

Member Newsletter

May 2005

Facts...

Australia's Adolescents

Of those young people aged 12-24 years:

- Injury and poisoning was the cause of over 70% of deaths in 2001
- Males are 4 to 5 times more likely to commit suicide than females.
- 19% of all hospitalisations are due to pregnancy and childbirth.
- Incidence of hospitalisation due to mental disorders is on the rise.
- An increasing number are being infected with sexually transmitted diseases such as Chlamydia and gonorrhoea.
- 20% of males and 17% of females in 2003 said they were 'regular' drinkers of alcohol
- 21% said they have used cannabis and 4% amphetamines
- Indigenous young people have much lower education participation rates than non-Indigenous (in 2001, 29% of Indigenous males at 19 years were still at school compared to 68% of other Australian males)

Source: Public Health Information & Development Unit

Many thanks to our Sponsor...



The Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Research Foundation

CONVENORS' MESSAGE

Since June 2004, HDA have been forming links with various government departments and organisations to aid its members by promoting HDA & facilitating opportunities that can exist in multidisciplinary collaborations.

HDA's Strategic Plan is now available for members, as presented at the Official

Launch in December 2004. HDA's website can now be viewed at:

www.adelaide.edu.au/hda

Members now include representatives from various organisations including CHRI, CYH, CSIRO and the Hanson Institute.

We have completed our 'Meet & Greet' sessions with members (now at ~90) and 3 temporary Working Groups have been established to help achieve our objectives in 2005.

We wish you all a successful second half of the year.

Prof Caroline McMillen
Prof Robert Noman

THEMATIC EVENING SUCCESS

"INDIGENOUS HEALTH" - OPPORTUNITIES, COLLABORATION & FUNDING

On Friday 11 March 2005, HDA's first Thematic Evening was held.

Members A/Prof Peter Baghurst (Public Health Research Unit, WCH), Jenni Caruso (Yaitya Purrua Indigenous Health Unit), A/Prof Robert Gibson (CHRI) and guest Linda Knobben (ARI) presented insightful data, methodologies and personal experiences and specific areas that are in need of future research.

Chaired by A/Prof Ray Rodgers and moderated by Mr Roger Thomas (Wilto Yerlo), the evenings outcomes reflect future collaborative events to strengthen Indigenous Health outcomes in SA.

Those present included representatives from the Department of Health, Nunkawarrin Yuruti, CYH, CHRI, Port Adelaide Community Health Service, CSIRO, ASMR and the membership of HDA.



INAUGURAL ORATION & RESEARCH DAY!

On 26 May 2005, the Vice Chancellor will present the 'Healthy Development Award' at HDA's **Inaugural Oration** to Prof Graeme Hugo at the State Library from 4.30 pm.

Titled "demographic change and its implications for healthy development in South Australia,"

it will precede the **Research Day** on 27 May, focusing on:

1. Childhood Obesity
2. Modern Reproduction—The Choices
3. Challenges to Healthy Families
4. Genes, Environment and Development (sponsored by

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Research Foundation)

A highlight lecture by John Glover titled "Social inequalities and determinants of health in SA" will close the day.

For more information, visit:

www.adelaide.edu.au/hda

MEMBER PROFILE—KIRK JENSEN

DISCIPLINE OF BIOCHEMIST

SCHOOL OF MOLECULAR & BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

I joined the University in February 2004, relocating from the Rockefeller University in New York, where I was a postdoctoral fellow.

Setting up a new lab has been exhausting, but well worth the effort: the lab now has nine members, and we were successful in the 2004 grant rounds, obtaining a NHMRC Project award, an ARC Discovery award, and an Australian Postdoctoral Fellow (APF) award for Dr. Kate Dredge, one of two postdocs now in the lab. We have received wonderful support from the Discipline, the School, and the University.

My laboratory's long-term research interest is the study of **post-transcriptional gene regulation in the vertebrate nervous system**.

In particular, we are interested in how neurons use the mechanisms of *translational control* and *mRNA localisation* to control essential steps in brain development. While most genes are turned on or off by controlling the production of mRNA (transcription), we believe that neurons



make great use of gene control at the level of protein production (translation). Why is this?

Unlike transcriptional control, which must occur within the nucleus, translational control can happen wherever the processed mRNA may be, and in fact, could occur in one part of a cell (like the growing tip of a neuronal axon), but not another (like the cell body). Thus, translational control allows *spatial* gene regulation!

We believe that understanding these RNA regulatory events will be essential for providing a complete picture of brain development.

As my lab settles in during the next few years, we would be particularly interested in exploring linkages to groups active in bioinformatics, as our work touches on a number of computational biology areas, where we lack deep knowledge and skills necessary to tackle things on our own.

I would also like to team with a group that is interested in possible clinical applications of post-transcriptional gene regulation mechanisms— as there is enormous potential for the use of these technologies in human applications.

"We are interested in groups active in bioinformatics and clinical applications of post-transcriptional gene regulation mechanisms"

Dr Kirk Jensen

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

The opposite table details current relationships that HDA has established with government bodies, external research groups, health service providers, community and industry groups.

Members wishing to communicate with such groups can contact HDA staff for assistance on hda@adelaide.edu.au or 8222 6878.



Government Departments	Dept of Education and Children's Services Dept of Families and Communities Dept of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology Dept of Health Dept of Health and Aging - Public Health Information Development Unit
Government Initiatives	Dept of Family and Community Services - Communities for Children Dept of Premier and Cabinet - Thinkers in Residence / Social Inclusion Unit
Health Service Providers	Children Youth and Women's Health Service - Child and Youth Health / Women's and Children's Hospital Central Northern Adelaide Health Service - Queen Elizabeth Hospital / Lyell McEwin Health Service Royal Adelaide Hospital Drug and Alcohol Services Council
Societies & Foundations	Australian Society for Medical Research (SA) Nutrition Society of Australia (SA) The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Research Foundation
Industry	BioInnovation SA Reproductive Health Science Pty Ltd Repromed Pty Ltd
External Research Groups	Child Health Research Institute Child and Family Health Research Institute Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Research Organisation Hanson Institute Network in Genes & Environment in Development Centre for the Molecular Genetic of Development Sids and Kids Perinatal Research Centre, Alberta

MEMBER PROFILE—JENNI CARUSO

YAITYA PURRUNA INDIGENOUS HEALTH UNIT

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL PRACTICE

Born in Alice Springs, with brothers and sisters coming under the policies of removal of Aboriginal children from their families, was sent to Croker Island Methodist Mission. From there, fostered to a non-Aboriginal family in Adelaide where I have lived for most of my life.

My work background was in nursing with training at the then Children's Hospital, moving to Memorial and Ashford, with later work at the Helping Hand Centre, Parafield Gardens.

Moved into education in 1993 with Catholic Education South Australia as an Indigenous Education Officer. During this time I supported Aboriginal Students and their families, worked closely with the Dept of Education Aboriginal Education unit on the development of appropriate teaching resources, curriculum development and training courses in Cultural awareness and working with Aboriginal children and students which were delivered state wide and across all three education systems.

During this time I also was a year 12-question setter and marker for SSABSA on Aboriginal Spirituality and the Chair of the Aboriginal and Islander Career Aspirations Program (AICAP)

I came to the University in 1999 as a student support officer. In this time I have been a Lecturer in the Centre for Australian Indigenous Research and Studies, Humanities and Social Sciences Foundation Program and Lecturer, co-Coordinator of Indigenous Histories of South Australia in the Dept of History.

At present I am the Coordinator – Yaitya Purruna, Indigenous Health Unit, Dept of General Practice, University of Adelaide and I deliver the 2nd year Indigenous Health Elective in the Medical School.

After achieving my SACE Certificate in 1989, I graduated with a Diploma of Arts – Aboriginal Education (UniSA) with an Academic Achievement Award and Bachelor of Arts – Cultural Studies (University of

Adelaide). I am currently extending my studies through Honours.

Having come under the policies of removal of Aboriginal children from their families, my journey's goal is to be active in the arena of equity by informing, educating and sharing with those committed to social justice with the aim of initiating new understandings which lead to the development of a more fully inclusive community, both local and national.

"My goal is to be active in the arena of equity by informing, educating and sharing with those committed to social justice"

Jenni Caruso



CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

As of April 2005, HDA's ~90 members comprised all 5 University Faculties, external research organisations, Industry, Government and Health Service Providers. See Figure 1.

Early Career Researchers and postgraduate students represent 15% of membership.

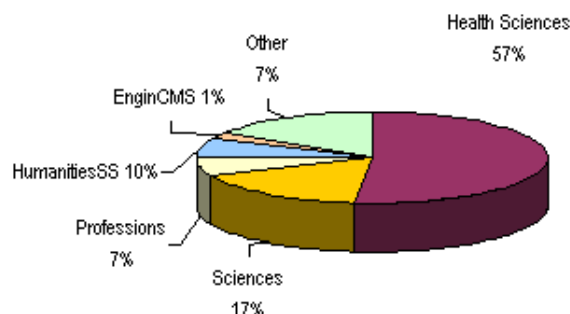


Figure 1: Membership Split based on Faculty

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY SUCCESS!

On 10 December 2004, HDA had its first inter-disciplinary, inter-cluster success through the Brailsford Robertson Award.

HDA Members Dr Manny Noakes, Dr Grant Brinkworth (CSIRO Health Sciences and Nutrition), Prof Caroline McMullen (HDA Convenor, Discipline of Physiology), A/Prof Gary Wittert (Department of Medicine / Healthy Aging Research Cluster) and Prof Robert Norman (HDA Convenor, Research Centre for Reproduc-

tive Health) will be looking at "Dietary interventions for overweight/obese women prior to and during pregnancy – safety and efficacy of low calorie and low carbohydrate diets."

This project will run for 2 years.

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