News from Head of School

We are coming to the end of 2004 and our first full year of relative co-location as a School. We have now become the leading department in the Faculty in terms of research income, and also lead the Faculty in quality of teaching scores.

We’ve seen some important changes in staff coming and going. Our staff are our most important and valued asset. Many of the changes and achievements are detailed elsewhere in this Newsletter, but I wanted to make special note of a few.

Leanne Taylor was appointed as School Manager, and this week Nick Golovachenko was appointed School IT Manager. Congratulations to both Pascale Allottey and Jill Astbury who have both been appointed to Chairs at other universities. Associate Professor Anne Kavanagh was appointed to the Key Centre for Women’s Health in Society. Nick Crofts was appointed Professor-Director of Turning Point and Professorial Fellow in the School of Population Health. Professor John Mathews returned to Melbourne as a Professorial Fellow from Canberra, having been instrumental in establishing epidemiology here in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

We have established the new VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Social Wellbeing, and appointed this Centre’s first Director, Professor Penny Hawe. Penny is due to start back in Melbourne from her current post at the University of Calgary in mid-January. The new Centre will be located on level 5, 207 Bouverie Street.

Federation Fellow, Professor Lenore Manderson, was recently elected to the prestigious World Academy of Art and Science.

A review of the Centre for the Study of Health and Society chaired by Professor Janet Greely (James Cook University) has been completed, resulting in high praise for the Centre’s achievements and several recommendations aimed at promoting our collaboration with the Faculty of Arts.

Our Advanced Medical Science program continues to grow in both quality and size, with enrolments for 2005-6 in excess of 30, by far the largest group in the Faculty.

Our School Seminar program has been established and is gathering strength, ably supported by Dorota Gertig. Attendance by all staff and especially PhD students is welcome and a vital part of our academic week.

Restructure of Health Practice for medical students in Semesters 1-5 with better integration of Health and Society is well advanced and ready for introduction from 2005 following considerable effort from many staff.

Continued on next page …
News from Head of School cont…

With the input of all staff, we are investigating the possibility of creating a new School Centre that would combine the Centre for Genetic Epidemiology and the Epidemiology and Biostatistics Unit, and another new Centre that would develop from the Program Evaluation Unit to focus on the evaluation and economics of population health systems, services and policies. Following new requirements from DEST in relation to the costing and advertising of university courses, we are close to confirming an agreement with the University’s academic administration that will protect our competitive position in being able to recruit postgraduate students. Many people have put in enormous efforts in this sometimes difficult and trying process, particularly Leanne Taylor, Catherine Bennett, Sumita Verma and several others.

Many School of Population Health staff have had input into the thinking and planning of the proposed Nossal Institute for Global Health that has generated strong Faculty and wider University support. Major donors are now being sought.

In the past week or two, announcements of Research Grant awards from NHMRC, ARC and DFCS have been made. These are listed here (School of Population Health staff in bold) and elsewhere in this Newsletter. Notable most of all is the evidence of School of Population Health collaboration with researchers elsewhere in the University and at other leading Universities. This has been an outstanding effort. As always, we have had some excellent staff whose applications missed out this time. Those involved in the Faculty research mentor scheme and senior staff within the School will do all they can to help those who missed out this time achieve success in the future.

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

PROJECT GRANT
Kit Fairley, Jane Hocking, Jane Gunn, Rob Carter, Lyle Gunn, Maria Pirotta: A computer alert to increase Chlamydia testing of high risk women in general practice: an RCT. $180,000 over 2 years.

John Carlin: Statistical methods for handling missing data in longitudinal studies. $194,250 over 3 years.

Claire Wainwright, John Carlin, Colin Robertson, Keith Grimwood, Rob Carter, David Armstrong: A new approach to management of young children with cystic fibrosis: to improve clinical outcomes. $566,000 over 5 years.

CENTRE FOR CLINICAL RESEARCH EXCELLENCE
Jonathan Carapetis, Terry Nolan, Jim Buttery, Linda Johnston, Susan Sawyer, Kim Mulholland, Nigel Curtis and Frank Oberklaid: Child and Adolescent Immunisation. $2,000,000 over 5 years.

CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT IN POPULATION HEALTH RESEARCH
Raina McIntyre, Niels Becker, Matthew Law, Terry Nolan, Graham Brown, Aileen Plant. Mathematical modelling for improved planning of infectious diseases control policy. $2,500,000 over 5 years.

Fran Baum, Anne Kavanagh and others. Australian health inequalities: a program addressing social and economic determinants of health. $2,444,000 over 5 years.

HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH PROGRAM GRANT
Theo Vos, Rob Carter and others. Guiding intervention choices to reduce health costs, health inequalities, and improve the health of Australians: avoidable disease burden and cost-effectiveness of prevention. $3,200,000 over 5 years.

ENABLING GRANT
John Hopper and others: Australian Twin Registry. $1,750,000 over 5 years.

EQUIPMENT GRANT
John Hopper and others: Biospecimen repository. $172,000 over 2 years.

Australian Research Council (ARC)

DISCOVERY PROJECT
Janet McCalman and others: A demographic and socio-medical history of the Aboriginal People of Victoria 1800-2000: reconstitutions and epidemiological analysis. $221,000 over 3 years.

Andrea Whittaker and others: Infertility, IVF and reproductive tourism in Thailand and the region. $178,000 over 3 years.

LINKAGE PROJECT
Mark Burgman, Louisa Flander and others: Hazard identification, risk assessment and decision analysis for conservation and management of Australian marine parks. $176,043 over 3 years

Janet McCalman and others: Science and Citizenship: Democracy in the age of science-mediated risk. $240,478 over 4 years

Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services

STRONGER FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES STRATEGY 2004-2008
KCWHS Jane Fisher and Heather Rowe, Mothers, Fathers and Newborns: Preventing Distress and Promoting Confidence Program $481,000 over 3 years *see also page 6*

Finally, I would like to thank all our staff, including our honorary staff, very much for a wonderful effort in 2004. It gets harder and more competitive every year, and the pressure we all work under never seems to diminish. I see plenty of evidence that our academic and general staff work as a team within the School. Your good humour, mutual respect and support for each other are fundamental to our success. Have a wonderful Christmas/New Year break and let’s all look forward to an even better year in 2005!

Professor Terry Nolan, Head
School of Population Health
Welcome to New Staff …

**Academic Programs Office**
Kate Dumas has replaced Jan Powell as the Undergraduate Programs Officer.

Anita Lucas has joined APO as the SPH AMS Administrator. See also page 7 “News from APO”

Both Kate and Anita have worked in the Faculty previously and familiarized themselves quickly with their new roles.

**VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Social Wellbeing ( Newly established)**
Julienne Corboz joined us as a casual Research Assistant in qualitative analysis from August until October. Julienne is a PhD candidate in the School of Anthropology, Geography and Environmental Science and is now in Uruguay building a shanty and commencing her anthropological fieldwork.

Elizabeth Gwynne commenced as a casual Administrative and Finance Officer in July. Lizzie also works in the Program Evaluation Unit.

Bree Rankin commenced as a Research Assistant in September. Bree has a B.Com. She is doing a scan on mental health promotion research in Australia and helping with our program of work on community-level interventions.

Karen Turner commenced as a casual Research Assistant in October. Karen is assisting us with qualitative analysis and is a PhD candidate in the School of Anthropology, Geography and Environmental Science. Karen’s PhD work is exploring the impact of religious beliefs on the everyday experiences of migrant women.

**Centre for Genetic Epidemiology**
Melanie Adams completed a BAppSci in Health Promotion and has joined the *Australian Twins and Sisters Breast Density Study* as an Interviewer. Prior to Melbourne Uni, Melanie worked on the Victorian leg of a follow-up study “Childhood Determinants of Adult Health” for diabetes and cardio vascular disease at the Menzies Institute, Uni of Tasmania.

Jenny Boadle Administrative Assistant, Australian Twin Registry. Jenny’s role is liaising with twins and their families, keeping their details up-to-date and recruiting them for relevant research. Prior to joining the ATR was secretary to an Architect whilst completing a Bachelor of Arts Degree, majoring in Psychology.

Clare Constantine is working as Project Manager for NIH Genetic modifiers of Haemochromatosis (PI, Dorota Gertig), spending Monday and Thursday a.m. at CGE, and the balance of the working week at WEHI. Clare moved from Perth where she worked on population genetics of parasites.

Sarah Kauppinen On completion of a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences at the University of Melbourne Sarah worked for 2 years at Careers and Employment. In August she transferred to SPH to become Finance and Resources Officer where she primarily “wrestles” *(and wins! Ed.)* with THEMIS and HR.

Debbie Moon joined the *Australian Twins and Sisters Breast Density Study* team in October as an Interviewer. Debbie previously worked at The Smith Family, Collingwood as a Team Leader and Education Support Worker administering a sponsored scholarship to financially disadvantaged families.

**Epidemiology and Biostatistics Unit**
Peter Feldman, Interviewer for the Tasmanian Health Study. Peter’s background is in Sociology, with particular interest in the social and cultural anthropology of contemporary societies. Aside from earlier incarnations as a collective farmer and television floor manager, he has mainly worked in research and planning for community and mental health services. As an interviewer, he has used all methods short of bribery and blackmail to locate and interview recalcitrant non-responders to the Tasmanian Health Study’s postal survey. He has also been involved in editing and writing documentation for the laboratory phase of the study, which curiously seems to increase RA Cathryn Wharton’s workload!!

**Amy Niselle HealthIron & HaemScreen**
Coordinator Amy’s background is project management in multimedia medical education. She coordinates studies for Murdoch Children’s Research Institute and the University of Melbourne involving haemochromatosis, an inherited iron-overload disease. “HaemScreen” provides insight into community genetic screening programs and “HealthIron” investigates modifiers of disease expression in the Melbourne Collaborative Cohort Study.
Welcome to New Staff cont…

Key Centre for Women’s Health in Society
Dr Anne Kavanagh, in August, took up position of Associate Professor of Women’s Health and Coordinator Research. Previously Anne was SRF at Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society at La Trobe Uni. Anne is a medical graduate and social epidemiologist highly regarded as an expert in breast cancer screening research.

Anne brought with her a Senior/Public Health Research Fellowship from the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation for the project: understanding the role of place in health inequalities; and a Victorian Health Promotion Foundation Research Project Grant (with others): How research methods shape public health knowledge and practice.

Ms Carolyn Nickson, has been appointed part-time Research Officer, to coordinate a study examining the feasibility of collecting information about HRT use and menopause in the Victorian breast-screening program and to draft a protocol for a national case-control study of mammographic screening. Carolyn is also undertaking a PhD entitled ‘Modelling the impact of targeted changes to screening intervals in Australian breast-screening programs’ supervised by A/Prof Anne Kavanagh and A/Prof Ray Watson (Statistics), and supported by scholarships from the National Breast Cancer Foundation and VicHealth.

Farewell to …

Dr Pascale Allotey is leaving the Key Centre for Women’s Health in Society and the University of Melbourne to take up the position of Professor of Race, Diversity and Professional Practice at the School of Health and Social Care at Brunel University in the UK at the end of 2004.

A/Prof Jill Astbury who left the Key Centre for Women’s Health in Society and the University of Melbourne in June, to take up the position of Research Professor in the School of Psychology at Victoria University.

Ashley Fletcher, CGE, to take up position of Epidemiologist in Public Health Genetics, Department of Human Services. He has been with the CGE since 2000, first as an RA and currently as a Research Fellow. Last day 19th November.

Forthcoming Events

Professor Doreen Rosenthal, KCWHS has been invited to lead a symposium on social disadvantage in the Fifth Australian Women’s Health Conference to be held in April 2005. The Conference will be held in Melbourne and will offer a range of sessions related to the theme: Reflecting On Gender / Confronting the Evidence.

For more details see website www.womenshealth2005.com.au

TO CELEBRATE THE FESTIVE SEASON
SPH SOCIAL COMMITTEE
INVITES YOU TO
the HUB
4th Floor, 207 Bouverie Street
on
Friday 10 December 2004
commencing at 12.30 p.m.
Light refreshments will be served
Feel free to bring a plate of ‘goodies’ to share with everyone
RSVP by 6th December
A raffle is being held for a Cruzer Mini USB 512MB Flash Drive
Tickets are $1 each, or 3 for $2 and can be purchased from your social committee member – Nora Li, Karen O’Brien, Jenny Burchill, Cathy Francis, Felice Rocca
New Grants/Awards/Contracts

Program Evaluation Unit
Jane Pirkis, Belinda Morley and Fay Kohn received an additional $150,000 from the Department of Health and Ageing for evaluation support to the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care initiative.

The Program Evaluation Unit has been engaged by the Department of Human Services to undertake the ‘Support and Evaluation’ component of an innovative new health promotion program, the Well for Life Initiative. Well for Life focuses on improving physical activity and nutrition among residents of public sector aged care facilities and frail older people who live in their own homes and participate in HACC Planned Activity Groups. Twenty-five projects have been funded across five regions, comprising Hume, Grampians and Gippsland regions in country Victoria and Eastern and Southern metropolitan regions.

Well for Life also utilises a kit developed by the National Ageing Research Institute at The University of Melbourne that provides resources to support training, discussion and information sharing about improving activity levels and nutrition for frail older people.

The Program Evaluation Unit has a dual role in the new program, to be undertaken by two staff members, Research Fellows, Rosemary McKenzie and Lucio Naccarella. PEU will provide support to funded projects with planning, implementation and internal evaluation of projects, whilst also developing a statewide evaluation framework focused on the collective progress and impact of the Well for Life Initiative in its first 12 months of operation. Further information on Well for Life and its evaluation can be obtained from Rosemary McKenzie email: rmck@teksupport.net.au or Lucio Naccarella email l.naccarella@unimelb.edu.au

Key Centre for Women’s Health in Society
Project i, the longitudinal study of homeless young people in Melbourne and Los Angeles, has won the Department of Human Services Public Health Research Award. The study has been conducted by Prof Doreen Rosenthal and Dr Shelley Mallett.

Dr Lisa Amir was awarded the prize for the best research poster at a recent Royal Australian College of General Practitioners conference.

Dr Amir’s proposal for a new on-line journal: International Breastfeeding Journal has been accepted and she will edit the journal.

Two separate grants have been obtained to develop and disseminate booklets to homeless young people reporting outcomes of Project i (Rosenthal and Mallett).

Prof Doreen Rosenthal and Prof Jeremy Anderson have been awarded a Faculty Restricted Purposes grant for work with RWH collaborators.

The University of Melbourne has funded Professor Doreen Rosenthal and Garry Thomson (Head of Student Services) to undertake a study of the health and well-being of the University’s international students.

Professor Leonore Manderson has been funded by beyond blue and the National Centre for Excellence Depression to explore links between diabetes and depression. The project will explore the impact of diabetes among people from different social and cultural backgrounds: immigrants from South Asia, people of Chinese descent, Pacific Islanders and people from the Mediterranean.

Dr Milica Markovic was funded by the McKay Charitable Trust to support the work on Health education needs of midlife women in rural Victoria, undertaken by one of her PhD students. Information was collected from midlife women about how they take control of their health and employ health promotion behaviours by relying on their individual and community resources. A booklet compiling these midlife women’s stories and how they maintain and promote health was launched.

A Capacity Building grant application submitted by Anne Kavanagh and others was awarded in November; two Career Development Award applications have also been shortlisted.

Two of three applications for VicHealth Public Health Fellowships have been short-listed.

See also next page for DFCS award details.

Epidemiology & Biostatistics Unit
Erbas B (Principal Investigator), Dharmage S, Newbigin E. Unravelling the joint adverse effects of air pollution and pollen on childhood asthma in Australia, Phase I: Melbourne Study. The Asthma Foundation of Victoria Convoy for Kids Research Grant. 2005 $20,000

Erbas B (Principal Investigator), Physick, B., (CSIRO), University of Melbourne/CSIRO Collaborative Research Grant Scheme, 2005, $10,000 – research includes air pollution and respiratory disease.

Gurrin, Lyle. UniMelb ECRG “Using haplotypes to detect rare high-risk genetic mutations: Validation using BRCA1 and early-onset breast cancer with application to haemochromatosis” 2005 $18,808
News From ….

Epidemiology and Biostatistics Unit

Taking statistics to the streets

The visit by English biostatistician Jonathan Sterne (Bristol University) to SPH last year prompted a re-think of statistics teaching in the MPH course, particularly the troublesome topic of hypothesis tests and P-values. While students were encouraged to read Jonathan's textbook and BMJ article, Professor Jeremy Anderson and Dr Lyle Gurrin found that they weren't getting quite the response they'd hoped for. So they decided to take their message to a wider audience, by enlarging a copy of Jonathan's article and displaying it, sandwich-board style, on the steps of 207 Bouverie Street, see below - note the large crowd! (Ed. Sorry Lyle, photo had to be cropped!!)


Tuesday 30 November: day long seminar to provide an opportunity for women’s health networks and service providers to find out more about the Centre’s research program and outcomes – an opportunity to exchange ideas and identify possible collaborations between the Centre and the community of women’s health providers and services.

Dr Andrea Whittaker, KCWHS/Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies: promoted to the position of Senior Lecturer

Professor Lenore Manderson: elected to the World Academy of Art and Science, a worldwide network of Fellows whose activities focus on the social consequences and policy implications of knowledge.

Dr Maggie Kirkman: invited panellist on Generation Next in the SBS TV's Insight series. Other panellists were Lord Robert Winston and Dr Leslie Cannold of the Philosophy Department. Discussion was about pre-implantation genetic diagnosis and donor assisted conception.

Key Centre for Women’s Health in Society

The International Symposium on Human Rights in Public Health: Research and Practice was held at the University of Melbourne November 3-5 2004. The symposium is a collaborative initiative between the KCWHS and the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Monash.

Invited panellists and discussants - international and national leaders in public health and international human rights and human law – included Justice Michael Kirby, A/Professor Sofia Gruskin, Professor Anthony Kessell and Professor Sally Macintyre. For further information and ongoing updates visit the website: www.rhhr.net

Tuesday 30 November: day long seminar

Mothers, Fathers and Newborns: Preventing Distress and Promoting Confidence Program

The Key Centre for Women’s Health in Society will receive around $481,000 under the Australian Government’s Stronger Families and Communities Strategy for a program that prepares first-time parents for the transition to parenthood. The program will operate in the cities of Yarra and Casey, and in Shepparton and Bairnsdale. By promoting confident parenting, Mothers, Fathers and Newborns: Preventing Distress and Promoting Confidence aims to reduce parental distress, including postnatal depression, and reduce unsettled infant behaviour, such as inconsolable crying. The program is also focused on helping parents support each other in their new role.

An innovative two-session program will be offered, using specifically developed resources for small groups of mothers and fathers and their babies. In the first session, parents will learn about infant temperament and how to comfort, soothe and settle a crying infant. In the second session, couples will be provided with strategies to help support each other and share the workload fairly.

The program will also build the knowledge of primary health care professionals, including maternal and child health nurses, to assist them to run the sessions.

Centre for International Mental Health
The International Mental Health Leadership Program (iMHLP) a joint initiative of the Centre for International Mental Health and Harvard Medical School, hosted its third annual Conference in Hong Kong this month. The four day talkfest brought together some of the world’s leaders in mental health to look at ways to tackle the deepening mental health crisis in Asia by boosting national mental health systems research. A highlight was the graduation ceremony of three iMHLP students who were conferred with their Master of International Health degrees from the School of Population Health. The Master of International Health is unique to the CIMH, offering psychiatrists and mental health professionals from Australia, Asia Pacific and beyond a highly flexible, internationally recognised degree in mental health systems training, research and service development. The course convenor is CIMH Director Associate Professor Harry Minas. Next year's program is also being offered as a series of professional development courses.

VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Social Wellbeing
The VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health & Social Wellbeing hosted two visiting scholars during July.

Assistant Professor Dina Birman, community and clinical psychologist from the University of Illinois, Chicago USA whose research focuses on issues of ethnic identity and acculturation of immigrant and refugee groups. Dina gave a seminar entitled Acculturation gaps between immigrant children and parents: Findings with former Soviet and Vietnamese refugees in the U.S. and implications for measurement, at the Refugee Health Research Centre, La Trobe University.

Professor Ed Trickett, community psychologist from the University of Illinois, Chicago USA and a leader in the field of ecological thinking in community interventions. He is the former Editor of the American Journal of Community Psychology. Ed gave a seminar in the Department of Psychology entitled The Classroom as a Social Context: The classroom environment scale as a window into the intricacies of environments. Ed also gave a presentation to the Centre for Adolescent Health, Adolescent Health and Social Environments Program entitled Community Intervention: An Ecological Perspective.

Ed was also a key speaker at a one day workshop organized by the VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health & Social Wellbeing entitled Making Community Interventions Stronger: Theory and Practice. Presenters also included: Professor Penny Hawe from the University of Calgary, Canada and Therese Riley from the VicHealth centre

Academic Programs Office
Increased intake of Advanced Medical Science Students in 2005/06 Enrolments are finalised for next year's intake of Advanced Medical Science (AMS) students into the School of Population Health. Thirty-three students will be commencing the one year program for Semester 6 & 7 medical students. This is an increase of 60% on this year’s enrolments. Students will be welcomed into units of study within the Centre for the Study of Health and Society, Key Centre for Women’s Health in Society and the Centre for International Mental Health.

Anita Lucas is the newly appointed AMS Administrator for the School of Population Health. Having commenced in August this year, she aims to ensure that AMS students make the most of the opportunities available within the whole School. The current cohort of AMS students will complete their research at the end of Semester 1 next year. A conference will be held in May 2005 at which they will present their research report findings. Keep an eye on the School website for copies of past AMS research reports which will soon be made available.

Sexual Health Unit
Dr Darren Russell, Senior Lecturer in Sexual Health, President of AFAO has been awarded winner of the Health & Medicine category in The Bulletin’s 2004 Smart 100. The Bulletin newsmagazine annually awards its ‘Smart 100’ to "Australia’s 100 best and brightest people across 10 areas - from IT & Communications, Health and Medicine ... to the Arts, Business, Sport and Education". It's emphasis is on creativity and innovation - often identifying quiet achievers rather than people with a prominent public profile. See http://bulletinnews.ninemsn.com.au/complIntro.aspx?compid=53
Diabetes Vaccine Development Centre

Dr David Irving, CEO was the keynote speaker at the 2004 APEC (Asia Pacific Economic-Cooperation) Pharmaceutical Enterprise Forum, held in Changsha City, Hunan Province, China, October 25–27. The Forum was a dynamic event focussing on different means of developing novel biopharmaceutical compounds with particular emphasis on the regulatory environment as China increasingly embraces Western pharmaceuticals both for internal use and for export.

Over 200 people attended the Forum including government regulators, researchers and leaders in the pharmaceutical industry. Papers focussed on the future development of biopharmaceutical enterprises, opportunities for new product development and the development of the biopharmaceutical industry in China. Most participants were from Hunan Province although there were also representatives from APEC countries including Australia, Japan and the USA.

The Forum was co-organized by the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology, Hunan Province and the Municipal Government of Changsha, supported by APEC and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

As the only non-Chinese speaking delegate at the Forum, and although translators were provided, communication was at times a challenge. I had the privilege of representing all international speakers at a meeting with the Vice-Governor of Hunan Province in a very formal opening ceremony. Although the entire meeting was conducted in Chinese (through interpreters for my benefit) after the formalities had concluded I discovered that the Vice-Governor spoke perfect English, has a PhD in agricultural biotechnology and had carried out post-doctoral work in the UK before returning to her native China.

Following the meeting, I was given an escorted tour of some of the popular parts of Hunan Province, including China’s first World Natural Heritage listed National Forest centred near the city of Zhangjiajie, in the North West corner of the province. Changsha is a city of about 2 million people and is close to the “former residence” of Mao Zedong. The province (of about 60 million people) has an economy that has focused primarily on agriculture. Like many other territories throughout the world it is now embarking on the development of more value-added industries, including biopharmaceutical based enterprises. With the level of government support for such activities, which is not insubstantial, there is every reason to expect these endeavours will be very successful in years to come.

Dr David Irving
CEO of the Diabetes Vaccine Development Centre
Postgraduate News

SPH Postgraduate Studies News
One of the trademarks of the SPH is our commitment to providing quality teaching and learning for our postgraduate students. SPH is fast developing a University-wide reputation for teaching excellence through our outstanding results in student evaluations.

Student Evaluations:
In semester 2 last year, and again in semester 1 this year, SPH was Faculty leader in teaching evaluations, particularly “was this subject well taught” (averages of 4.3 and 4.4 respectively out of a possible 5). We are doing so well, there is now little room to improve, but the figure below shows that we have dropped the average % dissatisfaction to below 2% in 2004, and this is an outstanding result.

Our scores are all also well above the University average in all categories, especially in the other important categories of student feedback and overall quality of the teaching and learning experience.

The SPH evaluation process
Semester 2 also saw the introduction of the new SPH teaching and learning policy. This program introduced a more detailed evaluation form for students, self-reflection guides for teachers, and a more formal communication process between subject and course coordinators and academic program committees. SPH subjects will now also be peer reviewed on a more regular and structured basis.

The SPH teaching awards were also introduced in 2004 to provide a framework to recognise and reward teaching excellence. The awards and evaluation processes allow us to promote SPH as a centre of teaching excellence, and demonstrate our commitment to providing a quality teaching and learning environment for academic staff and students alike.

Cathy Bennett
SPH Postgraduate Studies Coordinator

SPH Postgraduate Student Group – “Lofty Thoughts”

The SPH post-graduate students have recently resurrected the UMPA-funded post-grad group “Lofty Thoughts.” This group is designed to enhance academic and social activities of postgraduates and was originally started by students from the Key Centre for Women’s Health in Society and is now expanded to include all research students from the entire School of Population Health. At our Annual General Meeting in September, we elected a new executive committee with Jennifer Stone (CGE) as President, Anke van der Sterren (CSHS) as Secretary, and John Burgess (EBU) as Treasurer. We also elected three non-executive committee members: Karin Hammarberg (KCWHS), Lin Li (AIHI), and Adrian Lowe (EBU). We meet on the first Monday of every month for lunch (BYO) at 1:00 pm in Room 405A, 207 Bouverie Street and the committee has been busy organising our End of Year Party which will be held on Thursday, December 2nd at the Lincoln Hotel after 6 pm. Nibbles and drinks will be provided and all SPH postgraduate students are welcome!
Please RSVP j.stone3@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au by November 26th if you are interested.
**Post Grad news cont...**

**Key Centre for Women’s Health in Society**

Dr Liz Hoban, a KCWHS PhD graduate, was presented with a Head of School SPH Award for Excellence in Doctoral research.

The following new AMS students have started their academic work in the KCWHS:

- Nina Sorrenti is working on a project about the experience of immigrants as health professionals under the supervision of Dr Milica Markovic.
- Emma Wong is working on a project titled “Gender differences in experiencing a physical disability in Thailand” and will be supervised by Dr Elizabeth Bennett.
- Sarah Jane Rose Mansfield, also supervised by Dr Elizabeth Bennett, is working on a project titled “Critical analysis of the State Disability Strategy”.
- Era Mahyull is working on a project titled “A descriptive study of nipple vasospasm in lactating women”, under the supervision of Dr Lisa Amir.

**Epidemiology & Biostatistics Unit**

**New PhDs**

**John Burgess** began his PhD in August and is working with the Tasmanian Asthma Study under the supervision of Shyamali Dharmage. John has a background in adult medicine, and works part time as a Consultant Physician in the Southern Health Network, maintaining an active interest in undergraduate teaching and in evidence based medicine. He completed his Masters in Epidemiology in 2002 at this University. The working title of his thesis is “Risk factors for the development of chronic respiratory disease in adults”.

**Sonja Hood** commenced her PhD in the Epidemiology and Biostatistics Unit in March. The working title of Sonja’s thesis is “Getting evidence into practice: improving the management of heart failure in Australia”. Sonja has a scholarship from the National Institute of Clinical Studies and has worked in health services evaluation and management in Australia and the UK.

**Adrian Lowe** began his PhD within the Epidemiology & Biostatistics Unit in March. The working title of his thesis is “Effect of infant diet on the development of allergies in children with a family history of atopy”, supported by Dairy Australia, CRC for Asthma, VicHealth. Adrian completed his Masters of Public Health with the unit in 2001. He has since worked in a range of research positions at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, including the epidemiology of epilepsy and development of clinical practice guidelines.
Staff Out And About

Dr Bircan Erbas, EBU


Tony LaMontagne


3D: THE INAUGURAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL ASPECTS OF CHRONIC DISEASE, DISABILITY, & DISABLINGMENT, University of Melbourne, AUSTRALIA. Senior author on oral presentation by Hannah Walker entitled “It ruined my life—Living with the legacy of asbestos in the Latrobe Valley” (Walker H and LaMontagne AD). *July 2004*

WORLD HEALTH PROMOTION CONFERENCE 2004, Melbourne. Workplace Health stream leader, oral presenter on “Wellworks and beyond—lessons from integrated health promotion and health protection intervention trials in the US” LaMontagne et al (27 April), Co-Chair of joint Workplace Health and Globalisation/Governance stream oral paper session on “Globalisation and cross-linkages to work and family life” (29 April), Chair of oral paper session on “Strategies, Tools, and Examples in Workplace Health” 30 April 2004

Professor Doreen Rosenthal presented the 2004 Nigel Gray Oration on Wednesday Nov 24, titled “Is Adolescence a Health Risk?” This is an annual event that honours the achievements of one of Victoria’s most highly respected public health leaders. Professor Rosenthal’s presentation discussed whether categorising young people ‘at risk’ helps to explain their health outcomes.

Drs Jane Fisher and Heather Rowe and Ms Karin Hammarberg, a postgraduate student, presented sessions at the Annual Conference of The Australian Society for Psychosocial Obstetrics and Gynaecology held in Sydney in August. The conference theme was Young Women’s Sexual Health: Pregnancy and Beyond.

Centre for Genetic Epidemiology

On 24 October some staff generously participated in the 4th annual Pink Ribbon Motorcycle Ride 2004 to raise money for breast cancer support services and awareness – see below. Sponsorships and donations are still being accepted by The Cancer Council. Receipts will be issued by December 2004.
Publications 2004


Cowley SP, Else D, LaMontagne AD (2004): Increasing the adoption of OHS risk controls in small business: can social marketing help to achieve change? J Occup Health Safety – Aust NZ 20(1); 69-77.


Slavin, M., Fastenau, J., Sukarom, I., Panagiotis, M., Crowley, S. & Gerth, W.C., 2004 'Burden of hospitalization of patients with Candida and Aspergillus infections in Australia', *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, vol. 8, pp. 111.120.


Dr Andrea Whittaker’s book *Abortion, Sin and the State in Thailand* was launched at the Biennial Conference of Asian Studies Association of Australia.

Pascale Allotey, with Samia Baho, co-authored a report – *Staying Safe: Horn of African Women’s Experience of the Emergency Services in Victoria*. The report was launched on Oct 14 as part of the Victorian Government’s Community Safety Month at the Old Fire Station museum. The speakers at the launch all spoke very highly about the role of KCWHS and also about the respectful and inclusive manner in which women in the Horn of Africa communities were able to contribute to the report.

* Complete lists of published work are available from ORPS (see your Publications Coordinator)

2004 publications will be available c. March 2005 after which many Centre/Units upload onto website

Get to know …

Tony La Montagne

Tony LaMontagne is a VicHealth Senior Research Fellow and Associate Professor in the Centre for the Study of Health & Society, School of Population Health, at the University of Melbourne.

Tony’s research is multi-disciplinary and entails the development, implementation, and evaluation of interventions to improve workplace health.

Interventions of interest range from worker training programs; to integrated interventions targeting health behaviours and working conditions; to national occupational health policies.

Tony is the recipient of a Victorian Health Promotion Foundation Senior Research Fellowship (2002—2007) to develop a research program on “Integrated, Community-Based Approaches to Health Promotion for Victorian Blue-Collar Workers.” Two specific contexts in which Tony is pursuing this research are:

1. The relationship between job stress and health behaviours: For example, he is currently working on a National Heart Foundation-funded project on 1,100 working Victorians, and has just been awarded a VicHealth Tender entitled “Workplace Stress in Victoria—Developing A Systems Approach”;
2. Asbestos disease, health behaviours, and community health

See also http://www.cshs.unimelb.edu.au/staff/bio/lamontagne.html

n.b. GARDS = Gippsland Asbestos Related Diseases Support Group
Highlighted section in newspaper clipping “…Dr tony LaMontagne … is looking to interview people in the Latrobe Valley about issues surrounding asbestos. … He and his RA Hannah Walker are hoping to get Valley people’s views to assist in the development of a comprehensive public health response to asbestos issues.”