

# Newsletter

## Upcoming Events...

- **5 - 7 March**

Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA) biennial national conference in Adelaide.

- **7 - 10 March**

Womb to Tomb International Congress - Human Reproductive Health Through the Ages in Adelaide.

- **31 March**

Welcome function for HDA Scholars.

- **23 - 28 July**

7th Congress of the International Society for the Study of Fatty Acids & Lipids (ISSFAL) incorporating the 6th International Congress on Essential Fatty Acids and Eicosanoids & PUFA in Maternal and Infant Health Annual Scientific Meetings in Cairns.

*For further information visit our events page at:*

[www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/events](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/events)

## NEW YEAR

*Happy New Year to all our members and associates.*

We are looking forward to an exciting year. As you may be aware we have a newly restructured Steering Group (see page 2) to assist us in bringing together our state focussed objectives.

We are commencing HDA's Research Training Program with four HDA Research PhD Scholarships awarded this year

to our Scholars (see page 3).

Our temporary working groups are continuing with some new members coming on board to help with planning of events. There will be a whole range of interesting topics for our Thematic Evenings, Oration and Research Day. We also have new events planned as part of the student's Research Training Program such as translation research seminars and a research symposium.

We would like to take this opportunity to farewell and thank a few people that have supported us at HDA: Don Robertson, Justin Trogdon, Chris Grupen, and Peter Rathjen. A special thanks to Neville Marsh for his support and commitment to the cluster initiative as Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research.

**Prof Robert Norman**  
**Prof Caroline McMillen**

## HDA RESEARCH SUCCESSES

### NHMRC

*Prof Caroline Crowther* from the Discipline of Obstetrics & Gynaecology for a randomised controlled trial of vaginal progesterone for the prevention of neonatal Respiratory Distress Syndrome.

*Prof Michael Sawyer* from the Discipline of Paediatrics leading two research teams, and being involved in a third team led by *A/Prof Peter Baghurst* from the Public Health Research Unit working on children's and mother's mental health issues.

*A/Prof Sarah Robertson* and *Dr Claire Roberts* from the Discipline of Obstetrics and Gynaecology for macrophage regulation of embryo implantation.

*Prof Heddy Zola, Prof Robert Gibson* and *Dr Maria Makrides*

from the Child Health Research Institute with 3 project grants.

*A/Prof David Kennaway* and *Prof Julie Owens* from the Discipline of Obstetrics and Gynaecology working on circadian rhythm disruption and relation to diabetes.

*Dr Michelle Lane* and *Dr Michael Davies* from the Research Centre for Reproductive Health working on viability markers for human IVF.

*A/Prof Peter Clifton, A/Prof Manny Noakes* and *Dr Grant Brinkworth* from CSIRO receiving 2 project grants.

### ARC

*Prof Barbara Pocock* from the University of South Australia for a linkage grant on work,

housing, services and community project.

### Ch 7 Children's Research Foundation

*A/Prof Jennifer Couper* from the Women's and Children's Hospital for the effect of folate on early atherosclerosis in children with type I diabetes.

*Prof Alastair MacLennan* from the Discipline of Obstetrics and Gynaecology for a pilot study to validate methods on hereditary variations in fetal inflammatory response to infection causing preterm delivery and cerebral palsy.

*Prof Caroline McMillen* from the University of South Australia for a study on oxygen sensing in the newborn.

## MEMBER PROFILE— JONATHAN NEWBURY

### DISCIPLINE OF RURAL HEALTH, UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

Professor Newbury has recently taken up the position of Professor of Rural Health and Head of Spencer Gulf Rural Health School (SGRHS). The University of South Australia and University of Adelaide have created a joint venture agreement to operate SGRHS and manage health professional education for rural practice. SGRHS's research interests focuses on chronic disease (metabolic syndrome), Indigenous health (eg: ear disease in aboriginal children), mental health and community development. Professor Newbury graduated from Mel-

bourne University (MBBS 1978) and headed to the country to become a rural GP. Experience in rural general practice includes Yarrowonga, Victoria for 13 years after completing general practice training in rural Victoria and Great Britain.

Since commencing work with the University of Adelaide in 1997 he has practiced in the Yorke Peninsula towns of Maitland and Minlaton. Academic responsibilities at the University of Adelaide have been the Rural Undergraduate Support and Coordination Program (1997-

2006) and the Rural Clinical School (2002-2006). He is moving to Port Lincoln to continue in general practice at the Investigator Clinic and manage the administration of SGRHS from the UniSA Whyalla campus.

His MD thesis was "75+ Health Assessment: a randomised controlled trial" and tested a model of preventive aged care in the community based on nurses and doctors working as a team. He has developed medical education in Primary Health Care for the developing

world based on experience and ongoing links to a medical school in rural Nepal. He has published on 75+HA, rural medical education and rural aboriginal and developing world health issues.



## THE AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE (AUSSMC)

*The voices, faces and views of the scientific community can often get lost in the media scrum for 30-second sound bites, medical cures, and whatever else will sell advertising space. However there is one Adelaide-based organisation that plans to change all that.*

AusSMC is an initiative of UK Baroness Professor Susan Greenfield when she was a recent *Adelaide Thinker in Residence*. Central to AusSMC's

success is its growing database of scientists. The team is looking for experts in all areas of science that are well respected in their field and willing to make themselves available for media comment at short notice. This means allowing the Centre to have mobile numbers and in some cases home numbers.

Previous experience with the media is highly regarded but a willingness to engage is even more important.

"Scientists are sometimes reluctant to speak with reporters, especially on controversial areas of science. They fear being quoted out of context or tricky questions about risk for instance," Susannah Elliott said. "But if the community is to make informed decisions about science, then scientists have to get out there and explain what they're doing".

AusSMC also provides a resource for scientists with sup-

port available by email and telephone at any time and there are plans to create an interactive web based media course for those who find themselves in the spotlight for the first time.

*If you would like any information about AusSMC, email the team at [info@aus-smc.org](mailto:info@aus-smc.org) or visit the website at [www.aus-smc.org](http://www.aus-smc.org). The phone number is +61 8 8207 7419.*

## A STATE FOCUSED HDA STEERING GROUP

*The newly structured Steering Group met for the first time in December last year and will be moving to develop a stronger focus and future of HDA in South Australia.*

The Steering Group consists of the following members:

**Prof Robert Norman**, co-chair and HDA co-convenor from the University of Adelaide.

**Prof Caroline McMillen**, co-chair and HDA co-convenor from the University of South Australia.

**Prof Roy Goldie**, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences from Flinders University.

**Ms Anne Jurisevic**, HDA Network and Communications Officer from the University of Adelaide.

**Ms Sherry Thompson**, Executive Director: Early Childhood Services from the Department of Education and Children's Services.

**Hon Carolyn Pickles**, Chair of the Board of Directors from

the Children, Youth and Women's Health Service.

**Prof Barbara Pocock**, Director: Centre for Work and Life from the University of South Australia.

**A/Prof Margie Ripper**, School of Social Sciences - Gender, Work and Social Inquiry from the University of Adelaide.

**Prof Michael Sawyer**, Head of Discipline of Paediatrics and Assoc Dean (Women's and Children's Health) from

the University of Adelaide.

**Prof Dorothy Scott**, Director: Centre for Child Protection from the University of South Australia.

**Mr Andrew Stanley**, Director: Strategic Planning and Research Branch from the Department of Health.

**Prof Heddy Zola**, Executive Director from the Child Health Research Institute.

HDA's aim is to add value to current research training with a specific emphasis on multidisciplinary approaches and translation of research outcomes, to promote effective mentorship, professional development and career aspirations, to achieve recognition as a 'flagship' program for HDA and enhance recruitment of outstanding scholars with interests in all discipline areas of relevance to healthy development.

## Leigh Guerin



**Brief Bio:** My previous research focussed on whether male reproductive tract microflora can influence seminal plasma cytokines and seminal parameters such as sperm concentration and motility. My hobbies include Australian rules football, mountain bike riding and snorkelling.

**Supervisors:** *Sarah Robertson* (Discipline of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, University of Adelaide) and *John Hayball* (School of Pharmacy and Medical Science, University of South Australia).

**PhD Project:** "Role of maternal T regulatory cells in healthy pregnancy". This is an area of research of pivotal importance to maternal immune tolerance of the conceptus in pregnancy. It is now recognised that disturbances in the maternal immune response can underpin various pathologies of pregnancy including implantation failure, miscarriage and pre-eclampsia. T regulatory cells are believed to be central mediators of maternal tolerance in pregnancy, however the means by which these cells are induced in the peri-implantation period and their antigen reactivity are unknown. Through unravelling the factors regulating the ontogeny and function of these cells in the implantation site we seek to identify new therapeutic targets for infertility and optimal fetal growth.

## Siew Seen Lim



**Brief Bio:** Siew Seen has a Bachelor of Science (Biomedical Science) from the University of Adelaide and a Master in Nutrition and Dietetics from Flinders University. Siew Seen enjoys reading, cooking, playing musical instruments and walking.

**Supervisors:** *Manny Noakes / Peter Clifton* (CSIRO Human Nutrition) and *Robert Norman* (Research Centre for Reproductive Health, University of Adelaide).

**PhD Project:** "Determinants of responsiveness to dietary intervention in Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) women to improve reproductive outcomes". Previous studies on dietary interventions on PCOS women have seen variable results in terms of reproductive outcomes. This project aims to determine the predictors of responders versus non responders to lifestyle intervention in PCOS women.

## Anne Raimondo



**Brief Bio:** Anne has a Bachelor of Science (Honours) from the University of Adelaide. I remain an incurable lover of books and rock 'n' roll, particularly albums from the 60s and 70s.

**Supervisors:** *Murray Whitelaw* (Discipline of Biochemistry, University of Adelaide) and *Simon Koblar* (Discipline of Genetics, University of Adelaide).

**PhD Project:** I will be studying the Single-Minded protein 1 (SIM1), a transcription factor which is thought to possess roles in early neural development and regulation of the feeding response in adults. By seeking to identify those genes whose expression is directly regulated by the in vivo activity of SIM1, I hope to gain a better understanding of the behaviour of this protein at the molecular level. Gene disruption studies in mice have shown that animals null for the SIM1 gene die at birth due to a lack of neuroendocrine secreting cells in the hypothalamus. Furthermore, heterozygote animals maintaining one allele of the SIM1 gene develop early onset obesity, which phenocopies a childhood obesity syndrome seen in humans who suffer a translocation of the SIM1 locus.

## Lynlea Simmonds



**Brief Bio:** Lynlea has a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) and a research interest in psychostimulants. Hobbies include running/fitness and reading.

**Supervisors:** *Jason White* (Discipline of Pharmacology, University of Adelaide) and *Lisa Kettler* (Discipline of Psychology, University of Adelaide).

**PhD Project:** "Pharmacological, cognitive and emotional outcomes of ecstasy use in young people". Early intervention, in the form of screening and brief intervention initiatives has the potential to address immediate harms, prevent the development of future drug related problems and reduce the subsequent burden on public health resources from substance misuse. I am particularly interested in continuing research in the area of screening and brief interventions, including investigating the use of the ASSIST screening tool and brief intervention for alcohol and/or poly-drug use with youth or indigenous populations.