

Newsletter

www.adelaide.edu.au/hda

Upcoming Events...

- **25-27 August**
Endocrine Society of Australia and Society for Reproductive Biology scientific meeting will be held in Melbourne, Australia.
- **9-13 September**
European Sleep Research Society Congress will be held in Glasgow, Scotland.
- **10-13 September**
International Federation of Placental Associations will be held at the Seggau Castle in Austria.
- **1-4 October**
Australasian Sleep Association Conference will be held in Adelaide, South Australia.
- **2 October**
Lloyd Cox Memorial Lecture by Prof Euan Wallace (see page 7)
- **9 October**
HDA Thematic Evening on Allergies in Maternal and Child Health (see page 6)
- **18 October**
State Population Health conference will be held in Adelaide.
- **20-22 October**
Fertility Society of Australia conference will be held in Brisbane, Australia.

Further information at

www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/events

An initiative of the University of Adelaide since 2004



LATEST NEWS

New Cohort of HDA Scholars

The HDA Research Training Program (RTP) working group will oversee the implementation of the second cohort of HDA PhD Scholars to commence in 2009. Scholarship details will be forthcoming later in the year.

The current RTP Working Group will consist of:

A/Prof Pat Buckley, Dean of Research & Research Education, UniSA [Chair - continuing]

Dr Bernadette Richards, Lecturer in Law School, University of Adelaide [continuing member]
Dr Janna Morrison, Co-Head of Early Origins of Adult Health Research Group, UniSA [new member]

A/Prof Irene Hudson, Head of Statistics, UniSA [new member]

A/Prof Jeff Schwartz, Lecturer in School of Molecular and Biomedical Science, University of Adelaide [new member]

A/Prof Maree O'Keefe, Associate Dean Learning & Teaching in Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Adelaide [new member]

Second Round of HDA Travel Grants for 2009

HDA will be offering another round of Travel Grant support (for travel in 2009) to HDA members and students. Criteria and applications will be forthcoming later in the year.

FULBRIGHT SYMPOSIUM: HEALTHY PEOPLE, PROSPEROUS COUNTRY HDA REVIEW BY DR PETER CLIFTON

Dr Peter Clifton attended the Fulbright Symposium held on 10-11 July on behalf of HDA.

This symposium had a focus on social determinants of health, with particular emphasis on Indigenous health in Australia and USA. Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon ran through many of the targets for the Rudd government which included halving the gap between Indigenous Australians and non Indigenous Australians in infant mortality, numeracy and literacy rates by 2010 and removing the 17 year life expectancy rate in one generation. They have committed \$14.5M to tackle smoking and \$19M in National Indigenous Health Workforce Training Plan, to get more Indigenous people into the health workforce. She announced the establishment of a National Indigenous Inequality advisory committee.

Sir Michael Marmot gave his usual brilliant talk on health inequalities between and within countries. He noted there was a 52 year gap in lifespan between some sub Saharan countries and Japan and an 11 year gap between the north and south of the Camden borough in London. He noted that the average lifespan was the same in India and Calton in Glasgow which was not related to income as 80% of Indians live on \$2/day or less. His major point was that the Whitehall and other studies show that health inequalities relate to work stresses and control and social networks in people who are not conventionally regarded as deprived.

Dr David Satcher, the 16th US Surgeon General as well as assistant secretary of Health and former head of CDC spoke eloquently of the health inequalities due to race in the USA and how the response to hurricane Katrina in New Orleans brought the issue of inequality starkly into the mind of Americans who had never contemplated the issue before and that now was the time to tackle this. This theme was continued by Paula Braverman who showed that even in high income groups black women had smaller babies compared with whites and related this both to the ongoing stress of being black and a lifetime of additional stresses prior to pregnancy. This was also demonstrated in the fact that immigrant African and Hispanic women did not have the adverse outcomes of USA women of these ethnic groups. Thus lifelong stress is very important for adverse pregnancy outcomes and these are generally not related to lack of access to good medical care. This is particularly pertinent to HDA in its research agenda.

MEMBER PROFILE - A/PROFESSOR GORDON HOWARTH

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & WINE - UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE



As a senior research scientist in the School of Agriculture, Food and Wine, A/Professor Howarth divides his time between the Roseworthy Campus of the University of Adelaide and the Women's and Children's Hospital. He currently supervises four Honours students and seven PhD students, several of whom are undertaking specific studies in cancer research.

Gordon has secured regular funding from the Cancer Council SA for his outstanding work in cancer research. In 2005, he was awarded a three-year Research Fellowship by The Cancer Council SA. Most recently, he has secured a significant new grant from the NHMRC.

Gordon's main body of work under his Fellowship is a study of novel probiotics and their potential to alleviate intestinal mucositis, an inflammatory condition caused by chemotherapy. The NHMRC grant will complement Gordon's current study into therapies to ease the pain of mucositis. "We have had great success so far with sub-

stances such as Lyprinol, an extract from the green-lipped mussel, which is a New Zealand shellfish. "This is the first time we have found evidence that Lyprinol can be used in the fight against an inflamed gastrointestinal tract".

"In addition to our work with probiotics we are working with emu oil and grapeseed extract as anti-inflammatory treatments, and one of my students is investigating the use of traditional Chinese medicines. "Slowly but surely, we are applying more rigorous scientific scrutiny to alternative and complementary therapies. It's an exciting time as we have shown

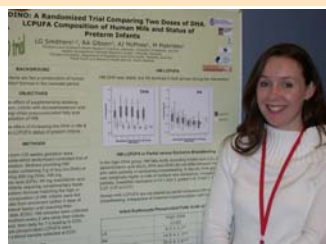
which have been handed down over thousands of years, are indeed very useful. Obviously the most important outcome is better treatment for cancer patients". As mucositis is very common and very painful, in many cases, oncologists have to keep doses of chemotherapy as low as possible to minimise its occurrence. Often they cannot get the dose high enough due to mucositis. "Keeping the severity of mucositis low will allow oncologists to increase doses of chemotherapy, which could significantly improve outcomes for patients".

A/Professor Gordon Howarth

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HDA TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENT CONFERENCE REPORT



Dr Lisa Smithers

Child Nutrition Research Centre
within Women's and Children's
Health Research Institute,
Flinders Medical Centre

Every two years, International Society for Study of Fatty Acids and Lipids (ISSFAL) holds a scientific conference and in 2008 it was held in Kansas City, USA. ISSFAL is peak society examining role of dietary lipids in health and disease. A broad range of cutting-edge research is showcased from basic science to clinical trials and public health policy. Program was jam-packed across 5 busy days and covered diverse research areas, such as role of fatty acids in cancer, lipidomics, neuroprotection, obesity, cognitive development and ageing.

My research interests lie in the

effect of long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (LCPUFA) on infant health, visual and cognitive development. LCPUFA are important constituents of retinal and neural tissues and therefore contribute to development of vision and cognition. The conference was very relevant to my research program as there were large number of presentations on fatty acids and development in the perinatal period and early childhood years.

I made two presentations, an oral and poster. The poster sessions were very well attended by conference delegates. My poster attracted much attention as I reported data on fatty acid composition of human milk and infant erythrocyte phospholipids from the DINO trial, which is the largest randomized controlled fatty acid intervention trial ever conducted in preterm infants. I demonstrated that supplementing lactating mothers of preterm infants with tuna oil raised the n-3 (omega-3) LCPUFA content of human milk, which in turn in-

creased the n-3 LCPUFA levels circulating in the infant. Human milk provides the vulnerable preterm infant immunological support and interventions that support breastfeeding are advantageous. In addition, raising n-3 LCPUFA status of preterm infants is important because these infants are denied usual gestational period to accumulate these fatty acids in retinal and neural tissues. My poster complimented a later presentation by my colleague and DINO trial Chief Investigator, A/Prof Makrides who presented the main findings of the trial in a plenary session. My oral presentation also generated much interest, as I presented a systematic review and meta-analysis which showed further trials are needed to quantify the effects of LCPUFA supplemented formulas for preterm infants in terms of clinically relevant outcomes including neurodevelopment and diseases commonly associated with prematurity.

A satellite workshop addressing

the conduct of clinical trials and harmonization of research methods in cognitive and neurodevelopmental areas was held prior to main conference. The workshop was thought provoking and will be very useful when designing future studies.

During my visit to the USA I extended my stay to undergo training with internationally renowned researchers in the field of fatty acids and cognitive development, where I learned new techniques for assessing emerging cognitive functions in young children. I am hoping to establish these techniques in Adelaide in the near future.

I am very thankful to HDA for supporting my trip to the USA. Attending the conference provided me with valuable opportunities to network with other researchers and present my research in an international setting, but also to learn more about clinical trials, cognitive assessments and develop an ongoing collaboration with the neuroscientists from USA.

On 12 June 2008, HDA held its 4th annual Oration presented by Professor Barbara Pocock on *Work+Life Balance? How Changing Patterns of Work affect Health and Wellbeing in Australia*. Professor Pocock is Director of the Centre for Work+Life at the University of South Australia and was presented with the Healthy Development Adelaide Award for 2008.

The Oration is HDA's high profile event for the year where we recognise the achievement, this year of Professor Barbara Pocock for her excellence in research contributing to healthy development. Professor Pocock's opening statement "I want to reflect on why issues of *work* are vital to Healthy Development Adelaide's goal to improve the physical, psychological and social health of Australia's infants, children and adolescents through research". [Professor Pocock's presentation can be found at www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/news](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/news)



pictured l to r: 1. Professor Barbara Pocock delivering HDA Oration; 2. HDA Co-Convenor Professor Caroline McMillen, Deputy Vice Chancellor & Vice President (Research & Innovation) at UniSA with Professor Barbara Pocock and HDA Co-Convenor Professor Robert Norman, Director of Research Centre for Reproductive Health at University of Adelaide; 3. HDA Co-Convenor Professor Michael Sawyer, Head of the Research and Evaluation Unit at CYWHS with Professor Eric Haan, Head of Department of Genetic Medicine at CYWHS; 4. Vice Chancellor & President UniSA, Professor Peter Høj with Professor Pocock.

On 17 July 2008, HDA held its second Thematic Evening for the year on *New Insights in Diabetes: developmental and social origins - what's next?*. Four expert speakers presented interesting insights to the topic of Diabetes that ranged from the early life origins, the increasing rise of type 2 diabetes in children, the health of young indigenous women in far north Queensland and the current status of the islet cell transplantation program.

The event was held at the Basil Hetzel Building at UniSA and attracted a very large audience of 130 people from the University, government, students, health services and community sectors.

The event was attended by The Hon Dr Basil Hetzel AC and introduced by A/Professor Claire Roberts from the University of Adelaide, Chair of the HDA Research Synergies Working Group. The event was chaired by Dr Patrick Phillips, Director of the Diabetes Centre and Endocrinology Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Professor Julie Owens, Head of the School of Paediatrics and Reproductive Health from the University of Adelaide presented on the *Early life origins of diabetes: new ways to intervene*.

Professor Jennifer Couper, Head of the Discipline of Paediatrics at the University of Adelaide and Head of the Department of Endocrinology and Diabetes at the Women's and Children's Hospital presented on *Type 1 and 2 diabetes: overlap or overlay?*

A/Professor David Torpy, Discipline of Medicine at the University of Adelaide and Senior Endocrinologist at the Royal Adelaide Hospital presented on the *South Australian / NT islet cell transplant program*.

Professor Robyn McDermott, Pro Vice Chancellor for the Division of Health Sciences at the University of South Australia presented on the *health of young Indigenous women in far north Queensland*.

[The above presentations can be found at www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/news](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/news)



pictured l to r: 1. Professor Jennifer Couper delivering her talk; 2. The Hon Dr Basil Hetzel AC, A/Professor David Torpy, A/Professor Claire Roberts, Professor Julie Owens and Dr Patrick Phillips; 3 & 4. Attendees networking post event.

Report submitted February 2008 by Dr Charmaine Power, School of Nursing & Midwifery, Flinders University; Ms Anne Nixon, Joint Midwifery Unit Head, Midwifery Group Practice, CYWHS; and Ms Kim O'Donnell, Research Associate, Aboriginal Health Research Unit, Flinders University.

Southern Adelaide Health Service, in conjunction with the SA Department of Health, established The Southern Aboriginal Maternity Care Project which commenced in February 2006 as a pilot project to develop a service model that established linkages and partnerships, and to provide a framework for an integrated maternity care service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their babies that is accessible and provides culturally responsive and timely maternity care.

An Aboriginal Health Worker was employed as a Project Officer to develop this model, with support from a Management Group of senior Aboriginal Southern Adelaide Health Service staff, a Reference Group (a wide range of service providers from the Southern Adelaide region), and a small group of Aboriginal Elders. A key element of the Project was a continuous evaluation component, from start to finish. Ongoing evaluation aimed to enable the evaluation team and Southern Adelaide Health Service to reflect regularly on their actions and to implement strategies to develop an effective service model that is responsive to the needs of Aboriginal mothers and infants.

The recommendations from the report synthesise the findings of the evaluation and provide guides for the continued development and strengthening of the Southern Aboriginal Maternity Care Program.

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that clinical pathways for maternity care be clarified, with an understanding of the implications of each pathway for accessibility, suitability and cultural appropriateness for Aboriginal clients in the Southern region. The role of the Project Worker in each of these pathways will need to be negotiated and integrated. Options: 1. Midwifery model – low risk at booking. 2. GP shared care – requires two specific medical visits at FMC with obstetricians. 3. Obstetric care – high risk at booking - Midwives Clinic at FMC and obstetrician visits at FMC.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that printed material be produced for clients and for the Aboriginal community, clarifying the model and care pathways. This information also needs to be provided to caregivers and agencies across the Southern region.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that the processes to provide clinical support and debriefing for the Project Worker, including access to maternity care practitioners, is articulated and formalised. Prevention of vicarious traumatisation is crucial in this role, as the Project Worker provides care for women in many complex situations (guidelines for maintaining the emotional wellbeing of staff are recommended where there is a cumulative effect of undertaking work with clients who may have traumatic outcomes). Access to maternity care expertise is an important component of this, in order for the role to be safe and effective.

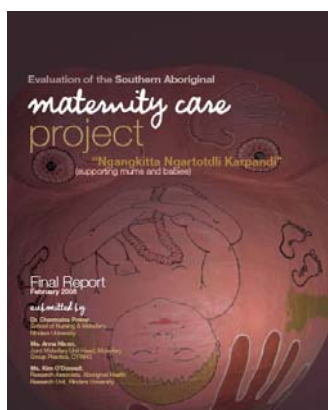
Recommendation 4

It is recommended that the Southern region consider an initiative to support appropriate transport resources for Aboriginal women seeking pregnancy care, as lack of transport is a serious block to women accessing care in hospitals and other appointments.

Recommendation 5

It is recommended that the service expands to include another project worker to provide further client services (as articulated in Recommendation One) to the increasing Aboriginal birthing population in the Southern region. This increased resourcing would further the development of the effective integration of this program into existing maternity services in the Southern region. The Southern region is geographically large with only one centre for birthing. An additional worker would also ensure better coverage of the region, also taking into account Recommendation Four.

If you would like the full report email anne.jurisevic@adelaide.edu.au



Report cover photo:

“Giving new life to mums and babies”

By Anna Pondi

The belly represents nurturing, protection, our women, children and families. The feet represent movement within the womb; the hand represents feeling and touching the life within and the symbolic meaning of the birthing process. The smaller hands represent feeding and nurturing and the touch of the child.

HDA TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENT CONFERENCE REPORT

Volume 4, Issue 4



Dr Natalie Sinn
Nutritional Physiology Research
Centre
University of South Australia

The International Society for Study of Fatty Acids and Lipids (ISSFAL) conference was attended by around 400 delegates from the USA, Europe, Australia and South Africa and focused on lipid research. It is a 2-yearly conference and provided an excellent opportunity to catch up with other researchers and industry involved in manufacture of fatty acid supplements.

During the conference I had the opportunity to spend time with researchers from the British Institute of Psychiatry, and had

in-depth conversations with Drs Alexandra Richardson (UK), Jay Burgess (USA), and Swedish researchers who are all key researchers in omega-3 fatty acids and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). I also had to opportunity to catch up with and meet other key researchers in the fatty acid area, including those who are involved in relevant journals and peer-review. I was taken out for dinner by Vifor, a Swiss company who bought Equazen (who has previously provided support for my research activities) and was invited to update them on future research proposals with indication of future funding support.

With regard to healthy development, there were a number of well attended maternal and infant sessions in my colleague and fellow HDA travel grant recipient Dr Lisa Smithers' area of expertise. Two symposia were dedicated to neuropsychology; these included a number of updates on research, including my own, with omega-3 fatty acids

and child ADHD. Dr Richardson, who had invited me to submit an abstract for an oral presentation, gave an overview. Some preliminary results were reported from London, from investigators who are supplementing adolescents who have ADHD with omega-3s and also conducting MRIs to determine whether any improvements following supplementation are mediated by alterations in cerebral activity.

Then we heard, in particular, about two studies conducted in Sweden by Johnson and Gustafsson. The results of these studies supported previous reports of improvement in ADHD symptoms with omega-3 supplementation. Importantly, they extended this research by dividing their samples into subgroups according to comorbid symptoms, and found that those children who had learning difficulties and the inattentive subtype were more likely to respond favourably to supplementation.

This supported part of the underlying rationale for our present

study in South Australia for which I presented baseline data, as this project is investigating the specific group of children with ADHD and learning difficulties. The conference was an ideal opportunity to promote our study, which is also investigating biological mechanisms and comparing long-chain omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA. The study received considerable advance interest with many researchers keen to know the outcomes.

Therefore the conference demonstrated that the work with omega-3 fatty acids and learning and behaviour problems associated with ADHD is progressing in different nations around the world and was an opportunity to ensure that we can progress the research to optimise the outcomes and provide a clearer picture of children most likely to benefit, underlying mechanisms and ideal dosage of omega-3s.

ARC-LINKAGE PROJECTS COMMENCING JULY 2008 HIGHLIGHTING HDA MEMBERS

A/Prof JD Karnon; Prof J Beilby; Ms CH Holton; Mr PH Hakendorf; Prof DI Ben-Tovim; Prof P Ryan; A/Prof SD Eckermann; Dr NP Roos; **Prof MG Sawyer**; Mr AL Woollacott; Mr DM Banham; Dr R Pegram; Ms S Thompson; Mr AG Elshaug

Evaluating the long-term costs and benefits of community-based initiatives

2008-2011: \$300,000

Partner organisations - SA Health, Department of Education and Children's Services, Central Northern Adelaide Health Service
Administering organisation - University of Adelaide

Dr J Dollman; Dr K Ball; Prof TS Olds; Dr MJ Drummond; **Dr AM Magarey**; **Dr N Sinn**; Mr J Smith; Ms TK Gill; Ms L Jarman

Exploring resilience in relation to physical activity and dietary behaviours among children from neighbourhoods of low socio-economic position

2008-2011: \$80,000

Partner organisation - SA Health

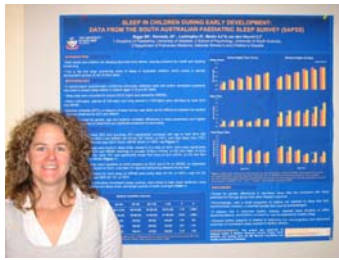
Administering organisation - University of South Australia

Prof L Segal; **Prof DA Scott**; A/Prof PH Delfabbro; A/Prof J Ratcliffe; Ms N Rogers; Ms G Mondy; Ms S Thompson; Dr TG Donald

Priority Setting in Child Protection: developing an evidence-based strategy to reduce child abuse and neglect and associated harms

2008-2012: \$562,748

Partner organisations - Social Inclusion Unit (Department of the Premier and Cabinet), Children Youth and Women's Health Service, Department of Families and Communities, Department of Education and Children's Services, SA Health
Administering organisation - University of South Australia



Ms Sarah Biggs
Discipline of Paediatrics
University of Adelaide

Ironically, SLEEP 2008 was anything but. Starting at 8am and often going on late into the night with dinner symposiums, actually getting sleep was not high on the agenda at this conference.

Thanks to the help of HDA, I had the opportunity to attend SLEEP 2008, the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies (APSS), held in June in Baltimore, USA. This is one of the biggest sleep conferences in the world and provides a six day program filled with the latest advances in sleep medicine and sleep research, as well as a specialised trainee program designed to assist in scientific and career development for post graduate students and early career researchers.

The conference began with the

Sleep Research Societies trainee symposia, which was filled with presentations and workshops facilitated by some of the leaders within the sleep field. And by no means did they start slowly. Right from the keynote address we were asked to challenge our paradigms and search for new and innovative ways of determining the function of sleep. No, that is not a typo - sleep researchers are still searching for the answer to the question of why we (and every other animal species on the planet) sleep. The series of workshops that followed were invaluable, not only providing training on the latest techniques in recording and measuring sleep, but also providing tips for successful career development. Hearing this advice from the experts was inspirational.

Although the developmental research presented at SLEEP 2008 was limited due to the conference's clinical focus, it was nonetheless of high quality. Of particular interest were the presentations attempting to define normal sleep across the ages. While we know quite a bit about what happens when people have truncated or disrupted sleep, defining 'normal sleep'

which provides for optimal health and development remains speculative. This is especially the case in children and the elderly as sleep changes so dramatically during these times. What makes this area of research particularly difficult is the influence of cultural and social norms on sleep behavior. However, it is also of great importance as knowing what is optimal for healthy development will allow us to provide informed and proactive advice to the wider community and not just reactive interventions to those already at detriment.

Another 'hot' area of interest was that of the association between sleep and obesity. It appears that the research in this area has now moved beyond epidemiological reports to more objective measures of sleep and metabolic functioning. For example, two separate research groups showed that in addition to getting less total sleep, overweight children also show differences in the structure of their sleep, especially rapid eye movement or REM sleep. Whilst the metabolic consequences of these results are still to be determined, this has very exciting and relevant implications for healthy

development as with this information we can begin to design intervention programs that not only increase sleep time, but target specific aspects of sleep which may aid in weight management.

And of course, this was just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. From the multitude of data presented at this conference, it is abundantly clear that sleep affects all aspects of health and development, from cognitive function, to obesity, to inflammatory markers associated with cardiovascular disease, to mental health. It is also abundantly clear that there are currently more questions than answers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the HDA for their support which enabled me to attend SLEEP 2008. On an academic level, I have gained a much greater understanding of what is known and more importantly, what is not known, in the area of sleep research. Moreover, on a personal level, I have gained some invaluable tools to help me in forging a successful research career in the healthy development of children.

UPCOMING: HDA THEMATIC EVENING

EARLY
NOTICE



HDA's 3rd Thematic Evening
for the year
will be held on
Thursday 9 October



Allergies in Maternal and Child Health

more details in mid/late August

FUNDING, GRANT & AWARD OPPORTUNITIES

The General Sir John Monash Foundation Awards - *Leaders making a difference to Australia's future*

The State Government is a proud supporter of The General Sir John Monash Foundation Awards, one of Australia's prestigious scholarship awards programs. Up to eight awards are presented annually to outstanding Australians graduating from Australian Universities and enable the recipients to study abroad at the world's best universities, appropriate to their field of study.

Eligible Australians are encouraged to nominate for the awards, which are presented by the Governor-General in November. Up to \$150,000 over 3 years.

The Foundation supports study programmes in any field, which leads to the highest academic research degree generally accepted in that field of study. Principally this will be a PhD or DPhil or an equivalent research doctoral degree. Only in exceptional circumstances, would Foundation consider supporting an applicant to undertake a Masters Degree that extends their capability for a special purpose. *The closing date for applications is 31 August 2008, for more information go to www.monashawards.org for nomination forms and a list of the 2008 winners.*

GlaxoSmithKline Award for Research Excellence 2009

The GlaxoSmithKline Australia Award for Research Excellence is to recognise a researcher with a demonstrated track record in human health, and for whom the award will facilitate career development and further achievements with potential importance to human health and Australian research. The award is valued at \$60,000 to further the scientist's work and knowledge. Nominations giving full details of the practical application of the work and background of the nominee, together with the names of two referees. *The closing date for applications is 1 October 2008, for more information go to www.gsk.com.au*

Jean Denton & Lillian De Lissa Scholarship

The scholarship is for the purpose of completing postgraduate study or advanced research or a combination of both, within Australia and/or overseas, in an area of early childhood education. The benefit of such studies or research is to advance the knowledge of early childhood education within Australia. The scholarship is available to any Australian citizen working in Australia. In 2008, the value of the scholarship will be up to a maximum of \$16,000. *The closing date for applications is 3 October 2008, for more information go to www.unisa.edu.au/resdegrees/scholarships/docs/jeandentonmemorial2008.rtf*

Australian Academy of the Humanities - Special Joint Project Funding: Australia and Britain - Travel Grant

The Australian Academy of the Humanities, the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, and the British Academy will provide support of joint projects between Australian and British scholars. One award of up to 8,000 pounds for a project which covers both humanities and social sciences disciplines or two awards of up to 4,000 pounds per project will be available each year to cover travel and maintenance expenses. Funding is not intended to cover major research expenses. The award will be for one year with possible extension upon re-application. *The closing date for applications is 26 September 2008, for more information go to www.humanities.org.au/Grants/International/Britain/Britain.htm*



LLOYD COX MEMORIAL LECTURE PROFESSOR EUAN WALLACE



The annual Lloyd Cox Memorial Lecture

Professor Euan Wallace

'Inhibins and activins in reproduction: clinical lessons from biological conversations'

Thursday 2 October, 5.30pm-6.30pm

Queen Victoria Lecture Theatre, 1st Floor Queen Victoria Building

Women's and Children's Hospital



Professor Wallace established and leads the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Research Group within the Centre for Women's Health Research at the Monash Institute of Medical Research. The group focuses on basic and clinical aspects of pregnancy and has an international reputation for its Down Syndrome screening program and the role of inhibins and activins in pregnancy. More recently, the group has established research programs in fetal growth restriction, *in utero* infection and early pregnancy events. In collaboration with Monash Immunology and Stem Cell Laboratories (MISCL), the group is a world leader in amnion "stem cell" biology.

Professor Wallace is Director of Obstetric Services at Southern Health, the largest provider of women's services in Victoria. His clinical appointment is in high risk pregnancies: recurrent miscarriage, multiple pregnancy, hypertension and endocrine disease in pregnancy. He heads the RANZCOG "Intrapartum Fetal Surveillance Education Program" - a national education program for doctors and midwives.

RSVP by Monday 22 September to Virginia Furness ✉ virginia.furness@adelaide.edu.au or ☎ 8303 4552

The Healthy Mothers Healthy Families Survey is a population-based survey of recent mothers in South Australia and Victoria. A first for South Australia, the study is designed to explore women's views and experiences of care received during pregnancy, labour and birth and in the first six months following the birth of their baby.

The study builds on previous surveys of recent mothers in Victoria and will investigate the impact of changing patterns in the provision and organisation of maternity and early postnatal care in both states. Aims include:

- ★ To monitor the impact of maternity service strategies including increased opportunities for continuity of care/caregiver; increased choice regarding options for care in the public system and the uptake of evidence to inform practice.
- ★ To assess and contrast experiences and views of women using established and newer models of maternity care.
- ★ To monitor the impact of the current length of postnatal hospital stay and provision of home based services on maternal health and emotional wellbeing, infant readmissions and breastfeeding.
- ★ Assess the prevalence of maternal depression and intimate partner violence and investigate women's views about the responsiveness of primary care, public hospital and specialist services to psychosocial issues in pregnancy and the first six months following birth.

Thirty four South Australian public and private hospitals with births in the study period (Sept 1st – Oct 26th 2007) agreed to participate in the survey and assist with distributing questionnaires to women when their infants were six months of age. Homebirth practitioners also assisted in this process. More than 8000 women living in metropolitan, regional and remote areas of SA and Victoria have been invited to take part.

Completed questionnaires are currently being received and coded by the research team at the coordinating research unit, the Healthy Mothers Healthy Families Research Group, at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. A study reference group in SA comprising midwifery, medical, public health, health policy and consumer representatives has provided the research team with valuable advice regarding conduct of study including liaison process with hospitals, questionnaire design and piloting. It's anticipated that preliminary results will be available in mid-2009.

Aboriginal Families Study

The Healthy Mothers Healthy Families Research Group is working in partnership with the Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia (AHCSA) to plan a research project about pregnancy and postnatal care for Aboriginal families in South Australia. The project is called the Aboriginal Families Study. It will be a sister study to the state-wide postal survey of recent mothers carried out in SA and Victoria in early 2008.

Aims of the project include:

- ★ To find out what Aboriginal women and women with an Aboriginal partner having a baby in South Australia think of their pregnancy care, care during labour and birth, and care after the baby is born.
- ★ To use the information to advocate for changes to improve pregnancy, birthing and postnatal care for Aboriginal women and families.

From late 2007 to August 2008, the research team will be consulting with Aboriginal communities, organisations and groups throughout South Australia. We are hoping to talk to as many organisations and community members as possible during this time. Once we have gathered this information, it will be summarised and used to develop a plan for the research phase of the project (2008-2010).

An Aboriginal Advisory Group with representation from metropolitan and regional health services, the Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia, Aboriginal family and support services, and Aboriginal health workers with technical expertise in maternity and postnatal care, has been formed to guide and advise the research team.

Two Aboriginal project officers have been appointed to assist with promoting the project and consulting communities and organisations in South Australia. Roxanne Miller is based at the Spencer Gulf Rural Health School in Port Lincoln and has been working with communities in Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, West Coast, Spencer Gulf, Mid North and York Peninsula, Ceduna, Point Pearce, Coober Pedy, Yalata and Oak Valley. Hayley Wilson is based at the Magill Campus, UniSA and is working with communities in Adelaide, Murray Lands, Riverland, Point McLeay and Mt Gambier.

Projects funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council, SA Department of Health and Victorian Department of Human Services. For further information, please contact: A/Prof Stephanie Brown or Dr Jane Yelland.

T: (03) 9090 5205/11 E: stephanie.brown@mcri.edu.au; jane.yelland@mcri.edu.au. Info also at www.mcri.edu.au/healthymothers/

SA Study Investigators

A/Prof Stephanie Brown: Healthy Mothers Healthy Families research group, Murdoch Children's Research Institute

Dr Jane Yelland: Healthy Mothers Healthy Families research group, Murdoch Children's Research Institute

Prof Jeffrey Robinson: Discipline of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Adelaide

A/Prof Peter Baghurst: Public Health Research Unit, Women's and Children's Hospital, CYWHS

Dr Georgina Stamp: Spencer Gulf Rural Health School, University of South Australia

Dr Fiona Arney: Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia

Ms Karen Glover: Aboriginal Health Division, CYWHS

Ms Christine Franks: Spencer Gulf Rural Health School, University of South Australia



HDA was a partner in the Fraser Mustard residency that took place in Oct/Nov 2006 and Feb/Mar 2007. The objective of his residency was to increase interest and understanding across all sectors of the South Australian community about the crucial importance of the early years in developing a healthy and competent population.

Dr Mustard's report draws attention to the new knowledge that is emerging about early brain development and its effect on lifelong behaviour, learning and health. He recommends that this knowledge be spread as widely as possible to all people whose work affects outcomes for very young children. The recommendations he has made for South Australia cover the need for improvements and change in the work of universities and TAFE and the need to raise the standard of education and training for staff in all disciplines that affect the development of infants and young children.

excerpt from page 13 of the report:

"South Australia has a unique advantage in having established the South Australian Neuroscience Institute (SANI) involving the three universities and other institutions. This is a potential base for linking developmental neurobiological science with all disciplines concerned with population health, human wellbeing, behaviour, learning and competence. Another organisation, Healthy Development Adelaide (HDA), can also contribute to the integration of knowledge from neurobiological science with health, learning and behaviour. Linking both these organisations in a human development program or institute linked to the universities with a focus on developmental neuro- and biological science and on how the trajectories in health, learning and behaviour are set in early life could make a major contribution to assisting all university disciplines to incorporate this new knowledge into their teaching."

Dr Mustard's report makes 12 recommendations for South Australia. The report can be found at www.thinkers.sa.gov.au or contact Pauline Tuft on 8226 2220 for a copy.

1. Neuroscientific research and teaching
2. Measuring children's development in South Australia
3. Taking steps towards improvement
4. Changing Government programs and policies
5. Educating child development staff
6. Involving the community
7. Sensitivity to the needs of Aboriginal families
8. Supporting vulnerable families
9. The views of young South Australian public servants and students
10. Integrating the data
11. The value of investing State resources in early childhood
12. Establishing an independent body

Early Childhood Development: The best start for all South Australians, a detailed companion document to Fraser Mustard's final report is also available at www.thinkers.sa.gov.au

HDA TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENT CONFERENCE REPORT



Dr Lisa Jamieson

Australian Research Centre for
Population Oral Health (ARCPHO),
University of Adelaide

A HDA Travel Grant enabled me to present a poster at the 86th General Session of the International Association of Dental Research (IADR) in Toronto, Canada in July of this year.

The title of my poster was 'Risk factors for periodontal disease among Aboriginal Australian Adolescents' and findings of a study that involved periodontal examinations of participants in the Aboriginal Birth Cohort (ABC) study were presented.

The ABC study is a prospective, longitudinal investigation of over 680 young adults born to Aboriginal mothers at the Royal Darwin Hospital, Northern Territory, between 1987 and 1990. The IADR is the highest world-ranking conference in the field of dental research, with each annual meeting hosting internationally-renown dental researchers from a wide range of disciplines

and backgrounds; at this year's meeting there were over 3300 delegates. Attendance at this year's IADR meeting provided invaluable experience in terms of presenting and defending research that I am currently involved with to world leaders in the field, as well as enabling interaction with other researchers to foster collaboration. It was an opportunity to consolidate existing professional relationships with colleagues overseas, to learn of new and innovative procedures not yet published, and to discuss/debate and defend current research initiatives.

The IADR has a strong commitment to dental public health-

related issues, with an emerging interest in the oral health of marginalised groups such as the world's Indigenous populations. I was able to discuss findings from my research with other researchers, industry members, clinical dental professionals, undergraduate and post-graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.

It was an invaluable experience that will hopefully assist in developing an international profile in Indigenous oral health research, and I am very grateful to HDA for their support in enabling me to achieve this.