



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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FACULTY OF HEALTH RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

Did you know?

Nominations for the **UoN Awards for Research Excellence** are now open. Nominations close 30th September 2009. Further details can be found at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/unit/research-services/2009-awards-for-research-excellence.html>

Nominations for the **Vice Chancellors Awards for Supervision Excellence** are now open. Nominations close 23rd October 2009. Further details can be found at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/students/research-higher-degree/supervision/vc-awards.html>

Researcher Financial Reporting System

A new researcher workplace is now live in Technology One Financials to assist researchers with the financial management of their research grants. This workplace features a financial summary and detailed reports for all research accounts listed in the Research Office database, including salary information and commitments for the calendar year. Whilst residing within Technology One researchers can access the new reports without needing training on the full system. Further information can be found at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/grants-and-contracts/managing-your-grant/financial-reporting.html>

The **2010 RHD Scholarship Round** is now open for all Domestic and International Students. The closing date for International Scholarships is the 31st August and the 31st October for Domestic Scholarships. Further information can be found at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/students/research-higher-degree/scholarships/available-scholarships.html>

The annual **10 of the Best Research Showcase** will be held on the 25th September in HB13 Lecture Theatre. This day will showcase 21 of our best research higher degree students, 10 will be presenting an oral presentation and 11 presenting posters. For further information and RSVPs contact Shirley Savy at Shirley.Savy@newcastle.edu.au.

The **United Campus Bookshop** stocks and can source a number of research titles. Visit www.ucb.net.au

RESEARCH CENTRE FOR GENDER, HEALTH & AGEING

Newcastle was well represented at the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics in Paris last July. This conference brings together all the national associations of gerontology and geriatrics as well as organisations such as the United Nations focus on ageing and the World Health Organisation Department of Ageing and Life Course. With over 6000 delegates from 90 countries, the conference program was rich and diverse. Attendees from Newcastle included Professor Julie Byles, Professor Isabel Higgins, A/Professor Lynne Parkinson, Dr Lynne Slater and Dr Agnes Tembo. Julie Byles presented a paper entitled Living Long and Living Well that examined factors associated with survival and maintenance of physical well-being among a large cohort of women as they aged from their early 70's into their late 80's. Lynne Parkinson convened an international symposium on comorbid depression and physical illness with speakers from Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Poster presentations by Julie Byles (on women and retirement), Newcastle PhD graduate Afsoon Mehraban (falls risk), Lynne Slater (age discrimination in acute care), Agnes Tembo (Experience of older people in intensive care) and Isabel Higgins (Targeting pain in older people in the acute care setting) were very well received stimulating much interest in our research activities.

Professor Julie Byles

Director Research Centre for Gender, Health and Ageing

SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES & PHARMACY

In late 2008 the School of Biomedical Sciences & Pharmacy held an "away-day". Academic and senior research staff in attendance were invited to express views on the research activities of the School, with the goal being to devise strategies to improve on all aspects of School performance. One concern, which is actually being acted on at the level of the University through initiatives such as ReFocus, was Staff Training and Development.

Therefore, this year the School is starting a new forum designed in part to help researchers at all stages of their career, develop and strengthen their research programme. The intention is to use expertise that is currently within the School to disseminate knowledge (insider information). Therefore, it is planned that the forum will include a talk by a NHMRC GRP chair (Professor Rodney Scott) and a member of the ARC College of Experts (Professor Keith Jones). We also intend to address a number of issues germane to research funding success. For example, the vexed issue of publication "quantity" versus "quality"; should we as researchers concentrate on the number of publications we produce each year, or alternatively produce less of a higher substance. Also, how concerned should we be with the several indices currently out there that can be used to measure our publication record? Research life started to become queasy with the introduction of the h-index, now we have also to contend with the m-index and the g-index: they are indices that take into account factors such as researchers age and one-hit wonders. For some, it is merely a case of understanding what these indices measure, for others how seriously we take these performance indicators, should we use them in grant applications.

School of Biomedical Sciences & Pharmacy Staff Training and Development Lecture series starts October 2009. Fridays 3 PM. Consult the School's website for further detail.

Professor Keith Jones

Chair of School of Biomedical Sciences & Pharmacy Research Committee.



SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES

On the 24th of July, the School of Health Sciences held a School Research Showcase and Networking Session, "Across the Divide." This day showcased School research and provided an opportunity to facilitate new research collaborations. Around 25 academics, researchers and research students across all disciplines in Health Sciences attended. Presentations included overviews of research areas within various research streams within the School, with examples of collaborations and suggestions for possible future collaborations. As a result of this day new multidisciplinary research collaborations have formed. One example is a group that will develop weight management guidelines appropriate for use by a range of allied health practitioners for patients presenting for treatment due to injury or illness that is hampered by excess body weight.

The WorkCover NSW Research Centre of Excellence (WRCE) held a Research Directions Forum, inviting Australia's leading occupational health and safety experts to consider the future direction of research in this field.

The WRCE hosted a visiting expert in environmental toxicology, Professor Ping-Chi Hsu from Taiwan, at the University of Newcastle's Central Coast campus.

Director of the WRCE, University of Newcastle Professor Derek R Smith, was awarded the 2009 World Safety Organization Concerned Citizen Award for 2009.

Honours Seminar

A "NEXT STEP" seminar was held during the week of August 24th for Honours students in the School of Health Sciences. The goal of this seminar is to provide information for current honours students about what is involved in undertaking a Research Higher Degree in an attempt to increase future RHD numbers for the School.

Other News

- Dr Imelda Burgman has joined the Special Needs Unlimited Group (SNUG) as a researcher. SNUG has funding from the Steve Waugh Foundation and has commenced running family camps at Myuna Bay for families of children with a disability.
- Professor Smith was recently appointed a Visiting Professor at the Third Hospital of Hebei Medical University in China and continues his ongoing collaboration with the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Occupational Health in Japan.

GLADYS M BRAUN MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIPS

Congratulations to our new Braun Fellows who have been awarded a Fellowship in 2009. Receiving a Senior Braun Fellowship is Professor Amanda Baker from the Health Behaviour Research Group. Professor Baker will continue her work within the Drug & Alcohol Research Unit (CBMHR).

Our newest Fellow, Dr Elizabeth Holliday, has just been awarded a Post-Doctoral Fellowship and will be commencing with the University in September to work in the Information Based Medicine Research Centre. Dr Holliday works in the area of statistical genetic analysis.



Painting by Stroke Survivor, Marcia Johnston.

ART, MUSIC AND STROKE REHABILITATION

Art has been widely used in some areas of health including dementia and cancer but less extensively used and documented in stroke.

One of the research projects that sits under the 'Arts and Health' umbrella is a collaborative pilot between the Hunter New England Community Stroke team and John Hunter Hospital Arts for Health that provides stroke survivors with the opportunity to explore art in a supportive environment; and to investigate their experience of stroke and recovery through art.

Led by artist Rhonda Partridge, the program is called "Stroke of Art" and uses an 'Arts for Health' approach which recognises the value of arts to health and wellbeing.

Two-hour sessions were held over a ten week period. A variety of media were utilised including charcoal, wax, paint, drawing and collage. These activities were tailored to suit the abilities of each individual.

Quantitative and qualitative methods have been used to evaluate the program including the Visual Analogue Self Esteem Scale (VASES), WHO Quality of Life-BREF instrument, Modified Rankin Scale, pre and post group, and in-depth, individual interviews.

The findings from the evaluation will be presented during the 2nd ArtsHealth Conference in October this year, which is being held at Newcastle City Hall.

"One of us was in too much pain and anguish to try anything. Now I think and breathe colours and form, and life has a gentle hue. Thank you for creating such a lovely venue of social warmth, fun and laughter" (Stroke survivor Marcia Johnston)

The ArtsHealth Centre is also working to secure funding for another collaboration between the Community Stroke Team, Hunter New England Health and the University of Newcastle Choir. We hope to establish a stroke survivors choir and evaluate the benefits of choral signing on brain function using fMRI. <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-centre/artshealth/>

THE SCHOOL OF NURSING & MIDWIFERY

The School of Nursing and Midwifery is currently involved in several projects that have been presented to an international audience. Several staff recently presented papers at the Third International Clinical Skills Conference in Italy and two of these were judged to be best conference papers. Other staff presented papers at the XIX World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics in Paris. In addition, there are several staff presenting at the Asia Pacific Alliance of Health Leaders Conference in Yamaguchi University in Japan this month.

Many staff including honours students are also presenting at two major Nursing Conferences in Australia: The Royal College of Nursing Australia Conference and Australian Nurse Teachers Conference.

The publications reported by the school for 2008 have increased by 70% since the previous year.

Honours and Research Higher Degree enrolments have enjoyed considerable growth in 2009.

The Faculty of Health Simulation Unit including a two bed simulation ward, control room, debriefing room and an interactive tutorial room will be handed over on 31 August and will be officially opened in September. Staff in the school are keen to commence using these facilities. A current project about simulation and clinical learning funded by the ALTC; is on track to produce four systematic reviews, a cross-sectional survey, a delphi study and a quasi-experimental study. Two honours and two masters students are involved in this project.

CENTRE FOR BRAIN AND MENTAL HEALTH

Professor Amanda Baker and the National Alcohol and Drug Research Centre have won the prestigious Excellence in Research National Drug and Alcohol Award. Professor Baker and her team (Frances Kay-Lambkin (NDARC), David Kavanagh (UQ), Brian Kelly and Vaughan Carr) were nominated for two new tools that enable front-line service organisations to better identify and treat co-occurring mental health and drug/alcohol abuse.

Professor Baker's team directed clinical and research teams to investigate relationships between alcohol/ other drug use and mental health. The research and tools developed have been critical in deepening the understanding of comorbid issues.

These tools discovered that unifying treatment for alcohol/other drug use and mental health, results in more effective treatment for this often-marginalised constituency. This work has important implications at a broad policy level and at the front-line treatment stages.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & PUBLIC HEALTH

Writing Skills Workshop – September 14, 2009

Tim Haydon, from The Write Media Network, will provide a customised workshop on:

- Writing scientific articles; structure, argument, style
- Publication processes and publication strategies
- Developing papers for publication

The full day workshop is available, at no cost, to SMPH Research Higher Degree students and SMPH Early Career Researchers.

Early Career Researcher Pilot Grant Scheme 2009

The SMPH Research Advisory Group is targeting Early Career Researchers (ECRs), particularly new investigators, who have not previously been a Chief Investigator on a nationally competitive grant application. \$100,000 has been allocated for editorial support and pilot data acquisition, to be committed or expended by December 2009.

Contact the Research Administration Office for information on future grant schemes E: smph-research@newcastle.edu.au

RTS Student Support Funding 2009

SMPH Research Higher Degree students are reminded that RTS Student Support must be expended yearly during your candidature. There is a provision for funds to be accumulated and carried forward for a 6-12 month period to cover a large expense (e.g. overseas conference), but this must be negotiated with the Faculty of Health and approved by your supervisor. Please contact the Research Administration Office (smph-research@newcastle.edu.au) if you have any questions about RTS Student Support Funding expenditure.

FROM THE DESK OF THE DHoF RESEARCH

New RHD Scholarships in Children's Health

The Faculty has received a generous donation from the estate of Isobel Hancock for "research into diseases that affect children". The Faculty will use the money to establish two 50% scholarships available to start in 2010 with the remaining 50% of the funds to be provided by other sources available to the supervisor and/or RHD student. These Isobel Hancock Scholarships will be open to any research relevant to improving the health of children.

Support for Stroke Research

The 2009 Barker Scholarship was awarded to Jennifer White, an occupational therapist and part time PhD student working as part of the stroke research group. This top up Scholarship is worth \$6000 per year for 2 years (FTE) plus \$2000 to attend a conference.

The NSW Office for Science and Medical Research has awarded \$230,275 to advance the China - Australia Therapeutic Hypothermia in Stroke research program. A team led by Associate Professor Chris Levi in Newcastle in collaboration with the Harbin Medical University in China will use proteomics to identify molecular markers in blood that can

guide the rewarming phase of the hyperthermia treatment for stroke patients.

Gold Medal for Sarah

Last week Dr Sarah Gordon from the School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy received the Gold Medal for Early Career Researchers based on her poster and oral presentations at the 22nd Biennial Meeting of the International Society for Neurochemistry in Busan, Korea. Her paper entitled "Differential regulation of the two major isoforms of human tyrosine hydroxylase *in situ*" was selected by an international panel of judges.



10 of the Best Research Showcase

All Faculty members and RHD students are encouraged to attend the Research Showcase on **September 25, 2009**. Ten oral presentations and eleven posters by RHD students will provide an exciting insight into the research activities across all the Schools. Prizes ranging from \$2000 to \$200 will be awarded by an independent panel of judges.

Conference Travel Grants in 2010

In 2010 conference travel grants will be funded from Faculty funds. The Faculty Research Committee will discuss the eligibility criteria that should be applied to these grants to ensure the greatest equity and strategic value in the distribution of these funds.

Professor John Rostas
Deputy Head of Faculty Research

