

View from the Top

Professor Mark Nelson
Co-director PHCRED , DGP

The second half of 2008 consolidated further the PHCRED program nested within the Menzies Research Institute cumulating with the very successful 5th Annual Research Symposium held this year in Hobart. Jen Hargraves won the best presentation award at the meeting further underlying the success our RDPs have had with their projects this year.

The research workshops held in conjunction with the UDRH have continued to attract good attendances and feedback. We look forward to further developments in 2009, including hopefully refunding for 2010-2012.

A/professor Sue Kilpatrick
Co -director PHCRED, UDRH

I am supervising Rob Rickard, an Occupational therapist from Devonport on a PHCRED mini apprenticeship. Rob is analysing the service access journey of cancer patients in the Circular Head municipality. This will help inform the Cancer Council of Tasmania on improving its services in rural Tasmania and the decisions of the Cancer Clinical Network established under the Tasmanian Health Plan A journal paper will be prepared in the new year.

I will move to a new challenge in 2009, having accepted the position of Pro Vice Chancellor (Rural and Regional) at Deakin University.

View from the Ground

Ms Danielle Williams
Program Coordinator (Menzies)

2008 has been a busy year for the PHCRED program. I have enjoyed meeting the diverse range of people who are actively involved in the PHCRED workshop program, as well as the increasing numbers of individuals who are contacting PHCRED for advice and support in designing and conducting their own research and evaluation activities.

Whilst I am looking forward to a Christmas break, 2009 planning is well underway and I am eager to progress some of our ideas for next year. I am especially excited about the prospect of running an inaugural PHCRED Writing Retreat, which will be a one day event away from the work environment. The retreat would be an opportunity to network with other writers, to receive mentoring and to have protected time that could be used for writing proposals, reports, newsletters, journal articles, or grant applications.

Dr Peter Orpin
Program coordinator (UDRH)

This year it was pleasing to see a small but growing group of familiar faces at workshops, seminars and our symposium and to know that little by little we are building a core of trained, and more importantly, engaged individuals that will form the basis of an eventual viable primary health care research culture in the state.

Highlights include Dorothy McCartney's appointment and work in Population Health to train and support program managers in high quality evaluation and Maree Gleeson's Health Matters group in Burnie which is an exemplar for a research community of practice. The quality of the 2008 Symposium presentations show that people are doing serious, high quality research without losing their connection to everyday practice.

Researcher Developer Program (RDP) 2008

Emily Shepherd-UDRH

During my RDP placement, I conducted a document analysis of print media looking at media representations of old age. I found the media place an emphasis on age instead of physical capability. Further, the majority of the references to older adults participating in physical activity are of low impact activities, whilst references to participation in high impact activities are reported in a sensationalist way. This has possible implications for older adult's choices to participate in physical activity.

I presented my findings at the PHCRED Symposium in Hobart in November and am now in the final draft stages of an article for the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*.

As an RDP, I have gained valuable skills in qualitative research methods, academic writing and writing for publication. This project has the potential for further research but for now the skills I have learnt will be very useful in my Health Promotion career. Thank you to my mentor, Dr Lisa Dalton, Dr Peter Orpin and A/Prof Sue Kilpatrick for their support.

Sally Bennett-Menzies

As an RDP, I conducted a review of all the literature published between 2003 and 2008 related to children (<12) with hearing loss that identifies families needs. Congenital hearing loss can have a significant impact on a child's language development and learning. Early diagnosis can maximise the child's potential for communicating aurally.

This work will assist the new Tasmanian Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS) program to develop guiding principles on how to best support families with a child diagnosed with hearing loss.

The review highlighted many areas that professionals need to be aware of when working with these children. These include considering the needs of the whole family, awareness of possible indicators of distress, providing clear and current written information, giving families all options and allowing families adequate time to process information and make their own decisions.

Other important findings included different coping capacities between the mother and father of a child diagnosed with hearing loss and that the level of distress is not necessarily proportional to the severity of the hearing loss. The review also revealed that families had experienced problems with the screening process and explanation of results, difficulty in accessing services and gaining information, the behavioral management of getting the child to wear the hearing aid and the lack of coordination and communication between services.

Jen Hargrave-Menzies

I have completed my RDP fellowship and a Masters Research Thesis in 2008. My study was the first in Australia which documented the demographics of a breast-feeding late-preterm infant population, who represent 70% of all preterm births within Australia.

Over the last 6 months I have been invited to present my findings to the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, at the Neonatal Intensive Care Scientific Meeting, RHH, the UTAS Excellence in Research Conference in Hobart and earlier in the year at an International Human Milk and Research Conference in Perth WA.

Early Infant feeding practices are important health determinates for mortality and morbidity in infants and young children and for some adult diseases such as diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular diseases. My key interests are therefore now focused on learning more regarding the epidemiology of the late preterm infant and the use of human milk and breastfeeding for reducing childhood diseases, particularly in vulnerable sub populations.

I am currently registering a Cochrane review on breast milk verses formula milk, post discharge and plan to apply for a PhD mid 2009.

Helen Zournazis-UDRH

The RDP program has afforded me numerous learning opportunities and has strengthened my research skills. This year, I completed a Pilot study: A Parent Carers Perspective on the Social Engagement of Rural Adolescents / Young Adults with Intellectual Disability and the Benefits to their Health and Well Being. This project reflected a personal interest and a gap in the literature and provides a platform for future study in this topic area.

I have submitted an abstract for the International Down Syndrome Conference in Dublin 2009 which I hope will provide opportunities to network with international researchers in this field. I also intend to submit an abstract to the National Australasian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability (ASSID) conference in Hobart November, 2009. This will be a further opportunity to develop networks beneficial in my continuing research

I hope to participate in future PHCRED workshops to develop skills in quantitative research and survey design and development.

This program has provided a foundation for future policy and program activities. It has given me the potential to further develop my research skills and expand my opportunities for further research and study. Thank you to Dr Peter Orpin and Keith McVilly for their support.

Travel Grants 2008

Kim Jose (Menzies)

I attended the **Population Health Congress** in Brisbane, July 2008. Convened by the four leading public health associations in Australia, this was a unique event for public health practitioners and provided a rare opportunity for cross discipline networking and dissemination of ideas.

I presented on the recently completed evaluation of the Family Food PATCH Project which was well received and generated interest among other delegates from Australia and New Zealand working to promote children's health and wellbeing.

I also attended an interactive workshop with Professor John Lynch on measuring health inequalities and the critical nature of a good fit between the questions or phenomenon under investigation and the method of measurement. I attended a breakfast session with keynote speakers and international experts on social determinants of health, Professor Sir Michael Marmot, chair of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health and commissioner Professor Fran Baum.

This conference provided an opportunity to attend presentations across a broad range of disciplines and the networking opportunities were invaluable and will be useful as I embark on my PhD studies in the future.

Ree van Galen (UDRH)

I presented a paper at the **Australian Rural Nurses and Midwives 14th National Conference** in Adelaide November, 2008. The paper, 'Rural Community Based Nurses: Moving towards a Primary Health Care Role and Identity' was based on a PHCRED funded research project, conducted with Dr Christine Stirling. This was a single site qualitative case study exploring ways to assist individual primary health care practitioners (particularly nurses) to translate their knowledge into new primary health care practices by understanding how these fit with their professional identities and beliefs.

Attending this conference provided much more than I had expected. The presentations in areas such as teaching and learning, challenges and innovations, workforce sustainability, research, safety quality and change and community best practice were of a very high calibre.

Discussions regarding moves towards a National Primary Health Care Strategy were high on the agenda with keynote presentations by Rosemary Bryant and Julie Porritt. Presenting at this conference also provided valuable networking opportunities with key figures in the field, including Dr Jane Mills, Dr Desley Hegney and Dr Mollie Burley, which has already proved valuable in supporting my PhD progress in the area of primary health care and rural community based nurses.

Sue Frendin (UDRH)

I attended the **Heart and Mind Conference**, in Prato, Italy which explored the links between psychological medicine and cardiovascular disease. Over the three days, the conference program explored the relationships between stress, mental illness and the development and course of heart disease and hypertension.

Papers and posters covered topics from scientific research to program design and implementation, focusing on issues such as mental stress links to coronary heart disease and hypertension, mediating biology of psychogenic heart disease, stress, gender and heart disease, depressive illness and coronary heart disease, mind-heart interaction in therapy anxiety disorders and cardiac devices and clinical pathways for management of mental illness in cardiovascular disease.

International leaders in this field including Professor Nancy Frasura-Smith (Canada), Professor Andrew Steptoe (UK), and Dr Ilan Wittstein (USA) all presented at the conference.

Attendance at this conference has further raised my awareness of the need to reinforce the importance of holistic approaches to chronic disease prevention and management and the need to ensure that research looks not only at the physical markers and behaviours, but also explores and monitors the impacts of the roles of factors such as self efficacy, and indicators of mental health and wellbeing.

Helen Cameron- Tucker Menzies

Helen presented findings from her PhD research at the **International Congress on Disease Self Management** in Melbourne, November 2008. She will report on her experiences in the next PHCRED e.bulletin.

Primary Health Care Scholarships 2008

Alison Archer (UDRH) Honours UTAS

This year I completed my Fourth Year coursework and achieved a Credit in Advanced Statistics, two Distinctions in Advanced Topics in Psychology and Assessment, Professional Roles and Ethics and a High Distinction in Theoretical Controversies in Psychology. My research plans for 2009 are to write my thesis on Deliberate Self Harm in Adolescents. My supervisor is Dr Frances Martin from UTas

Rebecca Austin (Menzies) Honours UTAS

This year I completed my honours degree in nursing. I was involved in the Pathways to Lung Health Project and focused on community health nurses and their experiences of implementing a self management model into practice.

I presented my research at the Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium on the 13th November and attended the International Congress on Chronic Disease Self-Management in Melbourne where I displayed a poster. I also displayed a poster at the recent PHCRED symposium. This year has presented a tremendous learning experience and a great opportunity to develop my research skills.

I am extremely grateful for the financial support I received from PHCRED, which made this research journey somewhat easier. While I will continue to develop my clinical skills, as a cardiac rehabilitation nurse in chronic disease self management, I also intend to continue research in the area of chronic disease self management with a focus on attendance rates for cardiac rehabilitation.

Brett Mitchell (DHHS)

Brett Mitchell has a nursing degree from Queensland University of Technology (Brisbane) and a Masters degree (Infection Control) from Griffith University and other post grad education including healthcare management, tropical nursing and teaching. He is currently working in Population Health in the Tasmanian Infection Prevention & Control Unit.

Brett presented the preliminary findings from his research project "The Colonisation Burden of Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) in Rural Hospitals in Tasmania" at the 2008 PHCRED symposium.

The identification of the current burden will enable a targeted safety and quality approach supported by the epidemiology / results of this research for the prevention and control of infection in rural hospitals.



Brett Mitchell receiving the DHHH primary health care research scholarship 2008 from Debbie Schofield-Gavin (Partners in Health, DHHS)

Special Seminar 2008



Sue Frenkin (Lt) and Ella Ashley at the Seminar

Forty seven people registered for the 2008 PHCRED public seminar, "A long and winding road? Transforming primary health care research into policy and practice", held at the beautiful Henry Jones Art Hotel on Hobart's waterfront.

Professor James Dunbar was joined by Kim Boyer, UDRH, Sue Frenkin, DHHS and Ella Ashley from the Heart Foundation as they discussed the sometimes tricky issues involved in transforming research into policy and practice in the primary health sector. Dr Peter Orpin moderated the at times lively discussion between the panel members and the program managers, policy makers and health professionals who attended.

Symposium 2008

There were fifty one registrants for the 5th Tasmanian PHCRED annual symposium “Building Primary Health Care Research Communities of Practice” which was held on 28th November in Hobart.

Special Guest Speaker Professor James Dunbar from Greater Green Triangle (GGT) , University Department of Rural Health, Flinders and Deakin University, presented on the establishment of the GGT Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Partnership. He identified the key factors in creating and maintaining an effective partnership - people with complimentary skills committed to a common purpose, with agreed goals, and an approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable, shared values where the members put the collective group first and have an end product orientation.

In all sixteen speakers presented their research including PHCRED researcher developer program fellows, Jen Hargrave, Sally Bennett, Emily Shepherd and Helen Zournazis, DHHS scholarship recipient Brett Mitchell and travel grant recipient Kim Jose. Other papers on diverse topics such as managing hypertension, quitting smoking, physiotherapy services, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, assessment of physical activity, sexual dysfunction, and foetal alcohol spectrum disorder were also presented. Maree Gleeson and Winifred Vanderploeg completed the symposium with a joint presentation on creating their own community of research practice at the Rural Clinical School in Burnie.



From Lt to Rt, symposium presenters Lorraine Smith, Dr Faline Howes, Emily Shepherd and Dr Emily Hansen

Symposium Abstracts and selected PowerPoint presentations are now available on the PHCRED website.

In addition to the papers there were a number of posters on display including contributions from 2008 honours scholarship recipient Rebecca Austin and PHCRED program coordinators Danielle Williams and Peter Orpin .



Special Guest speaker Prof James Dunbar (Lt) with Dr Peter Orpin



Presenters Sally Bennett (Lt) , and Maree Gleeson (Rt) with Danielle Williams , PHCRED program coordinator

From the Statewide Coordinator's Desk

We have been busy at PHCRED since our June e.bulletin. The last half of the year saw the continuation of our regular workshops program. We delivered sessions in the North and South of the state on

- Qualitative research methods
- Quantitative research methods
- Writing up results
- Conducting rigorous evaluation

In addition we conducted a second North West research clinic at the Rural Clinical School in Burnie as well as running additional evaluation workshops for specific stakeholders.

In August we implemented our on line registration system for the workshops and despite a few glitches, it appears to be working well. For the first time we also used the system for symposium registrants. So far 221 people have registered for a PHCRED event using the new system, which has saved a lot of time and paper!

I recently attended a national meeting for Statewide coordinators of the PHCRED program. This was a wonderful opportunity to network with my interstate colleagues and to exchange our ideas and experiences with the program. A number of really useful suggestions were made on how to support each other in promoting primary health care research across the country and I will be making a report to the program coordinators early in the new year,

The PHCRED program underwent a national evaluation in 2008 but to date we have not received any reports on the evaluation outcome. Our current funding cycle finishes at the end of 2009 but we are confident (hopeful!) the program will continue in 2010 and thereafter.

We have another full program of workshops and events planned for next year and will be advertising our first round of Travel Grants in late February. So check out our website www.phcred.utas.edu.au for regular updates or you can join our mailing list if you want direct information on what's new at PHCRED.

This is my last e.bulletin for the PHCRED program. It is with some sadness I am leaving as Statewide Coordinator early in 2009 to resume my PhD studies with the School of Government, University of Tasmania. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the program and have enjoyed meeting so many of you at the workshops and other events. I wish you all every success in your future primary health care research endeavours.

Theresa Doherty

On behalf of the team here at PHCRED Tasmania have a

*Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year*