*2. Head of School News (T. Nolan)

The past month has been a very busy period for many of us, and this issue of the School of Population Health News lists many new achievements and successes. Many staff have contributed to the work of the Curriculum Commission and the Faculty’s planning for the Growing Esteem agenda in relation to the new undergraduate degrees, and thinking about research higher degree training in the new era. The new Bachelor of Bioscience, the Bachelor of Science and the Bachelor of Arts and other degrees will potentially have contributions from staff at the School of Population Health.

Our other focus continues to be on postgraduate Masters and doctoral training, and the full implications for this are yet to be thought through and worked out. A new medical curriculum will be devised and just as with the current curriculum that we have all contributed to, the fundamental importance of population health for medical students will need to be both realised and maintained as the content of the new curriculum is developed.

Another crucial issue for us is the RQF (Research Quality Framework) process developed by DEST. I have been a member of a DEST ministerial working party contributing to thinking on the assessment of research
impact. I have been heartened to see a more coherent and at the same time practical approach to thinking about how research impact can be assessed, and I am hopeful that after Minister Bishop releases further details of the proposed new approach, others will have the opportunity to have input to both criticize and improve this process. Of course, for those who are working in Population Health, it is natural to think of the way in which the research that we do will make a difference to the wellbeing of the community, including its health and prosperity.

Professor Margaret Hamilton, AO

I am delighted to congratulate Professor Margaret Hamilton who was the previous Professor and Director of Turning Point. Margaret was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) recently for her service to the community in the areas of social welfare and public health especially in relation to the field of drug and alcohol. Margaret continues to be an active honorary member of the School of Population Health and has been associated with the University for many years.

While there have been several grant winners in recent weeks, I particularly want to congratulate Jane Hocking, Kit Fairley and colleagues from the Sexual Health Unit and the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre who have been awarded a Commonwealth Government Targeted Grant of $830,000 to study the incidence of chlamydia in young Australian women. For Jane, as a postdoctoral fellow, this is a particularly noteworthy achievement and this success will serve her well as she establishes her career as an independent population health researcher. Of course this ‘independence’ refers to her independent thinking because Jane’s works is exemplary in its development of multidisciplinary collaborations across institutions and across states in Australia. This is a wonderful achievement.

In addition, John Hopper and Dallas English on behalf of their teams from MEGA Epidemiology were successful in securing $165,000 in equipment grants from NHMRC and the University. This will assist in the purchase of a real time PCR machine for our joint genetic epidemiology laboratory in Pathology for molecular analysis of blood from their epidemiologic studies, and a bio-specimen repository management information system.

I also want to specially thank some of our up-and-coming leaders within the School who have assisted whilst more senior members of staff have been on study leave or in other ways less available than usual. This particularly applies to Jane Fisher and Anne Kavanagh from the Key
Centre for Women’s Health in Society, and to Marilys Guillemin in the Centre for Health and Society.

Following an independent review and further negotiation with the NHMRC, the Diabetes Vaccine Development Centre will possibly move to a more ‘commercial’ environment in 2007. The reviewer was very complimentary to the enterprise and success of the DVDC in identifying and funding promising vaccine candidates to prevent Type-1 diabetes. This means that both David Irving and Mary Joy Gleeson are moving on to ‘greener pastures’ and I want to thank them both for their most important contributions to the School of Population Health, not just with respect to the success of DVDC, but also for their contributions more widely to the School.

3. Teaching and Learning
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3.1. Postgraduate News (C. Bennett)
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3.2. Undergraduate News (M. Guillemin)
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*3.3. RHD News (J. Fisher)
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Rachel Canaway a postgraduate in the Centre for Health and Society has joined the Higher Degree Research Committee as a student representative for the remainder of 2006. Higher degree research students within the School of Population Health should feel free to contact Rachel with any matters they would like raised before the committee.
Email: r.canaway@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au
Mobile: 0407 658 012

*3.4. SPH Postgraduate Group – “Lofty Thoughts”  (eds. Jennifer Stone and Kelsi Kriitmaa, Co-Presidents)
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see above

*3.5. SPH Academic Programs Office (Liz Lagias)
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The University’s annual Postgraduate Information Week (PIW) will be held in September this year. The exact dates are: Monday 4 September to Saturday 9 September.

The School of Population Health Information session will be: Thursday 7th September 6.30 – 8.00pm
Venue: “The Hub”

SGS & Scholarships Information Session for Prospective Research Students

SGS and the Melbourne Scholarships Office run a combined information session on Thursday 7 September specifically for prospective research students. The format of this session is a lecture style with
information delivered by various representatives from SGS and Scholarships and it is held from 5.30pm in the Prince Phillip Theatre in the Architecture and Planning Building. This session will also be of use to existing students.

*4. Research Committee News
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We are planning a special WIP (Work in Progress) to be held on Thursday August 24th to allow those members of the Department (and others) who had served on the NHMRC GRPs to give feedback on the process and what sort of things did, or did not, work in this new setting, with special reference to Public Health.

Could you please make a note of this, and if you served or are about to serve on a GRP and would like to contribute, please let me know.
All the best

Professor John Hopper
Email: j.hopper@unimelb.edu.au
Tel: (61) 3 8344 0697
Fax: (61) 3 9349 5815

In the meantime:
Wed 9th August, 12 - 1pm, Angeline Loh, WAIMR. Details to be emailed.

Thu 10th August, 11am - 12noon, Julie March, WAIMR. Details to be emailed.

5. Centres/Units News
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5.1 School Office (L.Taylor)
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*5.2 Centre for Health and Society (D. Scobie)
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See article in latest UniNews re Koori health and heritage groups working together  http://uninews.unimelb.edu.au/unarticleid_3532.html

*5.3. Centre for MEGA Epi (M.Lenaghan)
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Australian Twin Registry News:
Ms Emily England joined the ATR in mid July in the newly created role of Assistant Coordinator of the Registry. Emily has an Honours degree in Biochemistry and a strong background in community education in the health and science areas, first with CSIRO Enquiries and most recently managing a department of the Metropolitan Ambulance Service.

At the same time, Ms Jenny Boadle’s role as Administrative Assistant has been reconfigured to reflect her expanded responsibilities in the coordination of all the research studies. Jenny’s new title is Project
Support Officer. Congratulations to Jenny for all of her hard work over the past two years - which now brings her even more!

Key ATR activities over the next few months include the announcement of the successful second round Travel Grant awardees, the launch of our new website which includes the ability for twins to register online, and the 2006 Newsletter.

Enquiries to the ATR should continue to be sent, in the first instance, to: dph-twins@unimelb.edu.au

Welcome:
Emily England, Assistant Coordinator, Australian Twin Registry, see above.
Michelle Burnett, Phlebotomist, filling in for Amanda Richardson, see below.
Emma Morley, teaching support casual

Welcome back:
Adrian Lowe has returned to MEGA Epidemiology to complete his PhD on the epidemiology of childhood allergic conditions. Adrian spent the first six months of 2006 supporting Dr Peter Greenberg as the Chair of NHMRC’s Health Advisory Committee (HAC). The HAC fulfils the NHMRC’s role of producing high quality health information for both consumers and health care workers. The activities of HAC are diverse, but a major function of HAC has been to develop and promulgate the NHMRC “Guidelines for Guidelines” series, which is coming up for review. Adrian enjoyed the experience of watching the development of health policy at the national level. He attended Council meetings, and had a front row seat to watch the evolution of NHMRC into an independent statutory body, which will increase NHMRC’s independence.

Best Wishes:
Kim Dorrell, Coordinator, Australian Twin Registry who is on maternity leave from 27/7/06 for 12 months.
Amanda Richardson, Phlebotomist, who is currently on maternity leave from late June.

Congratulations:
Ana Lopez-Polin who "tied the knot" in Spain this month.

Gold Medallist:
Eva Fenwick, Data Entry staff member -- see latest UniNews report 'Gold rush' at Ballarat at http://uninews.unimelb.edu.au/articleid_3548.html

Publications:
See 8.3 below

*5.4. Program Evaluation Unit (T. Mayhew/J.Yeadon)
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New Staff:
Welcome to Sara Niner and Colleen Doyle who both joined the Unit recently. Sara is assisting Jane Pirkis with developing a national research agenda that identifies priority areas of research to be addressed in the area of suicide prevention, and Colleen will be
Susan Day a current PEU PhD student has also recently joined the unit as a staff member, working with the LAMA consortium to undertake the National Evaluation of the Dementia Health Priority Initiative. (Members of the LAMA consortium are: La Trobe University - Lincoln Centre for Ageing & Community Care Research, The University of Melbourne Program Evaluation Unit and Applied Age Care Solutions and Access Economics)

PEU Seminars:
These seminars will be held in room 405A, level 4, 207 Bouverie Street building from 12.30-1.30pm. A light snack will be served from 12 noon.

1st Aug. Bree Rankin
Improving GPs’ assessment and treatment of coronary heart disease.

15th Aug. Theonie Tacticos
Why self-reported health status is important.

5th Sept. Belinda Morley
Evaluating the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care Program.

19th Sept. Jenni Livingston
An evaluation of changes to informed consent for post-mortem.

Publications:
See 8.4 below

*5.5. Key Centre for Women's Health in Society (A. Tattam)

Associate Professor Anne Kavanagh is on study leave in the US and will return in early September.

Centre Director Professor Doreen Rosenthal returns from study leave in early August.

Over 100 people attended the June one day inaugural national conference on “Gender and Health Inequalities” and the short courses were also well attended.

The Centre has a new telephone system and after a few initial hiccoughs, many staff have new extension numbers, please check the university phone directory or the Key Centre website.

Dr Shelley Mallett, Dr Deb Keys, Professor Rosenthal and Amanda Tattam are finalising a detailed report and executive summary on youth homelessness for the Victorian Department of Human Services, Office of Housing based on the findings from Project i, the longitudinal study on youth homelessness in Melbourne and Los Angeles. The results of this work have been included in the OOH “Youth Homelessness Action Plan,
Stage 2” which will set out strategic directions for homelessness in Victoria. Copies of these reports will be available later this year.

New Grants

Fisher, JRW, Rowe, H. “what were we thinking! Development and evaluation of a website for mental health promotion in parents of newborns, Brockhoff Foundation, $55,000.

Fisher JRW and Rosenthal, D. Improving Maternal Mental Health in Vietnam, Myer Foundation, $30,000. (Funds will allow completion of the planned study to validate psychometric instruments for local use.)

5.6. Diabetes Vaccine Development Centre (MJ. Gleeson)
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5.7. Centre for International Mental Health (J.Burchill)
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*5.8. Sexual Health Unit (K.Fairley)
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SUCCESSFUL GRANT APPLICATIONS


ORGANISATION OF SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS


NEW STAFF

We welcome Jade Bilardi who joined the Unit in July as a Research Assistant and has an academic background in sociology/social research and recently worked in the area of public health policy for state and national not-for-profit organisations

Publications:

See 8.8. below
Staff news:
The VCPMHSW is currently advertising for four new academic positions within the Centre, as below:

- Deputy Director/Research Coordinator (Level C/D)
- Research Fellow – Policy and Analysis (Level B)
- Research Fellow –Wellbeing Indicators and Data (Level B)
- Research Assistant (Level A)

Applications close on the 4th August, and interviews are planned for the following weeks with a view to making prompt appointments. Further news, including introductions to new staff members, will follow in due course.

Seminars:
The VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Social Wellbeing, in conjunction with VicHealth and the Planning Institute of Australia, will host a seminar by Barbara Holtman, Group Leader in Crime Prevention in the CSIR Defence, Peace, Safety and Security Unit, titled "Crime Prevention Partnerships at the Local Level: The South African Experience". The seminar is scheduled from 1-2pm on Monday 18th September in room 515, Level 5, 207 Bouverie Street. Further details available from the VCPMHSW News and Events webpage.

Publications:
see 8.9 below

6. Seminars/Events
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see http://www.sph.unimelb.edu.au/seminars/

7. IT News (N.Golovachenko)
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*8. Publications (since last issue)
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8.1 School
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8.2 Centre for Health and Society
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*8.3 Centre for MEGA Epidemiology
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*8.4 Program Evaluation Unit


8.5 Key Centre for Women’s Health in Society

8.6 Diabetes Vaccine Development Centre

8.7 Centre for International Mental Health

*8.8. Sexual Health Unit

Doxanakis A, Fairley CK. Cohort analysis of multi-disciplinary adherence intervention programs for patients on antiretroviral therapy. 2006; International Journal of STD & AIDS. 17(4): 257-259

Hocking J, Fairley CK. Associations between condom use and rectal or urethral chlamydia infection in men Sexually Transmitted Diseases. 2006; Sexually Transmitted Diseases. 33(4): 256-258

Tideman RL, Pitts MK, Fairley CK. Use of Delphi Sorting Technique to establish a core sexual history. 2006; International Journal of STD & AIDS. 17: 170-172

Chen MY, Hocking J, Fairley CK. Towards a national chlamydia screening programme for Australia. 2006; Medicine Today. 7(3):57-58
*8.9. VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Social Wellbeing
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