Healthy Development Adelaide (HDA)

A Research & Innovation Cluster in South Australia

Advancing an understanding of healthy development to ensure the physical, psychological and social health of infants, children and adolescents

The Foundation of a Healthy Society

www.adelaide.edu.au/hda

background document: September 2014
Introduction
HDA plays a key role in South Australia linking research, service delivery and policy development. Through these linkages HDA promotes, facilitates and enables multidisciplinary research that advances understanding of healthy development and ensures the physical, psychological and social health of infants, children and adolescents.

HDA was established in 2004 as an initiative of the University of Adelaide. HDA is currently led by Professor Michael Sawyer (Women's and Children's Health Network / University of Adelaide) and Professor Claire Roberts (Robinson Research Institute, University of Adelaide). The inaugural Convenors were Professor Robert Norman (Robinson Institute, University of Adelaide) 2004 - 2013; and Professor Caroline McMillen (UniSA) 2004 - 2011.

HDA is supported by a partnership of South Australian organisations that includes the Robinson Research Institute, Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation, University of South Australia, Flinders University, Department for Education and Child Development, Fertility SA, Women’s and Children’s Health Research Institute and Repromed.

HDA has over 245 Research members (senior researchers, early career researchers and PhD students) and over 345 Associate (non-research) members. Our membership base is drawn from the University of Adelaide, University of South Australia, Flinders University, relevant institutions (local, national and international), government, and the general community.

We are proud of the role that HDA is playing within South Australia to foster multidisciplinary research at a basic, clinical, social and population level which leads to the healthy development and wellbeing of Australia’s future generations.

The Research Context and Target Areas
HDA was formed around three main pillars created to highlight specific research interactions and major research questions, each covering a specific time period and spanning from preconception to adolescence. Within each pillar are three themes. Each theme traverses basic science, clinical science, health service delivery, social, cultural, economic and environmental determinants of health. The intent of this structure is to ensure that research groups with thematic interests will align with researchers from other research areas to advance our understanding of overall impact of research relating to infants, children and adolescence.

A Good Start to Life: Preconception to Birth
- Healthy Reproduction: Early Growth and Birth: Pregnancy and Families

The First Steps: Birth to 5 years
- Healthy Babies: Growth and Child Health: Healthy Parenting

Learning to Climb: Childhood to Adolescence
- Adolescent Development: Health Risk Behaviours: Gender and Sexuality

Excellence in Research Collaboration
HDA’s role, profile and reputation within the state has been well established and our contribution was acknowledged by winning the Excellence in Research Collaboration category at the 2009 South Australian Science Excellence Awards.
WHO WE ARE

HDA was established to foster research relevant to the healthy development of children and adolescents. HDA has been developing relationships with cross-disciplinary teams with expertise to tackle the bigger research questions and to enable researchers to work more effectively across universities, government, research organisations and the community.

HDA has been building the blocks that can enable researchers to exchange ideas, build collaborative relationships and work together for the benefit of Australian society. HDA continues to advance as the prominent Health Research & Innovation Cluster in South Australia.

HDA Convenors

Professor Michael Sawyer OAM
Head: Research & Evaluation Unit, Women’s & Children’s Hospital, Women’s & Children’s Health Network
Professor: Discipline of Paediatrics, University of Adelaide

Michael Sawyer is currently a Director with Australian Rotary Health. He has previously been Head, Department of Paediatrics and Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Adelaide. In 2008, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to the field of child and adolescent mental health as a researcher and educator.

Professor Claire Roberts
NHMRC Senior Research Fellow
Research Leader, Placenta Development Group
Robinson Research Institute, University of Adelaide

Claire Roberts is well known in the International and National placenta research scene and is Treasurer of the International Federation of Placenta Associations and the President of the Australian New Zealand Placenta Research Association. Claire’s research focuses on cellular and molecular interactions in placental differentiation, invasion and function and their impacts on fetal and maternal health.

HDA Staff

Anne Jurisevic
HDA Executive Officer
Overseeing the event program, memberships, partnerships, newsletter, and website

Sarah Turner
HDA Support Officer
Overseeing the scholars and travel grant programs
**HDA’s Role**  
HDA plays a key role in South Australia linking research, service delivery and policy development. Through these linkages HDA promotes, facilitates and enables multidisciplinary research that advances understanding of healthy development and ensures the physical, psychological and social health of infants, children and adolescents.

**HDA’s Vision**  
A major facilitator in South Australia of research and service innovation that advances understanding of healthy development and ensures the physical, psychological, mental and social health of infants, children and adolescents.

**HDA’s Objectives**  
Establish HDA as a facilitator for engagement between universities, health and education services, research networks and other key bodies responsible for the health and education of infants, children and adolescents in South Australia.

Develop effective communication and multidisciplinary interactions that encourage new research and service directions to improve the health and wellbeing of young people in South Australia.

Encourage multidisciplinary research training programs in Healthy Development in South Australia.

Build a positive image and profile of Healthy Development Adelaide to attract community, government and corporate support.

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**HDA Steering Group**

**A/Professor Pat Buckley**  
Director: Sansom Institute for Health Research  
UniSA

**Dr Mark Witham**  
Director Research and Evaluation  
Department of Education & Children’s Services

**Professor Maria Makrides**  
Executive Director  
Women’s & Children’s Health Research Institute

**Professor Sarah Robertson**  
Director, Robinson Research Institute  
University of Adelaide

**A/Professor Michelle Miller**  
Head: Discipline Nutrition and Dietetics  
Flinders University

**Mr Glenn Rappensberg**  
Executive Director  
Channel 7 Children’s Research Foundation

**Ms Heather Petty**  
Principal Project Officer  
Research Strategy, Evaluation and Funding  
Policy Legislation & Research Branch, SA Health

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**HDA Executive Committee**

*The Executive Committee “oversees the planning and organisation of HDA Thematic Evenings, HDA Oration, HDA Scholars Program (top-up scholarship assessment, mentoring & practicum placements); HDA Career Development Events; and HDA Travel Grant awards”*

Chair by Prof Claire Roberts (University of Adelaide); A/Prof Pat Buckley (UniSA), A/Prof Michelle Miller (Flinders University), Anne Jurisevic (HDA Executive Officer), Sarah Turner (HDA Support Officer).
WHAT WE DO

1. HDA EVENTS

Organisation and implementation of an extensive and varied event program of ~12 events/year covering high priority research and career development topics in the form of thematic evenings, oration, seminars, symposiums, workshops and forums.

Our events provide effective communication and interactions across disciplines that provide the opportunities for networking and multidisciplinary research collaborations. They are well attended by a broad array of researchers, students, government and health service personnel and educators, organisations, teachers and the general community.

ORATION

HDA’s high profile event of the year where a senior HDA member is awarded the Healthy Development Adelaide Award for achieved excellence in research contributing to healthy development.

In 10 years (2005-mid2014)....82 events have been held with ~10,000 people registering.
- 30 Thematic Evenings
- 15 Forums
- 12 Career Development Events / Workshops
- 10 Orations
- 8 Seminars
- 4 Symposiums
- 4 Research Days
- Other events - Research Australia Thank You Day, Tall Poppy Information Evening

2. HDA TRAVEL GRANTS

$63,000 has been awarded to 63 HDA Members (early career researchers) and PhD students supporting overseas conference travel since 2008. Travel reports published in the HDA Newsletters.

“All in all, my attendance at SGI's 58th Annual Meeting has been an invaluable opportunity to gain an international perspective and has also contributed to my growth as a scientist” Lisa Nicholas - Sansom Institute, UniSA

“I am very appreciative of the support provided by HDA to attend this conference and hope that the research directions I take now as a result of what I have learned will continue to work towards the well being of children with craniofacial conditions” Dr Rachel Roberts - School of Psychology, University of Adelaide

“I am very grateful to HDA for supporting my trip to the United States. Going to the conference and visiting other researcher’s labs provided me with an invaluable opportunity to network with other scientists and present our research on an international stage” Wei-Chun Tu - Foodplus Research Centre, University of Adelaide

HDA recipients can be found at www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/support
3. HDA SCHOLARS PROGRAM

HDA Scholars are awarded PhD Scholarships (competitive selection from the APA scholarship pool) with additional financial stipends (per student for 3 years) on the basis of individual merit and the multidisciplinary nature of the project.

A unique research training program that includes:
- engagement to network in HDA’s event program - career development and research events
- mentors identified and established on needs identified basis by the Scholars
- translational research practicum placements offered to enhance and broaden their research training and career development

**HDA Scholars - fourth cohort in 2014!**
We thank the Channel 7 Children’s Research Foundation for their continued financial support.

Naomi Fink
FoodPlus Research Centre, University of Adelaide
*Examination of the mechanisms by which supplemental DHA exerts and immune-modulatory effect*

Lucy Claire Martin
Discipline of Public Health, University of Adelaide
*The social acceptability of childhood obesity prevention through law: an investigation of public attitudes and their social contexts*

Olivia Octoman
Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia
*Cumulative harm: the outcomes, risks and protective factors on chronic maltreatment*

Bing Wang
Robinson Institute, University of Adelaide
*The cost of illness study of invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) in Australian children and young adults*

Amy Wooldridge
Robinson Institute, University of Adelaide
*Impact of placental restriction on adolescent immune function in sheep*

Sam Buckberry (continuing final year)
Robinson Institute, University of Adelaide
*The transcriptional landscape of the human placenta and gene expression differences between the sexes*

*A full list of our Scholars can be found at [www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/students](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/students)*

4. HDA AWARDS

- **Healthy Development Adelaide Award**
  Awarded annually to HDA members who have achieved excellence in research contributing to healthy development. Award recipients have included Prof Graeme Hugo, Prof Alastair MacLennan, A/Prof Manny Noakes, Prof Barbara Pocock, Prof Eric Haan, Prof Maria Makrides, Prof John Lynch, Prof Vivienne Moore and Prof Jennifer Couper.

- **HDA Leadership Awards 2010**
  Two senior HDA members were awarded a HDA Leadership Award of $2,000 each for their significant and steadfast contributions to HDA. The HDA Leadership Awards were an outcome from the SA Science Excellence Awards 2009.

  **Professor Claire Roberts**
  *Senior Research Fellow, The Robinson Institute, University of Adelaide*
  “I feel very honoured to have this bestowed upon me. I think that HDA is a fantastic organisation and I greatly value its cross disciplinary and cross institutional nature and the way in which it brings together such a broad range of researchers, government and community stakeholders in this highly important field of Development”.

  **A/Professor Pat Buckley**
  *Dean: Research and Research Education, Division of Health Sciences, UniSA.*
  “I am delighted to accept this award - I’ve certainly seen HDA become a significant and meaningful research cluster since it started up, and I’ve very much enjoyed playing a role in that”

- **HDA Collaboration Awards 2010**
  The following HDA members were awarded a HDA Collaboration Award of $1,000 each towards their collaborative research endeavours in the area of healthy development. The HDA Collaboration Awards were an outcome from the SA Science Excellence Awards 2009.

  Dr Janna Morrison, Senior Research Fellow, Sansom Institute for Health Research, UniSA
  Dr Lisa Smithers, Research Fellow, Sansom Institute for Health Research, UniSA
  Dr Kate Ridley, Senior Lecturer, School of Education, Flinders University
WHO WE REACH

“Multidisciplinary research advances our understanding of the overall impact of research relating to infants, children and adolescence.”

1. HDA RESEARCH MEMBERS

HDA’s membership encompasses 24 research disciplines with senior and early career researchers, and PhD students collectively dedicated to bringing together multidisciplinary aspects of research related to investigation and improvement in developmental health spanning embryo, infant, child and youth health.

biochemistry, biomedical engineering, demographics, dentistry, economics, education, endocrinology, epidemiology, ethics, genetics, immunology, indigenous health, law, nutrition, paediatrics, pharmacology, physiology, politics, psychology, psychiatry, public health, reproductive health, sociology and virology.

HDA’s membership has steadily increased from 80 in 2004 to over 245 in 2014. Interest in HDA continues to grow steadily that include membership requests to involvement in committees and events.

An A-Z membership listing can be found at [www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/people](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/people)

2. HDA ASSOCIATE (non-research) MEMBERS

HDA currently comprises of over 345 non-research members. Our associate members are interested in areas relating to the health and wellbeing of infants, children and/or adolescence in a non-research capacity and/or attend HDA events out of work/personal interest.

Sectors include (but not inclusive) to health, education, government, private company, and the community.

A Full listing of our associate members organizations can be found at [www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/people](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/people)

3. HEALTH SERVICE & GOVERNMENT

We receive a strong interest from the health service and government sectors.

4. GENERAL COMMUNITY & ORGANISATIONS

Our reputation and brand of events cater to the general community also and is wide reaching to various organizations. HDA’s mailing list continues to grow to incorporate all of the above sectors.
HDA Partners

In 2008, HDA officially became a Research and Innovation Cluster in South Australia with partners financially contributing to HDA initiatives and programs. We are grateful to our Partners and acknowledge their valued support which allows us to further strengthen and broaden our aims to continuously improve the health and wellbeing of young children in South Australia.

HDA was established in 2004 by the University of Adelaide

Contributing since 2009 towards our HDA Scholars with PhD top-up scholarships
HDA will continue to strive to advance our role as the prominent health Research & Innovation Cluster in South Australia

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