



FACULTY OF HEALTH

best of health

June 2008 newsletter



Graduation becomes
a family affair

Weight loss possible
when self-belief high

A double vision
for eye disease

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From the Executive Dean's desk



The Faculty of Health has always strived to provide our students with international linkages to enable them to expand their career opportunities, and to develop projects with an international interface to make significant contributions to the improvement of human health.

In this issue of Best of Health, we showcase a number of these international projects, including a capacity-building project in Vietnam and an internship for medical officers from Botswana and the success of some of our international students.

This year marks the 30 year anniversary of nurse education at QUT. The nursing department was established in 1978 at Gardens Point and the School of Nursing was established in 1992 at our Kelvin Grove campus.

Today we have over 2000 students enrolled in the undergraduate program and we offer the widest range of specialty postgraduate nursing courses in Queensland. A celebratory dinner will be held in September to acknowledge these achievements.

The new QUT Health Clinics are close to completion with the Podiatry and Optometry clinics preparing to move into the new premises at 44 Musk Ave in July. This will coincide with QUT's Course and Careers Day and we will take this opportunity to showcase the new facilities with tours of the clinics and course information sessions held onsite. This is an exciting time for the students who will be accessing state-of-the-art

technology and equipment to optimise their clinical learning experience.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our students who received prizes at our annual Prizes and Awards ceremony held in February. A record number of prizes was awarded and we were fortunate to secure the support of a number of new sponsors. Without the continued support from our sponsors, we would not have the opportunity to celebrate our students' achievements in this way. Thank you.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of the Best of Health.



Professor Ken Bowman AM
Executive Dean,
Faculty of Health

School of Nursing celebrates 30 years of nurse education

This year QUT's School of Nursing is celebrating 30 years of leading nurse education in Queensland.

The nursing department was established in 1978 as part of the School of Health Sciences at what was then the Queensland Institute of Technology (QIT) at the Gardens Point campus.

The department was the first in Queensland to introduce the Diploma of Applied Science (post-registration) in Nursing Administration, Nursing Education and Unit Management.

When QIT transitioned to become the Queensland University of Technology in 1990 the Bachelor of Applied Science (Nursing) was introduced and the School of Nursing was established at the Kelvin Grove campus in 1992.

Since then, QUT has been the leader in delivering the highest quality nursing programs in both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

Professor Helen Edwards the current Head of School, who has been an academic with the School of Nursing since 1982, cites a number of reasons the programs at QUT are highly sought after by students and well regarded by industry.

'The nursing program at QUT has achieved a number of impressive milestones over the last 30 years,' Professor Edwards said.

'They include the growth in nursing research; new pathways being made available for undergraduate students; aligning courses to meet workforce needs; the performance of higher

degree students; international linkages for students and projects; growth in staff numbers and establishing industry linkages.'

The undergraduate nursing program was also introduced at QUT's Caboolture campus in 2007.

The School of Nursing currently has over 2000 students enrolled in the undergraduate nursing program and over 200 postgraduate students.

A 30 year anniversary dinner and postgraduate nursing symposium will be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre on Tuesday 30th September to celebrate the occasion.

Social Work and Human Services join Health



Professor Bob Lonne

Professor Bob Lonne has been appointed as the inaugural Professor of Social Work at QUT.

Professor Lonne has over 20 years experience in social work, including 15 years in rural Queensland and Western Australia. As an academic, Professor

Lonne's research has focused on redressing the differences in services in rural areas compared to urban centres.

The Bachelor of Social Work was introduced through the Faculty of Health this year. A Social Work and Psychology double degree will be introduced in 2009.

The Bachelor of Human Services has also joined the Faculty of Health suite of undergraduate degrees this year, providing students with increased career opportunities and flexible study options.

Professor Lonne said that 'he looked forward to greater collaborations between Social Work and Human Services and other schools within the Health faculty, which will result in a richer teaching, learning and research environment.'

Social Work and Human Services and the School of Psychology and Counselling, which are currently located at QUT's Carseldine campus, will be

moving to the Kelvin Grove campus in 2009.

Professor Lonne says he is very excited about the prospect of offering the Bachelor of Social Work from the Kelvin Grove Campus.

'The move to Kelvin Grove will benefit the degree as well as the Bachelor of Human Services and Master of Human Services courses, with students afforded greater accessibility to these important areas of professional practice,' he said.

Professor Lonne has been the National President of the Australian Association of Social Workers, which has 6500 members, since 2005 and was selected to participate in the Prime Minister's 2020 Future Summit in Canberra in April as a representative for rural Australia.



Driver simulator set to slash road crashes



Associate Professor Andry Rakotonirainy

The state's first advanced driver simulator, expected to be up and running within six months, will help QUT researchers tackle the high death toll on Australian roads.

To be built at QUT's Kelvin Grove campus, the \$750,000 machine will give researchers the opportunity to study human behaviour in different driving conditions.

CARRS-Q Associate Professor Andry Rakotonirainy said tragically road crashes were still the major cause of traumatic death and injury in Australia with an economic and social burden estimated at over \$17 billion a year.

'This simulator will offer the capability to study drivers in safety critical situations with a high degree of realism,' he said.

'It will help provide research answers that would be difficult, costly and often unsafe to obtain under real driving situations.

'Given most crashes can be attributed to driver errors, evaluating driver behaviour is essential.'

Professor Rakotonirainy said it was estimated that intelligent transport systems such as the driver simulator, could potentially reduce road crashes by up to 40 per cent in Australia by 2012.

He said this advanced driver simulator would work by utilising seven to eight computers, projectors and a moving 6 degree of freedom (6DOF) platform.

'It will also incorporate a life-size vehicle allowing the simulator to reproduce real traffic situations,' he said.

Professor Rakotonirainy said 11 research projects had already been earmarked for the driver simulator including a study that would investigate reduced vigilance as a result of monotonous road conditions.

'Vigilance is a contributing factor in 7 per cent of all reported crashes and

15 per cent of fatal crashes,' Professor Rakotonirainy said.

'Understanding the effects, symptoms, detections and prevention strategies for hypovigilance could potentially reduce crashes and injuries of high risk workers involved in monotonous repetitive tasks such as train drivers, air traffic controllers and long flight operators.

'This project will use the driving simulator to focus on basic research to understand, predict and manage hypovigilance as related specifically to monotony.'

The driver simulator, which has been in part funded by the Australia Research Council, the University of Queensland and QUT, Queensland Transport, Department of Main Roads, RACQ and MAIC(Motor Accident Insurance Commission) will bring together researchers from multidisciplinary fields including optometry, psychology, mathematics, physiology and road safety.



Graduation becomes a family affair



From L to R: Alex Thompson, Kate Ashdown and Tenille Ashdown

Kate Ashdown recently attended her youngest daughter Tenille's graduation, but she didn't sit amongst other proud parents and friends in the audience, she sat right alongside her.

The pair was among hundreds of graduating students to receive their degrees on the 14th February and they couldn't have been more thrilled.

Kate, a former School of Nursing staff member, graduated with a Master of Health Science. Her daughter, Tenille graduated with a Bachelor of Nursing.

Kate said that she is extremely proud of her daughter who will follow in her footsteps into a career in nursing.

'Nursing is such a diverse field with many opportunities,' she said.

'I hope that Tenille gets as much satisfaction from it as I have over the years.'

The challenge of working in mental health and the desire to get back in contact with patients has motivated Kate to return to the clinical area and further studies in mental health.

'While I have enjoyed both professional and academic responsibilities at QUT, I have always maintained a clinical focus and worked in the clinical area,' she said.

Kate is currently working at The Park, Centre for Mental Health, while Tenille recently started at Ipswich Hospital in the Graduate Transition program and would ultimately like to work in the area of midwifery.

Adding to the excitement in the Ashdown family, Alex Thompson, who is married to another of Kate's daughters, also graduated the same day.

Alex graduated with a Bachelor of Health Science (Paramedic) and works for the Queensland Ambulance Service.



Quiet time shuts up hospital noise



Measuring noise levels in hospital wards

A trial of 'quiet time' in a Brisbane hospital has seen noise levels cut by half and found patients are more than twice as likely to sleep, according to QUT researcher Professor Glenn Gardner.

The study, conducted by a team from QUT's School of Nursing and the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH), examined the effect on patients of a daily period of 'lights out and no visitors' in the hospital ward.

Professor Gardner said hospitals were busy places, with visitors, nurses, doctors and students coming and going constantly.

'There is always something happening, alarms going off, and machines beeping. A hospital can be a very noisy environment, which isn't a good thing when you're sick,' she said.

As part of the study, the team implemented a mandatory quiet time in the orthopaedic ward of the RBWH and compared this with existing practices in a matched orthopaedic ward at a similar hospital.

For 1.5 hours every day in the RBWH ward, lights were turned off, no visitors were allowed, residents listened to TVs and radios via earpieces, staff movement was restricted and only urgent and immediately necessary clinical treatment was administered.

'We also checked that all patients were comfortable and free from pain,' Professor Gardner said.

These measures reduced noise levels dramatically and, as a consequence, patients slept.

'We found it was half as noisy in the RBWH ward and patients were more

than twice as likely to be asleep during this time,' Professor Gardner said.

Every day during the study, noise levels and the sleeping patterns of patients in the two wards were monitored.

In the RBWH orthopaedic ward the study surveyed patients' and visitors' satisfaction with the quiet time and the opinion of hospital clinical staff.

'Every day nurses went around the wards in both hospitals with a sound monitor measuring and recording ambient sound levels,' Professor Gardner said.

'Illness, trauma and surgery place increased demands on sleep requirements for patients,' she said.

For sick people, sleep positively influences blood pressure, pain experiences and emotional wellbeing, suggesting that sleep is good for patient health outcomes.

'Patients can often leave hospital worse than when they arrive because of lack of rest,' she said. 'Constant noise and activity is not very conducive to getting better.'

The majority of patients in the quiet time ward reported that they'd had enough time with visitors and liked the 'quiet time' intervention.

Visitors also agreed they'd had enough time with their sick relatives although many wanted unlimited visiting access.

The study was funded by a research grant from the Queensland Nursing Council.



Healthy determination



Equity Award Winner – Juliao Dos Reis

When Juliao Dos Reis takes a sip of his cappuccino at QUT's Kelvin Grove campus, he closes his eyes against the café din to soak in its smell and flavour.

Despite plenty of fair trade coffee coming from Juliao's home, East Timor, the public health student says his family there would never have the opportunity to enjoy a coffee like this.

'Every time I have a coffee here, I really appreciate it,' the Graduate Diploma of Environmental Health student said.

Juliao's family is never far from his mind and his decision to come to Australia in 2002 after winning a scholarship was bittersweet.

Juliao's father was a freedom fighter who left home when his son was just four years old, and lived in the jungle outside Dili for 13 years.

'My mother was a housewife with a small business, a little store selling groceries such as sugar, rice, biscuits, etc., which gave her enough money to feed us but not to send my brother and sister and I to school,' Juliao said.

'My sister and brother gave up the idea of going to school but I had something pushing me ... I wanted to learn, even

if it wasn't going to take me anywhere I wanted to know how to read and write.'

Juliao's family lived in the same village as his uncle, a civil servant for the Indonesian government, and he attended school until he said it became too difficult due to the hatred the uncle has against his whole family being pro-independent.

'People knew my dad was in the jungle and I was living in a society where everyone was against what he was fighting for, so every day was just about surviving to the next day, not about learning.'

Fearing retaliation and becoming increasingly uncomfortable around his pro-Indonesian uncle, Juliao left his home aged 10 to work for a family in another village where he was not known as the son of a freedom fighter.

When independence was declared in East Timor in 1999, Juliao and his friends were forced to find sanctuary in the jungle where, remarkably, he resumed contact with his father after 11 years apart.

'I had heard rumours he was dead ... but there was this guy with long hair down to his hips and he held my hand and said 'my son'. I looked at him and I recognised him. It was a moment that changed everything.'

When the unrest that erupted during independence calmed down, Juliao's family was reunited.

'From that moment, I knew I'd learnt nothing. I had stopped going to school at 11 and just wanted to go back and work hard to achieve something, now that I had my family and the country had its freedom,' the 24-year-old said.

'My dad doesn't work now and when I'd ask him why he used to say to me: 'If there is a war, I'll take my gun and go to work but my work is done. It was my duty to take the girl back from the enemies, now it's your duty to dress her up'.

'I couldn't understand what he really meant. Now I realise he was saying that he was fighting for this country his whole life,

and now it's my duty to go to school and learn how to make the country better.'

Since then, Juliao has been doing his father proud. He went back to school in 2000, getting straight A's in 15 subjects and topping his school.

In 2002, he was selected by Education Queensland as one of four East Timorese students to attend Nudgee College as part of a scholarship program.

Despite recognising an 'amazing' opportunity, he found it very hard to leave his family after they'd had just a couple of years together.

Juliao said attending Nudgee College was initially 'a nightmare' as he struggled to learn things in English and tried to adjust to a different culture and food.

However through persistence – including studying for six hours each day after school – Juliao graduated from Nudgee College at age 21 and enrolled in a Bachelor of Public Health at QUT.

He completed that successfully at the end of 2007 and is now immersed in his postgraduate studies in environmental health, as well as working 10 hours a week at the Jade Buddha restaurant and 16 hours a week as a dorm supervisor at Nudgee College.

'Doing public health, I can teach people about the environment they live in and how to care for it ... it breaks the cycle.'

Last month, Juliao received the 2008 Health Equity Award from the faculty for demonstrating exceptional application, determination and enterprise in his course.

'I do think about going home when I finish but I'm also looking out for other opportunities because, since this is an opportunity of a lifetime I want to make sure I take as much as I can before I leave,' he said.



Young elite team players prone to burnout: study



Postgraduate Psychology Student – Angela Christie

Young, elite players of team sports such as cricket, netball and hockey are more likely to be susceptible to crippling self-criticism, fear of failure and 'burnout' than older elite players.

This finding is based on a study by QUT postgraduate psychology student Angela Christie who surveyed 84 male and female semi-elite and elite athletes, aged 18 to 33, playing at state to international levels.

Ms Christie found younger players (aged 18-25) had higher levels of 'dysfunctional perfectionism' than elite participants (aged 25-33).

'The survey results showed that younger athletes were more likely to hold inflexibly high standards. If they don't meet their own standards, they tend to criticise themselves harshly,' Ms Christie said.

Research supervisor, Professor Kathryn Gow from QUT's School of Psychology and Counselling, said Ms Christie's research made an important contribution to our understanding of the pressure on athletes.

Ms Christie said the findings could potentially shed light on recent

discussion that elite sportspeople had lost the ethos of sport for enjoyment.

'Society expects a lot from elite athletes, and so, for some losing isn't an option,' she said.

'These younger athletes were more likely to gauge their self-worth from their performance and consequently had a greater fear of failure and strove to avoid errors more than more experienced athletes in the 25 to 33 age range.

'More research is needed to ascertain whether younger athletes will carry these qualities through to the elite level or whether the older athletes have learned to 'lighten up' along the way.'

Ms Christie's study aimed to identify whether adaptive coping reduced the likelihood of 'burnout' and if maladaptive coping increased the likelihood of burnout.

Burnout is the result of an athlete's inability to cope or to adapt to high levels of anxiety and stress when faced with long, stressful periods during competitions and matches.

'It is a real possibility when a person's life solely revolves around competitive sport at a high level,' Ms Christie said.

'Players with burnout can experience sleep disturbances, illness, and increased propensity for injury, as well as emotional depletion, agitation, mood swings and failure to experience positive emotions.

'With regards to their sport, burnout can lead to a reduction in self-determination and lowered drive for achievement and goals for higher selection honours. Many just withdraw from the sport altogether and some end up hating it.'

Ms Christie said it was important that elite players had a well-balanced self-concept in which they viewed themselves, not only as highly competent athletes, but as competent members of society.

'Overall, the findings point to the need for athletes to engage in meaningful activities outside sport.'



A double vision for eye disease



Dr Beatrix Feigl and Dr Andrew Zele

Dr Beatrix Feigl and Dr Andrew Zele are partnering in a quest to improve the sight of people who suffer from age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a condition that is the major cause of blindness in persons over the age of 60 years in the western world.

Dr Feigl and Dr Zele head up the Medical Retina and Visual Science Laboratory at QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation (IHBI).

Their research uses a two-pronged approach, leveraging Dr Feigl's specialisation in ophthalmology and Dr Zele's expertise in visual science.

Dr Feigl is developing safe and optimum treatment guidelines for new anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) treatments for use in AMD, while Dr Zele is focusing on understanding the basic mechanisms of retinal function.

'Our research uses new and innovative electroretinographic and psychophysical techniques to understand visual processing in the normal retina. We translate these techniques into rapid and easily performed non-invasive clinical tests for the early detection and monitoring of AMD,' Dr Zele says.

The cutting-edge techniques were developed at the University of Chicago in the United States, where Dr Zele previously worked. QUT is the only Australian university currently using these techniques.

With an ageing population, AMD imposes significant costs to the Australian economy.

A longitudinal study involving over 100 patients with AMD aims to identify how the disease develops and what effects the current treatment has on the eye.

'This research aims to determine the long-term effects of repeated anti-VEGF treatment and how eye function is affected,' says Dr Feigl.

'Ultimately, we would like to be able to reduce the number of injections given to AMD patients and minimise the risks to patients.'

The research is supported by the Australian Research Council and QUT seeding grants.

International and national collaborations are continuing with researchers from the University of Chicago, the Illinois College of Optometry, the University of Sydney and QUT.



A night for celebrating



From L to R: Greg Johnson, Executive Director, Optometrists Association of Australia (Qld & NT Division); Executive Dean, Professor Ken Bowman; Acting Head of School of Optometry, Dr Peter Hendicott; and Simon Hurwood, Optometrist (past president of the Optometrists Association of Australia (Qld & NT Division))

The Faculty of Health celebrated the successes of some of its brightest students at the annual Prizes and Awards Ceremony recently.

The event was held in the new Student Learning and Support Centre on Kelvin Grove campus and was attended by over 250 sponsors, QUT staff, students and their families.

With a record number of prizes and awards presented, new sponsors included the Australian College of Critical Care Nurses (Qld Branch), the Australian Podiatry Association, the Australian Health Promotion Association (Qld Branch) and Family Planning Queensland.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Health Equity Award, presented to public health student, Juliao Dos Reis from East Timor for his outstanding application, determination and enterprise in his undergraduate degree.

Juliao is an international student from East Timor and graduated from the Bachelor of Health Science (Public Health) degree last year and started his postgraduate degree in Environmental Health this year. His inspirational story is featured on page 5.



Head of School of Nursing, Professor Helen Edwards, Travis Harding (2007 Winner The Joy Crocker Centaur Silver Medal Award), and Deborah Prior, Centaur Memorial Fund

The Faculty would like to acknowledge the generous support from sponsors and congratulates all award recipients.



Equity Award Winner – Juliao Dos Reis, Deputy-Chair of the Equity Committee, Dr Katy White



Weight loss possible when self-belief high

If you are what you eat, what you eat has a lot to do with how you think about yourself, says a QUT PhD researcher whose study is part of an international research project on the healthy ageing of women.

Queensland University of Technology nursing researcher Rhonda Anderson said self-efficacy had emerged as a strong influence on women's decision to do more exercise or eat more healthily.

She surveyed more than 560 South-East Queensland women aged between 51 and 66 on their exercise and diet habits and found that although women in their 50s were keen to make healthier diet and exercise changes, they had few effective strategies to draw upon.

'This is an age when women's weight tends to peak, and almost two-thirds of the survey group were overweight or obese,' Ms Anderson said.

'Self efficacy is our belief that we can produce the result we want to produce, so a person with high dietary self-efficacy believes they can eat healthily no matter what - even when bored, upset, tired, on holiday or at a party.

'A person's level of self-efficacy determines how hard they try and how long they stick at things in the face of difficulties. People with high self-efficacy are motivated and optimistic - when the going gets tough, they keep going.

'People with low self-efficacy avoid difficult tasks and when things get tough they are more likely to give up. We can improve our self-efficacy by developing skills, having role models and getting encouragement from others.'

Ms Anderson's study found being overweight or obese was a key influence on self-efficacy.

'Women who carried a lot of excess weight were more likely to have low self-efficacy and to not believe they could stick to an effective healthy exercise or diet program,' she said.



Nursing researcher – Ms Rhonda Anderson

'Education is also a factor - women with a tertiary education were more likely to have high self-efficacy for exercise.'

Ms Anderson said her findings were timely given the population was ageing and women lived longer than men.

'We are going to have a lot of older women and if they are obese at age 60 they are not well placed to have a healthy old age. Carrying excess weight has been linked to diseases including diabetes, heart disease and breast cancer,' she said.

Ms Anderson said that most of the women in her study who had made an effort to exercise more took up walking and those who had tried to eat more healthily had mainly cut down on fat.

'But going for a stroll and not having butter on your bread won't have you lose 30kg. Women need specific education and support to be successful in improving their health and losing weight.

'We need to reach the many women juggling work and motherhood and feel guilty if they take time for themselves.

'A lot of women in their 50s are keen to improve their health, and we need to take advantage of that, but if we can support them in taking care of themselves from an earlier age, so much the better.'



Cracking the code in Botswana



Mrs Esther Seleke

An educational program to train Medical Records Officers in Botswana aims to improve continuity of patient care at one of the largest hospitals in the Republic.

The National Centre for Classification in Health (NCCH) at QUT is engaged in an educational program with health information managers at Princess Marina Hospital to migrate from the International Classification of Diseases 9th edition (ICD-9) to the current version, ICD-10.

The ICD-10 is the World Health Organisation standard for the classification of diseases, other health conditions and causes of death.

The Princess Marina Hospital operates as one of the main referral hospitals in the Republic.

Mrs Esther Seleke, Chief Medical Records Officer at the hospital, has begun a three-month internship at QUT

to learn about the new coding system with the view to training other health information staff at her hospital.

'This internship will help us to correctly code each disease which will improve management, budgeting, staffing requirements and identify future research opportunities,' Mrs Seleke said.

Mrs Seleke is being supervised by Associate Director of the NCCH, Sue Walker, who visited Botswana in January to conduct a short training course in the use of the ICD-10 for the Ministry of Health. Mrs Seleke is also working with Mrs Joy Smith, Manager, Clinical Data Services at Brisbane's Mater Hospital to gain practical experience in the application of ICD-10 codes in a hospital setting.

Mrs Seleke's three month internship concludes at the end of June with four more staff members from the Health Statistics Unit in Botswana arriving at QUT in July to participate in an NCCH ICD-10 course at QUT.

Further information about this course can be obtained from Sue Walker by emailing ncch.brisbane@qut.edu.au.

Fellowships create linkages in Asia Pacific

Professionals from China and Indonesia, identified as leaders and future leaders in their field, recently participated in the prestigious Australian Leadership Awards under the (ALA Fellowships) program at QUT.

According to project officer Denny Surjaatmadja, ALA Fellowships provide senior officials and mid-career professionals, who cannot leave their positions for extended periods, the opportunity to participate in short-term study, research and professional attachment programs.

'ALA Fellowships are one component of a regional program that aims to develop leadership and build partnerships within the Asia-Pacific,' he said.

'It is intended for those who are already leaders or have the potential to assume leadership roles that can influence social and economic policy reform and development outcomes, both in their own countries and in the Asia-Pacific region.

'One participant, Dr Muhammad Saiful Bachar from the Outbreak Division of Central Java, Provincial Health Office

in Semarang, Indonesia, was able to apply his knowledge from the program to assist with emergency and disaster management preparedness in the January flood and landslide disasters that occurred in Central Java.

'Dr Jian Hui Su was another of the ALA Fellowship program participants. As a doctor in charge of Research Management and Education in the Training Office for Beijing Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr Su is able to use her knowledge from the program in the lead up to the 2008 Olympics Games in Beijing.'



Men underestimate their own weight: study



Public Health researcher – Dr Katrina Giskes

More than half of all Australian men are overweight or obese, but less than a third of them think they are, according to new QUT research into perceptions of weight status.

The research, published in the latest issue of Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, reveals that many men are in dangerous denial about their weight, says Katrina Giskes,

a researcher from QUT’s Institute for Health and Biomedical Innovation.

‘There are some psychological benefits to positive perceptions of weight status, but the risks associated with incorrect perceptions cannot be ignored,’ she said.

‘Kidding yourself you’re lighter than you are, for example, makes it easier to ignore public health campaigns encouraging healthier food and more active lifestyles.

‘Individuals may only be responsive to these efforts if they perceive themselves as having a weight problem,’ she added.

The study, using data from the National Health Survey of more than 34,000 men and women, found that men from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds were even more likely to discount the health risks associated with their beer bellies.

Women, on the other hand, were more likely to report that they were carrying extra kilos - even when they weren’t.

‘Men tended to underestimate their weight status, whereas over-estimation was more common among women,’ she said.

The study found that 37.4 per cent of women were overweight or obese

according to self-reported height and weight data, but 42.8 per cent evaluated themselves as such.

This trend was particularly apparent amongst well-off, well-educated women, who were at increased risk of developing body image problems and eating disorders.

Overweight and obesity are key risk factors for the leading causes of death among Australians.

Public health campaigns currently stress changing energy balance behaviours as the solution to the obesity epidemic.

But Dr Giskes suggests these well-meaning efforts ‘may prove unsuccessful and potentially harmful’ if other factors, such as the way people perceive their weight status, remain unaddressed.

‘The challenge for public health is promoting this awareness differentially between gender and socio-economic groups,’ she said.

The report was co-authored by QUT public health researcher Jessica Siu.

QUT Health Clinics near completion

The QUT Health Clinics are preparing to move from the Kelvin Grove campus to a new state-of-the-art facility at 44 Musk Avenue in the Kelvin Grove Urban Village.

The Australian Red Cross Blood Service opened its Queensland blood processing headquarters in the building in March of this year.

QUT’s Podiatry and Optometry clinics will move to the new premises in July offering convenient access for patients to a comprehensive range of allied health services. The Human Movement Studies, Psychology, Family Therapy and

Counselling, and Nutrition clinics will open at the site next year.

Dr Helen Williams, who has coordinated the design of the new clinics for the Faculty of Health, says that the health clinics will enhance students’ clinical learning experiences and provide access to the latest in health technology for patients.

‘Teaching facilities which have been purpose built alongside the clinics will provide an excellent location for programs for practitioners who want to update their skills, for our international

visitors and community groups,’ Dr Williams said.

The QUT Health Clinics and Recreation Centre, which are open to the public, will include optometry consultation rooms equipped with the latest in visual field analyser equipment, a day surgery for podiatry patients and an on-site physical activity centre.

The QUT Health Clinics will be open to students and visitors for tours during QUT’s Course and Careers Day on Sunday 27 July. The Optometry and Podiatry clinics will be operational from 21 July.



Jessica makes a top choice



First-year social work student, Jessica Slater

With an OP 1 Jessica Slater had her pick of degrees and although she contemplated the traditional avenues of medicine, engineering and law, it was her 'passion for people' that drove her choice to study a Bachelor of Social Work at QUT.

For the first time this year QUT is offering the four year social work degree which is internationally accredited with the Australian Association of Social Workers.

'It was a pretty huge decision and everyone seemed to have an opinion on what I should be doing at uni,' 18-year-old Jessica said.

'But my passion is for people and I believe that people can change and there is always hope.

'There's an old saying that if you give a man a fish you will feed him for a day, but teach a man to fish and you will feed him for a lifetime.

'I think this is true and I don't just want to be part of a bandaid solution.'

Jessica, who finished year 12 at Wavell State High School last year, said studying social work would give her the skills to make a difference in people's lives.

'I think with this degree a lot more doors will open, whether that is working with an international aid agency overseas, in government, schools or hospitals,' she said.

The new social work degree is being offered through QUT's Faculty of Health and builds on the university's substantial expertise in the area of human services.

Course coordinator Dr Phil Crane said the course had a heavy commitment to real world experience.

'We incorporate a practice focus into all the academic units as well as providing each student with 980 hours of

professional practice experience in their third and fourth years,' Dr Crane said.

He said the students may be able to take their final year placements overseas.

'QUT has partnerships with organisations around the world so that our social work students can choose to gain their practical experience in other countries as well as across Australia.'

Dr Crane said social work offered many rewarding career paths in services for children, families, people with disabilities, mental health, young people and older people.

'There is a strong and continuing demand for social workers and this includes a wide range of individual, family and community options, in international aid organisations and in the area of policy advocacy,' he said.



New wound healing service opens at QUT



Treating patients in the new Wound Healing Clinic

Help for people with chronic wounds is now available thanks to a new community-based service which has opened at QUT's Kelvin Grove campus.

Run from QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, the Wound Healing Community Outreach Service operates every Tuesday and aims to improve healing rates and quality of life for sufferers of chronic wounds.

One of only two wound care nurse practitioners in Queensland, Michelle Gibb said the service was open to anyone, with initial one hour consultations costing \$20 for adults and \$15 for pensioners, health card holders and students.

'The service is about improving wound healing and improving quality of life by providing support and making treatment accessible to the public,' she said.

'It's also about providing information to people about their health and what they need to do to improve their health when it comes to chronic wounds.'

With between one and three per cent of people over the age of 60 experiencing a chronic wound, Ms Gibb said it was essential that affordable, convenient access to treatment be available.

'Chronic wounds are an important and costly medical issue and cost Australia's health care system more than \$500 million a year,' Ms Gibb said.

'We will be treating wounds including leg, pressure and diabetic foot ulcers, swollen legs, non-healing surgical wounds and infected wounds.'

Ms Gibb said unlike most health clinics, patients did not require a referral to attend the Wound Healing Service.

'We recognise that people with wounds may slip through the gaps of the health system due to problems with accessing busy outpatient hospital clinics, poor mobility, costs associated with purchasing wound care products and services, and difficulty finding wound care expertise,' Ms Gibb said.

'To access our service all you need to do is make an appointment.'

Ms Gibb said communication and collaboration with a patient's doctor was a key feature of the service.

'With a patient's consent, their doctor will be advised of the outcome of the assessment and plan of care including any treatment recommendations and alternative referrals or resources that may be required.'

Ms Gibb said while the service was established primarily as a community outreach program to improve the condition of people living with chronic wounds, QUT would also undertake research projects to assist in the understanding and treatment of wounds.

The service is funded by QUT and the Cecilia Kilkeary Foundation.

For more information on the Wound Healing Service, you can either call on 07 3138 6109 or email woundservice@qut.edu.au



Capacity-building project aids nurse education in Vietnam



Capacity-building project members from the Vietnam Nurses Association and QUT staff

A collaborative project between QUT's School of Nursing and the Vietnam Nurses Association (VNA) has been working to improve capacity in nurse education in Vietnam.

The principle focus of the six-month project was to identify needs, priorities and strategies to improve education of the professional nurse.

There are around 77 nursing training institutions in Vietnam of which 11 currently provide a four-year Bachelor of Nursing course. Colleges of nursing are also being progressively upgraded to university level.

The project started in June 2007 with a visit to Hanoi by Professor Ken Bowman, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health, Professor Helen Edwards, Head of School of Nursing and Dr Helen Williams,

Executive Officer (Strategic Projects) to learn more about issues of nursing and nurse education in Vietnam.

Following the initial visit, senior nursing staff from QUT visited nursing schools, universities and some hospitals throughout Vietnam.

The project has held a national consultation workshop to set priorities for the future and developed a set of national nursing competencies for Vietnam through a consultative process with the VNA.

A group of 10 nurse teachers came to the Kelvin Grove campus for curriculum training. They are pictured above with visitors from Vietnam for a similar capacity building program in public health and the QUT Project Teams.

A study tour was also organised for a group of Deans, Directors of Nursing and Ministry of Health officers from Vietnam on undergraduate nurse education.

Professor Genevieve Gray, Academic Director of the Project, has extensive experience of capacity building in nursing, especially in Asia and South America.

Genevieve says 'Vietnam is committed to raising nurse education to international standards and will need to build the capacity of an army of nurse teachers for its universities and colleges'.

The team is looking forward to extending its activities and is developing plans for a Phase 2 project proposal.

Higher degree highlights

MICHAEL ADAMS

Thesis Title:

Sexual and reproductive health problems among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males.

Research into the severe health situation for Indigenous men in Australia has generally focused on common chronic diseases, with little attention to sexual and reproductive health. This first in-depth study with Indigenous men found high rates of symptoms of prostate disease and erectile dysfunction, and there is clear evidence that these are under-recognised and under-treated in the health care system. As an Indigenous male with strong community connections, the researcher gained co-operation with more than 300 middle-aged and older Aboriginal men to talk about these sensitive problems. They talked frankly about the links between poor reproductive health and concurrent chronic diseases, and how sexual disorders reduced men's sense of self worth and are linked with relationship difficulties, including interpersonal violence. The study offered practical recommendations for improvement of training for primary health care workers, including the need to enhance routine screening for prostate disease and treatment for sexual dysfunction.

RACHEL COLLEY

Thesis Title:

Quantifying the effect of exercise on total energy expenditure in obese women

Despite steady progress and innovation in the management of obesity, its prevalence continues to rise. When exercise is completed as prescribed, there remains little question that it can be associated with health benefit and predictable weight loss. However, under free-living conditions the benefits of exercise are less consistent, suggesting that non-adherence and/or a compensatory response in non-exercise activity thermogenesis (NEAT) may be occurring. A sequence of methodological and intervention studies were undertaken to assess whether obese women compensate for structured exercise by decreasing their NEAT and thereby impeding weight loss. Heart rate monitoring, accelerometry and doubly-labelled water were used to objectively quantify total daily energy expenditure

and its constituents. The adoption of moderate-intensity exercise in a group of obese women led to a 67% decrease in NEAT. The compensatory response was highly variable between individuals and was associated with a range of psychological and behavioural mediators. The goal of exercise prescription for the obese should therefore be to determine the intensity and modality of exercise that does not activate compensatory behaviours as this may in turn negate the beneficial effects of the additional energy expenditure of exercise.

CLINT DOUGLAS

Thesis Title:

The impact of pain on the quality of life of people with multiple sclerosis

This thesis was concerned with exploring the scope, nature and impact of pain on quality of life among a community-based sample of people with multiple sclerosis (MS). In doing so, it argues the relevance of a biopsychosocial model of disability-related chronic pain. The study utilised a multimethod research design involving cross-sectional postal survey, structured in-person pain interviews and focus groups. The findings show that pain is common in MS, that it is severe in a substantial subset of these individuals and has the potential to negatively impact quality of life over and above the effects of MS itself. Specific pain beliefs and coping strategies were found to be associated with, and explained a substantial amount of the variance in adjustment to pain, over and above demographic and clinical variables. Additionally, qualitative data analysis revealed four broad conceptualisations of the experience of living with chronic MS-related pain. These findings have broad and important implications for the clinical management of pain in people with MS.

JANINE LURIE-BECK

Thesis Title:

The differential impact of holocaust trauma across three generations

This thesis developed a model explaining the differential impact of Holocaust trauma on its survivors and descendants via meta-analyses of existing research, supplemented by an international study. Parent-child attachment and communication about Holocaust experiences were influential in transmitting traumatic impact and dimensions of the survivor's Holocaust trauma explained large amounts of variance in both survivor and descendant psychological health.

Specifically, whether a survivor was in a camp or in hiding, their degree of familial losses and country of origin (influencing the nature and duration of persecution) were the most predictive of survivor and child survivor symptoms. Negative effects of the Holocaust are still measurably evident after a two generational removal from direct traumatic exposure. The findings highlight not only the fact that the effects of state-based traumas such as the Holocaust have multi-generational repercussions but also that trauma-transmission processes can be minimized by effective intervention programmes.

ERIN O'CONNOR

Thesis Title:

Health innovation adoption: The role of attitudes, control, and risk appraisal

This thesis examined the importance of psychological factors for predicting consumer use of health innovations such as vitamin supplements and functional foods. The methodology that was used addressed important limitations in the literature and demonstrated that people's attitudes, perceptions of approval from others and estimates of the risks involved in adopting health innovations were important in this context.

These findings have significant implications for health promotion in general, and in the prediction of health innovation uptake by non-clinical populations.

JOHN ROSENBERG

Thesis title:

A study of the integration of health promotion principles and practice in palliative care organisations.

This research is the first detailed study of the implementation of health promoting palliative care. It represents a major Australian case study of the intersection between public health and the end of life. Building upon the work of sociologist Allan Kellehear, this thesis contends that death and dying cannot be considered as solely a health care event, but as a societal concern for individuals and communities. A health promoting palliative care model, therefore, is fundamentally shaped by the location of death and dying in society, rather than solely upon its location in health care.

Dr Rosenberg has identified that the transition from conventional models of palliative care service provision to a health

promoting palliative care approach is one in which widespread organisational impacts are likely to be experienced. A multifaceted, cyclical and systematic approach to organisational change and advocacy for systemic policy revision are essential to this process.

LYNETTE VROMANS

Thesis Title:

Process and outcome of narrative therapy for major depressive disorder in adults: narrative reflexivity, working alliance and improved symptom and inter-personal outcomes.

This study was the first in the world to empirically evaluate the process and outcome of a relatively new therapeutic approach. The therapeutic approach, known as narrative therapy, is used in the treatment of adults with major depressive disorder. Dr Vromans found that this form of therapy is effective, and identified narrative reflexivity as a specific psychological process associated with improved treatment outcomes.

The research investigated relationships amongst changes in narrative reflexivity, the therapeutic relationship, symptoms and interpersonal relationships seen in individuals experiencing depression. Results indicated narrative therapy is effective and comparable to standard psychological interventions. The study also identified narrative reflexivity as a key process accompanying successful narrative therapy. Her study has implications not only for the evidence-based practice of narrative therapy but also for our understanding of change in sense-of-self over the course of effective therapy.

ANNE WALSH

Thesis Title:

Parents' management of childhood fever

Childhood fevers are generally harmless yet many parents overuse over-the-counter medications and overdose children while reducing fever. Predictors of intentions to reduce fever with medications were determined using the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Strongest predictors were fear of harm from fever, perceived pressure from partners and doctors and whether their child took medications easily or not. Parents of children non-compliant with medication administration were less likely to believe fever harmful, perceived less pressure to reduce the fever and did not intend to use medications. Targeted education is needed for both parents and all health professionals advising parents in fever management.

YU-YING LU

Thesis Title:

The impact of work-family conflict on working women in taiwan - the effects of organisational support

The aims of this study were to examine the effects of family-friendly policies and organizational support on the well-being of Taiwanese working women using a cross-sectional survey design. The availability of family-friendly policies and a supportive work environment were found to help working women balance their work and family responsibilities; to feel more satisfied with their work and their family lives; and to feel less stressed than those without a supportive organization.

A supportive organizational culture has been confirmed by this research as important in preventing the negative consequences of work-family conflict. This study fills a gap in nursing knowledge about the usefulness of family friendly policies to Taiwanese working women and their impact on their well-being. This research provides valuable information for healthcare professionals; policy makers and organizations, presenting ways to help working women manage the conflicting demands of work and family roles better.

CHIA-JUNG WU

Thesis Title:

Effectiveness of a specific infection control education program for Taiwanese nursing students

The SARS outbreak has highlighted the importance of education regarding infection control precautions. There is limited literature found with pre-service infection precautions for nursing students in Taiwan. This study generated the first knowledge about the effectiveness of a purpose-designed infection control education program for preparing Taiwanese nursing students for clinical practice. A specific focus was to improve students' knowledge about precautions, their ability to properly apply these precautions, and confidence in solving infection-related issues. The data revealed that this purpose-designed infection control education program has effectively and sustainably improved students' knowledge and application of infection precautions, and confidence in resolving infection issues. Infection-control education is indispensable for an ever-changing healthcare landscape. Health institutes need to consider incorporating this program into the nursing education curriculum to ensure that all nurses have an equal opportunity to prepare themselves fully for clinical practice.

SHU-YUAN LIANG

Thesis Title:

Opioid-taking self-efficacy in Taiwanese outpatients with cancer pain

This study examined self-efficacy beliefs to explore the difficulties that detract from opioid adherence and factors associated with cancer pain control; it provided information for clinicians to understand the practical difficulties when patients attempt to put a pain management regimen into practice. In addition, this study developed a scale for assessing patients' confidence with coping with their prescribed opioid regimen. These results support the importance of assessing and responding to the cognitive dimension of pain, and the significance of this dimension in an integrated conceptual model of cancer pain management. This study has provided many insights into how to use the newly developed scale and how patients' concerns in relation to their knowledge and self-efficacy with opioid taking could be addressed to improve cancer pain outcomes.

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