

KCWHS

FEBRUARY 2005

key centre for
**WOMEN'S
HEALTH**
in society



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE



Key Centre for Women's Health in Society

World Health Organisation Collaborating
Centre for Women's Health

Department of Public Health

School of Population Health

Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health
Sciences

The University of Melbourne Australia

Dr Anne Kavanagh joins KCWHS

Dr Anne Kavanagh took up her position as Associate Professor and Research Coordinator in August 2004. Before starting at the Key Centre, Anne was a Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University. The Centre is extremely fortunate to have Anne and the two outstanding PhD students she brings with her.

Anne is a medical graduate and social epidemiologist who brings exceptional skills to the Centre. She is highly regarded as an expert in breast cancer screening research and currently holds a VicHealth Principal Research Fellowship for a program of research into social disadvantage and health outcomes. In 2002 she received a Young Tall Poppies award from the Australian Institute of Political Science for her contribution to public health research.

Her areas of research are the social determinants of health and social inequalities in public health, evaluation of cancer screening programs, multi level studies of health, and place and research methods and public health.



Anne is currently a consultant epidemiologist to BreastScreen Victoria.

In 2004 Anne, with Fran Baum, Andrew Beer and Sue Richardson, received a 5 year NHMRC Capacity Building Grant: *The Australian Health Inequities Program - A program addressing social and economic determinants of health (AHIP)*. This grant improves the capacity of the research team to conduct innovative multi-method, cross-disciplinary research that will deepen our understanding of the social and economic processes that contribute to health inequalities.

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STAFF

DR PASCALE ALLOTEY, Senior Research Fellow (VicHealth), has been appointed to the position of Professor of Race, Diversity and Professional Practice at the School of Health and Social Care at Brunel University in the UK. Pascale left the Centre at the end of November 2004 to take up this position. Before leaving, Pascale was co-convenor of an International Symposium on Human Rights in Public Health at The University of Melbourne. This highly successful symposium was a collaborative initiative between The Key Centre for Women's Health in Society and the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine at Monash University.



We congratulate Pascale on her appointment to her exciting new position. We will miss Pascale's extensive contributions to the research activities of the Centre and to its strategic planning.

Welcome

The Federation Fellowship research program, "Self, the social body and wellbeing" has a number of new appointments. Dr Sari Andajani-Sutjahjo has taken the position of Research Fellow to assist Professor Lenore Manderson in the development and design of the research program. Two Research Assistants, Ms Narelle Warren and Ms Bhensri Naemiratch have been employed to conduct field investigations for the program. Dr RoseAnne Misajon has joined the Federation Fellowship as a Research Fellow. RoseAnne will contribute to the project through her strong quantitative research skills and by organising the Second 3D Conference to be held this year.

Associate Professor Anne Kavanagh brought two Research Officers to the Key Centre to work on her projects, Ms Carolyn Nickson and Ms Tania King. Carolyn is coordinating a study examining the feasibility of collecting information about HRT use and menopause in the Victorian breast-screening program and is drafting a protocol for a national case-control study of mammographic screening. Tania is working with Anne on the VicLanes project which aims to explore the impact of the neighbourhood environment on physical activity and food purchasing.

DR JILL ASTBURY left the Centre at the end of 2003 to take up the position of Research Professor in the School of Psychology at Victoria University.

As Deputy Director of the Key Centre for Women's Health in Society, Jill's research focussed on the promotion of women's mental health using a gender and human rights perspective. Jill played a leading role in the development and trialling of a WHO training curriculum for Health Programme Managers that sought to operationalise the Platform of Action from the Cairo and Beijing Conferences.

Her significant contribution to women's health in Victoria was recognised with her appointment to the Implementation Committee of the Victorian Women's Health and Well Being Strategy. Jill was a member of the Ministerial Advisory Committee responsible for the development of this policy.

We wish Jill well in her new and exciting appointment.



VISITORS

In 2004 the Key Centre had a number of distinguished visitors.

DR LORRAINE GREAVES is the Executive Director of the British Columbia Centre for Excellence for Women's Health in Canada. This centre is one of five National Centres of Excellence sponsored by the Women's Bureau of Health Canada. The work of the Centre is to improve the health of women by fostering innovative, multi-disciplinary research on health policy, women's health initiatives, and women-centred health services and programs.

In her seminar presentation – *Making Waves in Women's Health; linking collaborative research to policy and practice* - Lorraine explained that in Canada the struggle to highlight women's health issues continues and she supported the Key Centre in its determination to keep women's health on the agenda for public health policy and practice and in the research arena. She was able to draw on the commonalities of the Centres in that both facilitate research on the social determinants of health for women.

DR GAYLE LETHERBY is a Reader in the Sociology of Gender, and Deputy Director of the Centre for Social Justice, at Coventry

University in the UK. She is a feminist sociologist, among whose recent books is *Feminist Research in Theory and Practice* (2003). Gayle visited the Centre in May to work with Maggie Kirkman as they share an interest in narrative theory and method. Gayle's presentation in the Centres seminar series - *Me, Myself and Auto/Biography; some personal reflections on autobiography as a method*, addressed the dilemma of and responses to academics researching, reading and writing about themselves or the lives of others.

DR MARCELA RAFFAELLI is Associate Professor, Psychology and Ethnic Studies and Director, Institute for Ethnic Studies in the Department of Psychology, University of Nebraska, USA. Marcela visited the Centre during her study leave to work with Doreen Rosenthal. Her main research interest is in understanding and preventing risk-taking behavior among adolescents and young adults, with a particular focus on gender and cultural issues. Marcela is also involved in the Latino Research Initiative, an interdisciplinary group that focuses on issues pertinent to the wellbeing of Latino youth and families.

Marcela presented her lecture *Acculturation, sexual socialisation, and sexual behaviour of US Latina*

young adults in the Key Centre seminar series.

PROFESSOR SALLY MACINTYRE, Director of the MRC's Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, and recently named as one of the top ten leading people in public health in the UK, visited the Centre in November to renew her association with Anne Kavanagh and to discuss possible future collaborations. The unit is based at the University of Glasgow and its aim is to promote human health via the study of social and environmental influences on health.

Sally's main research interests are in the patterning of health by social class, gender and area of residence. In her work she has championed the importance of robust evidence for public health policy. She was very interested to hear about the Centre's work and the fields of research.

The Centre also welcomed two student visitors who worked with Pascale Allotey. Sharmin Haque, an undergraduate medical student from New York City College was on an international placement and Cath Chamberlain was a Victorian Public Health Trainee.

NEWS

PROJECT i was awarded one of two 2004 Victorian Public Health Awards for Research, in the category of Research Innovation. These annual awards, sponsored by the Victorian Department of Human Services, recognise original research that has made a substantial or potential contribution to public health.

From left: Professor Doreen Rosenthal, Health Minister Bronwyn Pike, Dr Shelley Mallett and Ms Jude Edwards at the Victorian Public Health Awards.



Staff Achievements

PROFESSOR LENORE MANDERSON was elected as a Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science, a network of 500 individual Fellows from diverse cultures, nationalities and intellectual disciplines. Lenore was awarded a *beyondblue* Victorian Centre of Excellence in Depression and Related Disorders 2004 Grant for her research project: *The emotional and lifestyle impact of type 2 diabetes: exploring the association between diabetes and depression.*

DR ANDREA WHITTAKER has been promoted to the position of Senior Lecturer in the Key Centre for Women's Health in Society. Andrea will continue her joint appointment with the Melbourne Institute of

Asian Languages in Society. Her book *Abortion, Sin and the State in Thailand* was published this year for the Routledge Curzon Women in Asia series.

DR SHELLEY MALLETT has been awarded a five-year VicHealth Public Health Research Fellowship to examine early intervention programs with vulnerable young people and their families. Shelley will commence the fellowship in March 2005.

DR LISA AMIR was awarded the best research poster prize at the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' conference with a poster titled *Review of tongue-tie release.*

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed off with the Ben Gurion Center for Women's Health Studies and Promotion in Israel, whose director is Professor Julie Cwikel. Julie was a visiting scholar at the Key Centre in 2003-2004. This MOU addresses future collaborative research possibilities and staff exchanges.

Please visit our new website

The KCWHS website has been updated to make it easier for staff, students and others interested to access information on our research projects, publications, newsletters, annual reports, conferences, courses, workshops and seminars.

www.kcwhs.unimelb.edu.au

NEW PROJECT

Drs Jane Fisher and Heather Rowe have been funded by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services for a 3 year project titled *Mothers, fathers and newborns: preventing distress and promoting confidence program*.

The Australian Government's *Early Childhood – Invest to Grow* initiative is a key component of the new Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. It funds innovative early intervention and prevention models that work with children aged between 0 – 5 years and also the development of resources or tools for parents, professionals, community groups and/or government organisations to support positive early childhood development.

In 2003 *beyondblue* provided seed funding for the development of a brief psycho-educational intervention to prevent the development of depression in mothers after the birth of their first baby. A significant outcome of this project was the research, writing and development of *what were we thinking!* a resource booklet for first-time mothers and fathers.

This new grant allows Jane and Heather to determine the



From left: Dr Heather Rowe, Senator Kay Patterson and Dr Jane Fisher at the presentation of the grant.

effectiveness of an intervention using that resource booklet. They will trial an evidence-based brief psycho-educational small group intervention for mothers and fathers and their first baby to investigate its effectiveness in:

- reducing parental psychological distress, including postpartum depression;
- reducing unsettled infant behaviour, including inconsolable crying and resistance to soothing; and
- promoting confident parenting.

If the trial is effective then further work will include

- the development of a training manual and resource package for early childhood or maternal and child health nurses to assist them to run these groups as part of primary health care for parents of newborns; and

- a formal program of dissemination to ensure that materials and training are available to maternal and infant primary health care professionals in all states and in rural and remote locations.

Masters for Japanese health professionals

In conjunction with the Key Centre, Melbourne University Private held two units for the Master's level course for Japanese Health Professionals. This year's units held in Melbourne were *Determinants of Women's Health* (4 students) coordinated by Dr Heather Rowe (16-20 August) and *Women and Ageing* (10 students) coordinated by Ms Susan Feldman from the Alma Unit for Research on Ageing (AURA), Victoria University (23-27 August).

PRESENTATIONS

Professor Doreen Rosenthal AO presented in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences Dean's Lecture series on June 22, 2004. She spoke to the topic: *'Still taking a chance on love? Adolescent sexuality and sexual health'*. The lecture was very well attended with a stimulating question and answer session following Professor Rosenthal's address.

Professor Doreen Rosenthal AO was invited to present the 2004 Nigel Gray Oration. This is an annual event honouring the achievements of one of Victoria's most highly respected public health leaders. Professor Rosenthal's presentation, titled *'Is adolescence a health risk'*, addressed the question of 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 at the Annual Conference of The Australian Society for Psychosocial Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Sydney on 27 and 28 August. The conference theme for 2004 was *Young Women's Sexual Health: Pregnancy and Beyond*.

Dr Elizabeth Bennett and Ms Narelle Warren presented papers - *Movement and manhood: Metaphors of masculinity and women's spaces: initiating a women's support group in rural Australia* - at the Society for Applied Anthropology Annual Meeting, March-April 2004 in Dallas, Texas.

Ms Warren also presented another paper *'Journeying for myself: Meanings of menopause in the lives of rural midlife women'* at the Australian Anthropology Society Annual Meeting held in Melbourne, September 2004.

Dr Milica Markovic presented her paper *'Cervical cancer: Reflections on women from Serbia'* at the Annual Conference of the Australian Anthropological Society held in Melbourne, 28 September-1 October 2004.

Dr Milica Markovic, in July 2004, spent a week in Khon Kaen as part of the Key Centre's on-going collaboration with Khon Kaen University. She gave lectures on Australian women's health policy and qualitative research methods. In addition, she provided academic guidance to PhD students who were placed with the Key Centre over the last couple of years, as well as to other Faculty staff and students.

Centre staff and students will have a strong presence at 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*. Professor Doreen Rosenthal has been invited to lead a symposium on social disadvantage, which will include Drs Anne Kavanagh and Shelley Mallett. Professor Lenore Manderson's symposium will examine chronic disease, disability and gender with Drs Sari Andajani-Sutjaho and Elizabeth Bennett from the Centre. Drs Dorothy Broom and Jane Dixon from Australian National University and Dr Alexandra Gartrell from Deakin University will contribute papers for the presentation. Dr Milica Markovic will present a symposium on immigrant women and health with five of the Centre's postgraduate students presenting papers. Drs Jane Fisher, Maggie Kirkman, Heather Rowe and Ms Karin Hammarberg will present a symposium on the impact of reproductive technologies on women's health.

CONFERENCES

3D Conference on Social Aspects of Chronic Disease, Disability And Disablement

The Inaugural Conference on Social Aspects of Chronic Disease, Disability and Disablement, was held in July 2004 at The University of Melbourne. It was convened by Professor Lenore Manderson in association with her team working on the Federation Fellowship program of research on disability. The evaluations of over 100 participants showed very high levels of satisfaction with the comprehensive program and the opportunities for networking. Participants came from metropolitan and rural Victoria, from all the Victorian universities, the Department of Human Services, disability rights, advocacy and support groups, and key stakeholder groups.

Short Course on Gender & Reproductive Rights

The Short Course on Gender and Reproductive Rights was held 15-26 November 2004 with Dr Maggie Kirkman as coordinator and with participants from Kyrgyzstan and Nepal. This course was adapted to the needs of the group and consisted of a number of site visits and intensive facilitator-student interaction. At the end the course was very well evaluated by the participants.

The Key Centre has reviewed our Short Courses program for 2005, focusing on providing in-country training. Please visit our website for more details.



Professor Doreen Rosenthal & Dr Maggie Kirkman present the Short Course students with their Certificates of Attendance.

International Symposium on Human Rights in Public Health

The International Symposium on Human Rights in Public Health: Research and Practice was held 3-5 November 2004 at the University of Melbourne. It was organised by Dr Pascale Allotey in conjunction with Monash University, with support from Deakin University and VicHealth. The conference explored human rights for the improvement of the health of mainstream and marginalised populations.

It was opened by The Honourable Michael Kirby, Justice of the High Court of Australia. Amongst featured speakers were Associate Professor Sofia Gruskin of Harvard University and Associate Professor Nora Groce of Yale University. Participants came from backgrounds in health promotion and research, and community work, and provided very positive feedback. Copies of Abstracts, Papers & Presentations can be found at www.rhhr.net/symposium.htm

STUDENTS

PhDs Awarded

The Centre is very pleased to announce the well deserved success of the following students who had their PhDs confirmed in 2004:

Nicole Asquith: *Text and Context of Malediction: A study of antisemitic and heterosexist hate violence in NSW, 1995-2000.*

Holly Buchanan-Aruwafu: *Global movements and local desires: Youth sexuality and urban life in Auki, Malaita.*

Sarah Drew: *Stranger in the community: Life after cancer in childhood.*

Alexandra Gartrell: *Flying on hope: The lived experience of disability in rural Cambodia.*

Jenny Sharples: *Women living with SLE: Understanding the emotional experience.*

Lakshmi Ramachandar: *Decision making and women's empowerment: Abortion in a South India community*

Natalie Wray: *"Under the knickers": Modesty, the body, and gynaecological cancer*

Elizabeth Donohue: *Postnatal debriefing did not improve health outcomes after operative birth: An investigation of possible explanatory factors*

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Awards

Anthony Williams, currently enrolled as a Masters student at the Centre, was a successful applicant for a PhD scholarship as part of the Victorian State Disability Plan 2001-2012. The inaugural statewide scholarship program, managed by the Department of Human Services was launched in June and provides six PhD scholarship awards. A second scholarship was awarded to Raelene West who plans to enrol on completion of her current course.

Dr Elizabeth Hoban, a KCWHS PhD graduate, was presented with one of two School of Population Health, Head of School Awards for Excellence in doctoral research.

Ms Sara Holton has been awarded a VicHealth Public Health Post Graduate Scholarship to finish her PhD.

Ms Catherine Acton & Ms Pauline Gwatorisa were awarded Melbourne University Research Scholarships to support their work on their PhDs.

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