of data collection which will investigate the experiences of the older participants in the project.

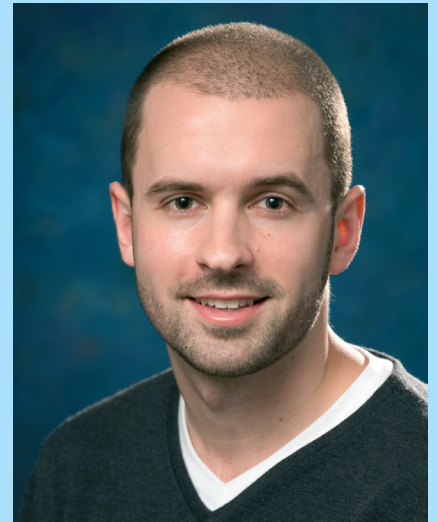
#### VALE

HARU would like to acknowledge the passing of **Professor Michael Clyne**, the Chief Investigator of this project, who has been an inspiration to all that knew him. The team will be working even harder to promote the project and to honour Michael's memory and initiative.

## Student News

Currently we have 9 PhD students enrolled in ageing related studies, working on a wide range of projects from long-term marriages, to cultural conceptualisations of healthy ageing in Malaysia. We are also delighted to report that the "Best Victorian Presentation" at the 9th Emerging Researchers in Ageing Conference in Newcastle 21 & 22 October, was awarded to Jan Taylor for her presentation on '*Staff Manual Handling and resident transfers on and off furniture; a systematic review*' (sponsored by Australian Association of Gerontology, Vic Branch).

## Staff Profile



### Dr Sean Cowlshaw

Sean Cowlshaw is a Research Fellow and Statistician in the Primary Care Research Unit (PCRU); including the Health Ageing Research Unit (HARU) and Problem Gambling Research and Treatment Centre (PGRTC). He is our newest member of staff, joining the team in 2010.

Sean obtained first class Honours in psychology from Swinburne University, before receiving a competitive scholarship to pursue his PhD at La Trobe. His doctoral research investigated inter-role conflict and stress within families of emergency service volunteers. During his candidature Sean was employed at Swinburne to provide research consultation; including advice regarding both traditional and advanced quantitative methods. He also presented lectures within psychology and health science undergraduate programs.

Sean has co-authored manuscripts published in prestigious international journals such as the Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology and Work & Stress. His primary interests are focused on family functioning in the context of psychological disorders, including a current project on family functioning of older Vietnam veterans with chronic Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He is also involved with studies focused on patterns of psychological functioning and sensory loss for older adults over time, and factors promoting better outcomes and positive change. Sean is co-supervisor of a PhD student, Ms Sue Hunt, and a project titled: Modelling successful ageing and lifestyle behaviour patterns.



## Upcoming Event

We are delighted to be hosting a FREE public forum: 'We are all in this together: partnerships in ageing research at Monash University.' The aim of this event is to showcase the exciting work that is being done by the Healthy Ageing Research Unit (HARU), in collaboration with a whole range of people both within Monash University and externally.

This public event will highlight a range of collaborative research projects, and illustrate the value and importance of working in partnership to improve the health and wellbeing of Older Victorians.

Dr Alan Finkel (Chancellor of Monash University) will open the event, and speakers will include a research participant from our Melbourne Longitudinal Studies of Healthy Ageing (MELSHA) study, representatives from Government and not-for-profit agencies who have worked closely with us, as well as some of our academic colleagues at Monash University.

A key feature of this event is to provide opportunities for participants to contribute to public discussions about the work that we do and the broader and complex issues associated with the ageing of our Australian population.

This event will be held on **Thursday 18 November, 1.30-4pm**, at the Treasury Theatre, Ground Level, 1 Macarthur St, Melbourne.

## International Activities

### HARU activities in China

We run a number of research programs in China in collaboration with Peking University and the China Ministry of Health. The Happy Life Club™ is a chronic illness management program for older people and uses health coaching to assist with increasing physical activity and improving nutrition. The program will be delivered to 20,000 patients over the next three years. We are also working on a large-scale community and housing development that will facilitate active ageing and will include an associated research program.

### HARU goes to Singapore

Colette and Susan recently visited Singapore to discuss establishing some potential research collaborations between the Council for Third Age (C3A) and our research unit. C3A acknowledged that "Monash University expertise

lies in translational research and framing research findings to suit the milieu of different stakeholders such as academics, practitioners, governmental bodies etc". The focus of potential projects include: (1) Lifelong Learning; (2) a National Longitudinal Study on Ageing Issues; and (3) The Happy Life Club™. Colette and Susan also visited: (1) the Family Life and Active Ageing Centre where older people attend each day for a range of activities related to health and wellbeing; (2) Presbyterian Community Services, who provide a housing and support program for older people who live independently; and most interestingly (3) the Wellness in Motion program, an intergenerational exercise program, run by a commercial operator who actively encourage families to exercise together by reducing membership costs for families of 2 or more generations.

## Recent Publications

- Feldman, S., Radermacher, H., Lorains, F., & Haines, T. (In Press). A research-based community theatre performance to promote ageing well: Is it more than just a show? *Educational Gerontology*.
- Radermacher, H., Feldman, S., Bird, S., & Lorains, F. (In Press). The role of family and older people's access to food: Will the children be there to help? *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*.
- Browning, C., Sims, J., Lundgren-Lindquist, B., & Kendig, H. (Accepted October 2010). Urinary incontinence in a community sample of older adults: Prevalence and impact on quality of life. *Disability and Rehabilitation*.
- Bird, S. R., Radermacher, H., Sims, J., Feldman, S., Browning, C., & Thomas, S. (2010). Factors affecting walking activity of older people from culturally diverse groups: An Australian experience. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 13(4), 417-423.
- Sims, J., Hill, K., Hunt, S., & Haralambous, B. (2010). Physical activity recommendations for older Australians. *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, 29(2), 81-87.
- Browning, C., Cowlshaw, S., Kendig, H., Thomas, S., Grayson, D., & Feldman, S. (2010). *The Health And Service Needs Of Older Veterans: A Longitudinal Analysis: Analyses of the physical, mental health and service use of DVA veterans and a non-DVA comparison group: The Melbourne Longitudinal Studies on Healthy Ageing program*. Melbourne: Department of Veterans Affairs

## Selected Recent grants

- Browning, Clyne, Cordella Masini, Huang, 'Connecting younger L2 learners and older bilinguals: Intergenerational, intercultural encounters and second language development', ARC Linkage Grant, 2010-2012, \$421,104
- Browning, Collier, O'Connor, Sheehan, Trotter, 'Ageing in prison: A strategic framework for the management of ageing offenders in the Australian criminal justice system', ARC Linkage Grant, 2010-2011, \$167,000
- Browning, Green, Kossenas, O'Connor, 'IRIS: investigating research implementation strategies for care of people with dementia', NHMRC, 2009-2012, \$1,100,000
- Browning, Feldman, H. Kendig, Thomas, 'The health and service needs of older Veterans: A longitudinal analysis', Department of Veterans Affairs, 2009-2011, \$223,396

(see website for a comprehensive list of grants and publications)

## Weblinks

Monash China Health Initiatives  
[www.med.monash.edu.au/sphc/mchi/index.html](http://www.med.monash.edu.au/sphc/mchi/index.html)

Healthy Ageing Research Unit  
[www.med.monash.edu.au/sphc/haru/index.html](http://www.med.monash.edu.au/sphc/haru/index.html)

## Contact

For more information about HARU and our activities, or to join our HARU registry of research volunteers, please contact:

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 In 2008, the Healthy Ageing Research Unit signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council on the Ageing (Victoria). As part of this arrangement, we are collaborating on a number of developments.

The information in this newsletter was correct at the time of publication. Monash University reserves the right to alter this information should the need arise. NOVEMBER 2010. CRICOS provider: Monash University 00008C.

