



A Research Newsletter for Allied Health Clinicians

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Allied Health Research News MARCH

Looking back and moving forward in the Allied Health Clinical Research Office

Katherine Harding,
Senior Research Fellow &
Manager AH Research Office

Welcome to the first issue of Allied Health Research News for 2017!

This year marks 10 years since the establishment of the Allied Health Clinical Research office, and a great time for reflection on how our research activity has grown over that time.

This week we launch our 2016 Allied Health Research Report. This document is an important annual record of our research activity, and we thank the clinicians and managers who have assisted in putting this together. The full report is available for download from the Eastern Health website, but we are pleased to report that in 2016 Allied Health Clinicians at Eastern Health:

- Published 38 papers in peer reviewed journals
- Completed 29 projects
- Had 21 other projects in progress
- Presented at 36 national and international conferences
- Had 16 students enrolled in higher degrees with a major research component, including 8 PhD students.

2016 was also a busy year within the Allied Health Research Office. For the majority of the year we have been joined by four part time project officers funded by external grants as well as having several PhD students regularly working from our Arnold Street office. Space is at a premium but it is great to see the bustle of activity taking place every day, and certainly marks a contrast from our humble beginnings! Furthermore we have expanded to establish a small base at the Angliss Hospital, where Judi Porter has joined the Allied Health Research team three days per week.

This year we have plenty more opportunities coming up for staff interested in getting involved in research. The Allied Health Research Forum will take place on the 25th May (p. 3), applications are now open for the 2017 Stepping into Research Training Scheme (p.2), and research clinics are planned across most sites throughout the year (p. 2), kicking off at PJC on April 16th.

Finally we were very proud to see some of our researchers out on the field taking part in the Closing the Gap sports day at Healesville on March 5th, and our own Professor Nick Taylor as Assistant Coach for the football team.

Congratulations to all involved in this great event!



Left: Jo Stanford and Amy Dennett represent Eastern Health in the netball.

Below: Nick Taylor with PhD students Amy Dennett and Jason Wallis



To download the
**2016 Allied Health
Research Report:**

<https://www.easternhealth.org.au/research-ethics/research-programs/allied-health>

"Stepping into Research"

Allied Health Research Training Scheme

**Applications
now open!**

2017

What's Involved?

Successful applicants will be supported by their manager to spend one half day per week for twelve weeks to learn to conduct and write up a systematic review on a topic relevant to their work place. The program includes:

- 4 x 3 hr group training sessions (Thursday afternoons: 13th July, 3rd August, 31st August, 21st September at Box Hill)
- A series of 1:1 meetings with an allocated mentor (time and site negotiable)
- Private study time
- An additional presentation afternoon at Box Hill for participants and mentors on Thursday 19th October.

What is "Stepping into Research?"

This program introduces allied health clinicians to the process of conducting and writing up a systematic review of the literature. No previous research experience is required, just basic computer literacy and a demonstrated interest and enthusiasm for finding the answers to an important clinical question.

Participants will have the opportunity to present at an appropriate Eastern Health Forum, and are expected to work towards the goal of submitting their work to a peer reviewed journal.

**SYSTEMATIC REVIEW
OF THE LITERATURE**
A systematic search,
appraisal and summary
of the literature on a
clinical question.
Often the first step to
a change in clinical
practice.

Expectations

At the conclusion of the program, participants are expected to have written a systematic review of the evidence for a clinical intervention of relevance to their workplace to a standard suitable for submission to a peer reviewed journal. Participants are also expected to be available to present their findings at an appropriate Eastern Health forum, such as the annual Allied Health Research Forum.

To obtain an application form, contact Katherine Harding at the Allied Health Clinical Research Office or talk to your manager. Further information is available from Nick Taylor (9091 8874) or Katherine Harding (9091 8880).

Applications close: Friday 9th June. Places will be limited.

All You
Need

Need some advice on a research idea? ALLIED HEALTH RESEARCH CLINICS

is a Good
Idea!

Allied Health Research Clinics are a place to sit down with some experienced researchers in an informal setting to discuss any research related questions or ideas. Clinics rotate to different sites for the convenience of staff across Eastern Health. Individual appointment times are allotted, so bookings are essential.

Please note that research clinics are not the only opportunity to discuss your research questions. Appointments can be made to meet with Nick or Katherine in the Allied Health Clinical Research Office at 5 Arnold St Box Hill at any time.

To make a booking please contact:

- katherine.harding@easternhealth.org.au for April (PJC), June (WH) and August (MH) clinics
- judi.porter@easternhealth.org.au for May (AH) and July (YRH) Clinics

April 13th , 8.30-10.30am	PJC
May 11th , 10.00am-12.00	Angliss
June 8th , 8.30-10.30am	Wantirna
July 20th , 10.00am-12.00	Yarra Ranges
Aug 10th , 8.30-10.30am	Maroondah

2016 Allied Health Research Forum

Thursday 25th May, 2.00 - 4.30pm

Wantirna Health Lecture Theatre

Guest Speaker Professor Christine Bigby

Professor Christine Bigby is the Director of the Living with Disability Research Centre and Chair Academic Board, School of Allied Health at La Trobe University.

She has an international reputation for her research on the social inclusion of adults with intellectual disability. The focus of her work is policy issues, program effectiveness and front line practice that supports quality of life outcomes for people with intellectual disability. Her current ARC and other grants are examining the effectiveness of supported accommodation services, the nature and meaning of social inclusion for people with intellectual disability, and supported decision making for people with cognitive disability.



3 Minute Presentation competition



3MP competition entrants are asked to present a project (proposed or completed) in strictly 3 minutes, with no props and a single power point slide. Allied Health clinicians at Eastern Health are eligible to enter the competition.

Our esteemed panel of judges will be awarding a prize for the best presentation, and the audience will also be voting for a "People's Choice" award.

Still not sure? Search for "3 minute thesis" on You Tube and you'll find plenty of examples of three minute presentations to get an idea of what the format looks like.

Entry forms are available either from allied health managers, or by contacting Katherine Harding or Nick Taylor in the Allied Health Research Office. Entries close 12th May 2017.

Refreshments will be served, so please RSVP by 30th April to Katherine.Harding@easternhealth.org.au.

Conference Opportunities 2017: Looking beyond your discipline

Looking for somewhere to present your research or quality project?

When faced with this question many allied health professionals tend to look first to the National Conference for their discipline, or perhaps to one of

the many "condition specific" conferences for their client group. However, there are also a range of other health service conferences that bring together health professionals, researchers and

policy makers from across disciplines with a broad interest in improving health services. These are often well suited to allied health projects.

Here are just a couple of upcoming examples if you are looking for something outside the usual box for your next presentation.

Call for abstracts now open...closing 17th March!

RESPONSIVE SERVICES • RELIABLE SYSTEMS • RESILIENT WORKFORCE

12TH NATIONAL
Allied Health
CONFERENCE



Stronger Together

26th - 29th August 2017, ICC Sydney, Australia



10TH HEALTH SERVICES & POLICY RESEARCH CONFERENCE

1-3 NOVEMBER 2017, SURFERS PARADISE MARRIOTT, AUSTRALIA

Call for abstracts opening soon.

Optimising physical activity and rehabilitation for cancer survivors

Cancer is a leading cause of burden of disease across the world. With an ageing population and advances in screening and treatment, the number of cancer survivors is rising. With this comes challenges of living with cancer as a chronic disease.

Physical activity plays a critical role in the management of the effects of cancer and treatment. Higher levels of post-diagnosis physical activity are known to be associated with improved prognosis, survival and reduced disease recurrence.

Cancer rehabilitation facilitates participation in physical activity and improved quality of life in cancer survivors. However, there remain significant gaps about how best to prescribe physical activity to optimise outcomes. A program of research led by La Trobe PhD student and physiotherapist **Amy Dennett**, being conducted from the Oncology Rehabilitation Program at Wantirna Health, aims to address some of these issues.

"Our initial review of 42 exercise trials showed that exercise is overwhelmingly safe in this population, and moderate intensity aerobic exercise is optimal for improving function and fatigue," says Amy. "However, in a national survey of oncology rehabilitation practices we found only 31 programs exist (of which our own Eastern Health was the first!), providing rehabilitation opportunities for only 0.5% of survivors."

So how active are cancer survivors? An observational study by the team looking at physical activity levels in cancer survivors, showing that physical activity levels are low when patients enter rehabilitation. Only 8% of our sample were able to achieve aerobic exercise guidelines, with patients completing on average just 12 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise. Factors most associated with physical activity were BMI and physical function, rather than clinical or psychosocial

factors. An RCT is now underway to see if adding motivational interviewing to oncology rehabilitation improves physical activity levels. This trial is due for completion late this year.

Overall this research program has reinforced the importance of physical activity for cancer survivors and highlighted the need for improvements in service delivery. Amy says "It is a privilege to be able to directly translate research findings back into practice through our fantastic Oncology Rehab Program".



PhD student Amy Dennett working to improve outcomes for cancer survivors

Protected Mealtimes in the subacute setting: Trial results

Judi Porter

Thanks to many of you who may have contributed to this clinical trial, a key part of my NHMRC Translating Research into Practice Fellowship (2015-16). This was the first trial internationally to use high quality study design (a stepped wedge design) to test whether the implementation of Protected Mealtimes improved nutritional intake of patients. Protected Mealtimes aims to address the problem of malnutrition in hospitalised patients through increasing positive interruptions (such as feeding assistance) whilst minimising unnecessary interruptions (including ward rounds and diagnostic procedures) during mealtimes. The study was powered to determine whether the intervention closed the daily energy deficit between estimated intake and energy requirements measured in the pilot study for this trial of 1900kJ/day. 20 students from the Monash University Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics program collected outcome data; students were blinded to the intervention being implemented. In total, 416

observations of 24 hour food intake were obtained across the three sites. Energy intake was not significantly different between the intervention [(mean±SD) 6479±2486kJ/day] and control [6532±2328kJ/day] conditions (p=0.88). Daily protein intake was not significantly different between the intervention (68.6±26.0g/day) and control (67.0±25.2) conditions (p=0.86). The difference between estimated energy/protein requirements and estimated energy/protein intakes were also not different between groups. The adjusted analysis yielded significant findings for energy deficit: [coefficient (robust 95% CI), p value] of -1405 (-2354 to -457), p=0.004. Variability in implementation across some aspects of Protected Mealtime policy components was noted. The findings of this trial mirror the findings of other observational studies of Protected Mealtimes implementation. We recommend

that approaches with a greater level of evidence for improving nutritional outcomes such as mealtime assistance, other food based approaches and the use of oral nutrition support products to supplement oral diet, should instead be considered in the quest to reduce hospital malnutrition. Again, my sincere thanks to everyone at Eastern Health who participated in this trial: All patients and clinical staff in October-November 2015 working on North Ward at Wantirna Health, 1 West at the Angliss Hospital, and East Ward at PJC contributed, as well as the ISS staff and Dietetics teams, and the Nutrition EAC who provided governance and oversight.

This trial has now been published in the open access journal *BMC Medicine*. The full text paper is available at: <http://rdcu.be/o5Tp>

Allied Health Staff success Eastern Health Foundation Awards

Congratulations to three allied health recipients whose achievements were celebrated at the Eastern Health Foundation Awards night on February 15th.

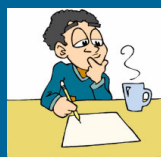
Victoria Manning (Psychologist, Turning Point) and Judi Porter (Dietitian) both received Research Grants for 2017. Victoria's project will explore novel brain training strategies to try to reduce relapse in methamphetamine users, and Judi will use the grant funds for a pilot project investigating the use of doubly labelled water to measure energy expenditure in the older elderly.

David Snowdon was acknowledged for receipt of the inaugural Eastern Health Foundation top up PhD scholarship for a La Trobe University student. This is one of three scholarships for a PhD students from each of our partnering universities (La Trobe, Monash and Deakin), for students conducting their PhD projects at Eastern Health. This is a fantastic initiative of the Foundation that continues to support and promote the importance of these partnerships with academic institutions.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to the many donors and the hard work of the staff of the Eastern health Foundation who make these initiatives possible.



Victoria Manning, Judi Porter and David Snowdon display their awards at the Eastern Health Foundation Awards night.



Euan's Musings

Euan is a PhD candidate and works with the Psychiatric and Emergency Response Team. He knows how many leaves there are in the tree outside the window of his study room. He has also been known to watch Mister Maker, knows all the actions to 'do the propeller' and wishes he could drive a big red car.

So you have done some research. It is now time to do the write up. You have boiled the kettle, bought some expensive decaf coffee, and put the children in front of The Wiggles, Mister Maker, or Pulp Fiction. You have a new computer, new software, your reading glasses prescription has been updated, and a nice new desk. You have a lovely poster on the wall, it is a picture of a cat on a branch and it says, "Hang in there!" Gold.

You have some scented oils burning, and a few corn chips to nibble on, and dip, can't forget dip. You have set up all of your files on your windows explorer, bought yourself some nice binders, opened up word on your computer, and told the clinic you are not to be disturbed. And finally you had an intense argument with your manager about getting some study days.

Now, at last, it is time to write.

Yep, it's time to write.

Here we go.

Gonna write stuff.....

Hang on, better check your e-mails. And you were also going to see when if the new Star Wars trailer came out on youtube yet. It has. Awesome.

Welcome to the world of writers block. And it happens to us all at some point. I am sorry to say, there is no cure. But there are some useful tips.

1. Turn your mobile phone off. Stop texting, stop checking facebook, or twitter, or singles online.
2. Write pretty much anything. Your brain will catch up. And if what you write is not completely brain dead, chances are you can find a reference to back it up later. If not, delete it. See? The world did not end.
3. Don't worry about writing a masterpiece first time around. This regular column should be proof of that.
4. Just say what you think, bluntly. Refine it later.
5. Go back and look at your research question for inspiration.
6. Have your subheadings figured out first, it will give you direction.
7. If all else fails, look at some good writings on the topic, it may inspire you.
8. It is OK to take breaks, change rooms, or go for a walk with a pen and notepad to clear you head.
9. Try to manage you mood. Anxiety + research writing = fail.
10. Ask for help.

So there you are. Remember, you are not alone. And don't get too bogged down in the process of preparing for writing. Inspiration can come at any time, don't put pressure on yourself by thinking at can only come 9 am – 5pm on your designated study day.

Allied Health Research Achievements

Publications

Kate Henderson (Physiotherapy)

Henderson KG, Wallis JA, Snowdon DA. Active physiotherapy interventions following total knee arthroplasty in the hospital and inpatient rehabilitation settings. A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Physiotherapy*, 2017 (in press).

Melanie McGrice (Dietetics)

McGrice M, Porter J. 2017. The Effect of Low Carbohydrate Diets on Fertility Hormones and Outcomes in Overweight and Obese Women: A Systematic Review. *Nutrients* 9, 204.

Judi Porter (Dietetics)

Paciepnik J, Porter J. 2017. Comparing computerised dietary analysis with a ready reckoner in a real world setting: Is technology an improvement? *Nutrients* 9(2), 99.

Porter, J. Haines T and Truby H. 2017. "The efficacy of Protected Mealtimes in hospitalised patients: a stepped wedge cluster randomised controlled trial." *BMC Medicine* 15(1): 25.

Presentations accepted for Victorian Allied Health Research Conference, March 31st 2017:

Oral Presentations:

Kate Lawler: What lies beneath: The power of consumer collaboration

Katherine Harding: Improving access for community and subacute outpatient services

Yvonne Fellner: Hand therapy direct from emergency referrals

Kylee Lockwood: Effect of pre-discharge home visits following hip fracture on readmissions

Nick Taylor: Research interest and experience of allied health clinicians

Posters:

Glenda Kerridge: Leadership and career development

David Snowdon: Does clinical supervision improve quality of care?

Katherine Harding: The organisational benefits of a strong research culture

Annette Leong: Leading the way for advanced practice in Occupational Therapy

Kylee Lockwood: The feasibility of conducting a randomised controlled trial of the effectiveness of home visits by occupational therapists after hip fracture.



Allied Health Research Office Opportunities in 2017

Stepping into Research Training Scheme

July to October
Applications now open
(see page 2)

Allied Health Research Clinics

Discussion and advice forum
rotating sites
(see page 2)

Allied Health Research Forum

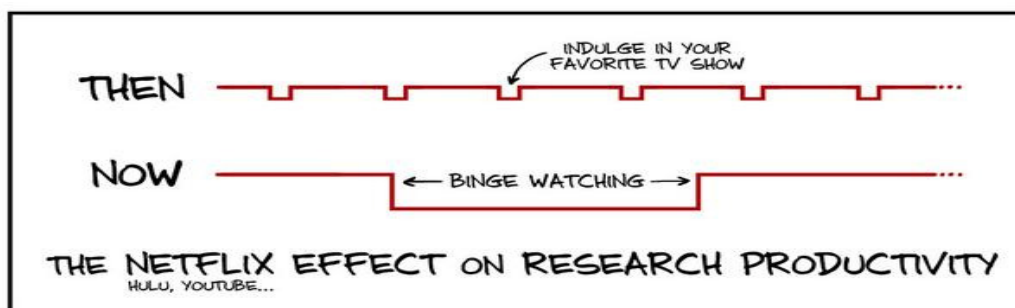
Guest speaker and 3 minute project competition, May 25th
(see page 3)

Advice and consultation
available **any time** for research related matters from Nick Taylor and Katherine Harding

And don't forget....



@EH_Research



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WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

Allied Health Research Committee

Nick Taylor

Katherine Harding

Jason Wallis (PT)

Alison Wilby (Psych)

Anne Thompson (ACS)

Sarah Dallimore (Pod)

Judi Porter (Dietetics)

Euan Donley (Mental Health)

Lauren Lynch (SP)

Anna Joy (OT)

Glenda Kerridge (SW)

Judy Bottrell (PT)

Do you have anything of interest to report in this newsletter? Please forward your articles and achievements to:

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