

Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 4

November 2005

Upcoming Events...

- **20 - 23 November**

ASMR National Scientific Conference on 'Hormones, Fertility and Cancer' at Couran Cove Resort, Queensland.

- **21 November**

Department of Health seminar on the 'Implications of developments in bio-technology and genetics on public and population health'.

- **30 November - 3 December**

Nutrition Society of Australia 2005 Scientific Meeting at the Hilton on the Park, Melbourne.

- **9 December**

HDA Xmas Drinks at the University of Adelaide Staff Club - Terrace Gardens.

- **7 - 10 March 2006**

Womb to Tomb International Congress - Human Reproductive Health through the Ages at the Adelaide Convention centre.

For further information visit our events page at:

www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/events

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

HDA has been striving to promote, facilitate and develop research collaborations between researchers and government. We have achieved this in a number of ways that have included hosting events on research topics and meeting with government departments towards ARC-Linkage grants.

HDA has also been moving towards a state wide focus to include our current associations and we will be restructuring our

current Steering Group to reflect this focus. Hence, in 2006 we will be striving even harder to work towards developing a collaborative research environment and portfolio for South Australia.

Our Annual Report for 2004-2005 has been submitted to the University and can be found on our website. In 2006, we will have 4 additional events (3 seminars and a research training symposium) that reflects our

commitment to HDA's Research PhD Training Program commencing in 2006 (full story on page 2).

We look forward to working with you and building the Foundation of a Healthy Society for all South Australians.

Prof Robert Norman
Prof Caroline McMillen

3 SUCCESSFUL HDA EVENTS

The Wonder Years - Science meets the Community:

On 11 September, an expert panel presented different aspects of early childhood development covering topics of education, child psychology, intellectual development and childhood diseases and responded to questions from a community audience. The panel included Prof Dorothy Scott (Director of the Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia), A/Prof Victor Noszar (Senior Paediatric Consultant with Child and Youth Health), A/Prof Pat Buckley (Associate Head of the School of Pharmacy & Medical Sciences, University of South Australia) and Dr Simon Koblar (Clinical neurologist and neuroscientist at the Uni-

versity of Adelaide and TQEH).

Cultural Awareness and Research workshop:

On 22 September, HDA held a workshop on "Perspectives on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture and Research Issues". Cultural Awareness was presented by Roger Thomas (Director, Centre for Australian Indigenous Research and Studies - Wilto Yerlo) and research issues by PhD student Sonja Kutza (Gender Studies).

Thematic Evening - Substance Abuse:

On 20 October, HDA held its final event for the year on Substance Abuse covering snapshots from multidisciplinary

perspectives. Dr Rod Irvine (Department of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology, University of Adelaide), Dr Elizabeth Elliot (School of Pharmacy and Medical Sciences, University of South Australia), A/Prof Robert Ali (WHO Collaborating Centre for Research in Treatment of Drug and Alcohol Problems), Dr Simone Dennis (Anthropology Department, University of Adelaide). Prof Jason White moderated audience discussion.

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For more information on these events visit our events page.

www.adelaide.edu.au/hda

MEMBER PROFILE—PETER COYLE HANSON INSTITUTE

Dr Peter Coyle is the Chief Operating Officer of the Hanson Institute and heads the Drugs and Metals Research Group at the IMVS. He is also a Senior Affiliate Lecturer with the Department of Pathology, University of Adelaide.

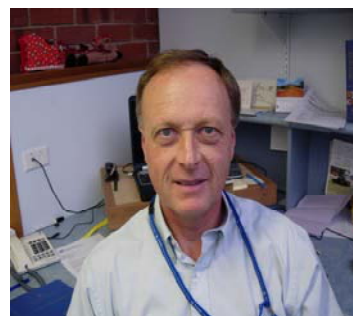
I have thirty years experience as a Clinical Biochemist at the IMVS and worked in both general diagnostic and research areas. My interests include carbohydrate metabolism, nutrition and cancer, heavy metal toxicity and metabolism of essential trace elements. My research

focuses on the mechanisms by which various stressors during pregnancy can lead to birth abnormalities and cognitive problems in their offspring. These insults include infections, psychological shocks or exposure to toxicants such as alcohol. Using a mouse model, we have found that prenatal infections or exposure to alcohol leads to production of a zinc-binding protein (metallothionein) in the mother's liver. It attracts and holds zinc in the liver, sequestering it from the maternal circulation and limiting the amount

available to the growing foetus. A constant zinc supply is essential for the developing foetus and even a transient deficiency can cause severe effects on development. We have found that we can prevent birth abnormalities caused by infection or alcohol and cognitive deficits caused by alcohol by supplementing diet with zinc during pregnancy.

Our data suggests poor zinc nutrition coupled with infection and/or alcohol exposure puts the foetus at grave risk.

We would contend that zinc nutrition in pregnancy deserves similar attention to that given to folic acid nutrition.



Dr Peter Coyle - 8222 3028 or peter.coyle@imvs.sa.gov.au

HDA RESEARCH PHD SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2006

HDA has developed a unique multidisciplinary research training program commencing in 2006 with 4 Scholarships to be awarded to prospective PhD students at a value of \$25,000 tax free per annum for 3 years.

These scholarships will appeal to candidates with backgrounds in biochemistry, biomedical engineering, demographics, dentistry, economics, education (medical), endocrinology, epide-

miology, ethics, genetics, indigenous health, law, nutrition, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, pharmacology, physiology, politics, psychology, psychiatry, public health and sociology.

The principal objectives of HDA's program are to:

- Add value to current research training with specific emphasis on value of multidisciplinary

approaches and research translation outcomes.

- Promote effective mentorship, professional development and career aspirations.
- Achieve recognition as a 'flagship' program for HDA and enhance recruitment of outstanding trainees with interests in all discipline areas of relevance to healthy development.



Closing date for applications is 15 November.

More information can be found at our website at www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/students

SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICY ONLINE (SAPO) www.adelaide.edu.au/sapo

SAPO was launched in July 2004 as an initiative of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in collaboration with the three South Australian Universities. It was developed as a means of linking researchers and public policy makers in South Australia as well as increasing the accessibility of research resources for researchers in universities, the public sector, industry, the media and schools. SAPO currently contains three key sections with a resources section under development. The first

comprises information about forthcoming events taking place in the government, university and community sectors. The second includes recent opinion and research updates from the three universities to highlight current research projects taking place. The main section contains research publications including reports, policy discussion papers and conference articles produced by the three sectors. The publications section also contains an archive of publications going back to 2000 fo-

cus on issues across a range of themes including the environment, youth and social policy.

SAPO users can submit research based publications on themes relevant to the state. Further information can be found at www.adelaide.edu.au/sapo/contributor/ or by contacting the Project Officer, Sanjuga Vasdev at sanjuga.vasdev@adelaide.edu.au.

SAPO has received positive feedback from users across

the government, education and tertiary sectors with much of this based on SAPO as "an essential resource for researchers and policy makers to be able to interact and be aware of so much diverse research and opportunities available".

A fortnightly e-newsletter is sent to subscribers through the site to inform about recent publication and event updates.

MEMBER PROFILE—LAREEN NEWMAN

School of Social Sciences

Ms Newman is currently completing her PhD thesis on how men's and women's experiences of childbearing and childrearing affect Australia's birth rate.

Her supervisors are Prof Graeme Hugo (Dept of Geographical & Environmental Studies) and A/Prof Barbara Pocock (Dept of Gender & Labour Studies). Research was conducted across 4 different socio-economic areas of Adelaide and included analysis of Census data, in-depth interviews examining differ-

ences in fertility rates and subjective perceptions of influences on fertility behaviour and likely future family size. It explores impact of both the embodied experiences of conception, pregnancy, birth and early parenthood as well as work-related and financial issues.

An active member of several state and national birth support groups, and the consumer representative on the Joint Advisory Committee for the Bachelor of Midwifery courses at South Australian Universities,

and has provided written and oral submissions to the SA Government's 2004 Inquiry into Postnatal Depression.

Ms Newman has written a book on "Better Birth: Raising Satisfaction & Reducing Fear". It contains 12 birth stories from women in Australia, Britain and France with information for women to help them make informed choices in relation to their birth. The book is due in February 2006 from New Holland publishers and is also co-authored by Heather Hancock,

former senior lecturer in midwifery at the University of South Australia, and currently Homebirth Coordinator for the Northern Territory government.

Ms Lareen Newman - lareen.newman@adelaide.edu.au or 8303 5647



NOVITA CHILDREN'S SERVICES - PRODUCING AND EVALUATING RESEARCH EVIDENCE

Novita Children's Services (formerly the Crippled Children's Association of SA Inc.) provides therapy, equipment and family support services to over 1000 children (0-18 years) with physical and severe multiple disabilities in SA. Novita employs occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech pathologists, psychologists, orthotists, rehabilitation engineers and social workers.

A Clinical Research department was established in 1999 to conduct research into the most effective and efficient clinical assessments and inter-

ventions for clients of Novita and to undertake Evidence-Based Practice. Novita has undertaken 10 major projects, 29 smaller projects, and 25 joint projects with universities and external agencies. In addition, clients, families and staff have participated in 13 varied projects initiated by external agencies from retrospective evaluation of services, to examining the effectiveness of various interventions or programs with individual clients or larger groups of clients and families. We have been highly successful in collaborating

with universities in attracting Honours, Masters and PhD students. We are also working with universities locally and nationally as industry partners for ARC-Linkage grants.

Novita is part of a NHMRC grant recently awarded to Prof Michael Sawyer, University of Adelaide that will examine the relationship between caregiver time and mental health and well-being of mothers caring for children with chronic disability.

The Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation of SA has funded the following projects

in recent years: * Effect of serial casting following Botulim Toxin A treatment for dynamic equinus for children with cerebral palsy. * Applications of pulse oximetry in assessment and management of dysphagia in children with physical disability. * Assistive technology solutions for students with physical disabilities: an analysis of utility, costs and student satisfaction.

Further information about our research, evidence based practice activities and Research Report can be found at www.novita.org.au or contact Dr Pammi Raghavendra (Manager, Clinical Research) at 8243 8281.

HDA'S CO-CONVENOR'S MOVE TO UNISA



HDA Co-Convenor, Professor Caroline McMillen will be moving to the University of South Australia in early December to take up the position of Pro Vice Chancellor and Vice President (Research & Innovation).

Caroline will be retaining her role at HDA which will help to strengthen HDA's vision and purpose towards building a

state research portfolio with all 3 state Universities and health service providers.

Caroline is a key leader of the ARC/NHMRC National Network for Genes, Environment and Development (NGED) and has been Chair of ARC and NHMRC project review panels with extensive experience in national and international research and academic policy

and development. Caroline is the only Australian Chair of a major commission within the International Union of Physiological Societies. Caroline also sits on a range of State and National policy committees including the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) Expert Subcommittee (Promoting and Maintaining Good Health).