

KCWHS

APRIL 2004

This issue includes Summary of Activities 2003.

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



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE



Key Centre for Women's Health in Society

World Health Organization 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

Welcome to our New Community Liaison Officer – Jan Watson

Jan has worked as a teacher-librarian, policy officer and manager in areas of education of girls, gender, student wellbeing, health and sexuality education and professional development in her 33 year career in government school education.

She has also worked in two significant national projects for young people: Mindmatters (mental health) and Talking Sexual Health. Much of the success of these projects flowed from the use of current, relevant and informed research. Research informed the development of policy frameworks, programs and curriculum resources. Departmental policymakers, teachers and welfare staff and families responded very positively to the research data as evidence for changes to policy and programs.

Sexuality, drug use and mental health education are challenging areas for schools and their communities but much of the



heat is removed from the debate about values when the challengers are faced with the facts. They may not like the research findings but they can't dispute them.

From these experiences Jan has seen the powerful effect of putting research into practice and in a social context. This was a strong incentive for her interest in this position at KCWHS. She looks forward to working with the staff to create a greater awareness of the rich and interesting work undertaken in the Centre.

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RESEARCH

Reproductive Mental Health

The Centre has a substantial interest in the determinants of women's psychological health and wellbeing during the reproductive years. Jane Fisher and Heather Rowe have been asked to report on their growing program of research.

Jane's and Heather's doctoral research findings regarding the adverse psychological consequences of instrumental birth and caesarean surgery for maternal mental health and mother-infant relationships have been extended into a range of investigations of the risks and benefits of obstetric technologies. Heather Rowe was awarded a Faculty grant to investigate how psychological factors influence informed choice about prenatal genetic screening. Lisa Donohue's PhD, supported by an Australian Postgraduate Research Award (APRA), has investigated why postnatal debriefing does not improve health outcomes after operative birth.

Postpartum depression, anxiety and fatigue are widespread health problems for mothers of newborn babies. Our group has recently completed follow up studies of mothers and infants admitted to two of Australia's unique residential early parenting services. We found that maternal mood improved dramatically and that infant crying was significantly reduced in the short and longer term. Dorothy Akindele is investigating the understanding of depression among disadvantaged mothers of young children, for the research component of her Doctor of Public Health studies.



Dr Jane Fisher & Dr Heather Rowe

The Fertility Society of Australia funded an audit of 750 medical records of mother-infant dyads admitted to Masada Private Hospital Mother Baby Unit which confirmed an earlier finding of higher than expected rates of women with IVF assisted conceptions admitted to an early parenting service. In collaboration with Melbourne IVF and Royal Women's Hospital Reproductive Services and funded by the Bertarelli Foundation, Jane Fisher is conducting a prospective longitudinal study of women who have conceived using IVF. Karin Hammarberg has extended this project for her doctoral research and was awarded an APRA.

Some of the determinants of reproductive decisions of Australian women are being investigated by PhD students. Mandi Cooklin, awarded an NHMRC Postgraduate Award and VicHealth Supplementary support in 2004, is investigating decisions to resume employment after giving birth. Heather McKay has completed a sub-study of the middle-aged cohort of the Australian Longitudinal Study of Women's Health investigating the impact of choice

in childless women's reproductive decision-making. Her work was supported by a MRS and a grant from the Helen MacPherson Smith Trust. Two new PhD students joined us in 2004. Sara Holton will investigate young women's decisions whether or not to have children. Catherine Acton will investigate the impact of childhood sexual abuse on pregnancy mental health.

The Victorian Centre of Excellence in Depression and Related Disorders, which is part of **beyondblue**, the national depression initiative, has funded us to develop an educational intervention for mothers, fathers and their first baby to prevent the development of depression.

Our international students include Phoebe Bwembya who is investigating reproductive decision making in HIV-positive women in Zambia. Lakshmi Ramachander recently completed a study of the use of pregnancy termination services by poor women in India. Atika Farooqui is investigating the impact of smoking traditional cigarettes on maternal health and infant birth weight in another rural area in India. All these students have Melbourne International Research Scholarships and are jointly supervised with Dr Andrea Whittaker and Dr Mridula Bandyopadhyay.

Coursework students have recently completed research reports including an evaluation of internet resources about breastfeeding, and reproductive health education for young people in rural Vietnam. We are supervising three undergraduate medical

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Mental Health and Reproduction

5 day course, including field visits

Short Course Coordinator - Dr. Jane Fisher

Suitable for: clinicians, members of NGOs, mental health professionals and health planners,

Course dates: July 2004

Venue: Seminar Room, Key Centre for Women's Health in Society, University of Melbourne campus

Fee: AUD \$1500 (Australian-based applicants, add 10% GST) (including tuition and readings)

Course Objectives:

- To understand the psychological aspects of pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period;
- To recognise common mental disorders which can occur at this life phase, and;
- To evaluate the evidence relating to efficacy of prevention and treatment.



PhD students: Mandi Cooklin (with baby Ravi), Karin Hammarberg & Phoebe Bwembya

KCWH Staff List

Academic Staff

Director and Professor of Women's Health

Doreen Rosenthal AO, BA Melb PhD Melb FASSA (from February)

Australian Research Council Federation Fellow & Professor of Women's Health

Lenore Manderson, BA, PhD ANU FASSA

Deputy Director and Associate Professor

Jill Astbury, BA, Med, PhD Melb MAPS

Senior Lecturers

Jane Fisher, BSc Qld PhD Melb

Martha Morrow, BA Kalamazoo College Mich USA MA

Harvard PhD La Trobe (on secondment to AIHI)

Lecturers

Lisa Amir, MB BS Monash MMed Melb IBCLC

Mridula Bandyopadhyay, BSc Cal MSc Poona CPS

Bombay MPhil Bombay PhD City U HK

Heather Rowe, BSci (Hons) LaTrobe PhD Melb

Joint Lecturer with Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Society

Andrea Whittaker, BA, PhD Qld

VicHealth Public Health Research Fellow

Pascale Allotey, BA Legon PGDip MMedSc. PhD W.Aust

NHMRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Maggie Kirkman, BA Melb PhD LaTrobe MAPS

Senior Research Fellow

Elizabeth Sutherland Bennett, MTropHlth Qld PhD Melb

Research Fellows

Deborah Keys, BA Deakin PhD La Trobe (from May)

Shelley Mallett, BApSci, BA, PhD La Trobe (from March)

Milica Markovic, BSoc, MSoc Belgrade PhD Qld

Ben Rossiter, BA (Hons) PhD La Trobe (March)

Research Officers

Louise Keogh, BSc UWA MA Monash PhD La Trobe (from May)

Jude Edwards, BApSci Deakin MSocSci RMIT

(March until December)

Paul Myers, BA (Hons) Qld (March until April)

Research Assistant

Alina Turner, BCA Melb (part time from May)

General Staff

Manager

Joni Yuk-Ching Law, DipMgtStudies HKP BA Melb (until April)

Felice Rocca, BA Melb (from May)

Administrative Assistants

Anne Edmonds, BA Melb (until September)

Brooke Roach, BA (Hons) LaTrobe

Jennifer Sievers, BInfMan Monash

Honourary Staff

Principal Fellows

Julie Cwikel, BSW Hebrew U MSW, PhD U. Michigan

(Visitor July 2003 – June 2004)

Fumi Horiguchi, BMed TokyoWmMed- College PhD Keio

Pertti Pelto, BA Wash. SU PhD Berkeley GDipAnth

Helsinki

Senior Fellows

Simon Barraclough, BA ANU MA SOAS SEcon London PhD Qld

Daniel Reidpath, BA Swinburne PhD W.Aust DEdPsych Monash

Wendy Holmes, MBBS London MSc London Sch Hygiene & Trop Med

Fellow

Adele Murdolo, BA, PhD La Trobe

Visitors

Siriporn Chirawatkul, Dip Nursing Mahidol Bed, Med Chunlalongkorn PhD Qld (November – December)

Julie Cwikel, BSW Hebrew U MSW, PhD U Michigan (July 2003 – June 2004)

KCWH Scientific Advisory Committee Membership

Chair

Ms Caroline Hogg

Former State Government Minister for Health and Chair of the Victorian Women's Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Professor Jeremy Anderson

Head, Epidemiology and Biostatistics Unit, School of Population Health, University of Melbourne

Professor Ruth Fincher

Dean, Architecture, Building and Planning, Anthropology, Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Melbourne

Ms Dale Fisher

Executive Director, The Royal Women's Hospital

Ms Yolanda Klempfner

Former Advisor to the Victorian Government on Women's Affairs and President of RMIT Council

Dr Rosemary Lester

Manager, Prevention and Perinatal Health, Department of Human Services

Dr Adele Murdolo

Executive Director, Working Women's Health

Professor Terry Nolan

Head, School of Population Health, University of Melbourne

Ms Helen Owens

Commissioner, Productivity Commission

Ms Helen Szoke

Chief Executive Officer, Infertility Treatment Authority

Professor Gillian Triggs

Co-Director, Institute for Comparative and International Law, University of Melbourne

Ms Lyn Walker

Director Mental Health and Wellbeing, VicHealth

For a complete version of our 2003 Annual Report, please visit our website:

www.kcwh.unimelb.edu.au

Publications

In 2003 the staff and students of KCWHS published their research in 26 refereed articles, 3 edited books, 12 book chapters, 3 reports and 6 editorials/comments/letters.

Conference Presentations/Programs

KCWHS Staff and students presented their research findings at 9 international and 24 national conferences.

External Major Consultancies, Special Funding & Grants

Apart from funding by the University of Melbourne, research projects also received funding from the following organisations:

Academy of Social Sciences

-\$10,000

Australian Research Council

- \$296,934

Bertarelli Foundation (Switzerland)

- \$22,473

BeyondBlue

- \$50,000

MSP Project Services (RWH)

- \$10,000

National Institute of Mental Health (USA)

- \$270,415

National Health & Medical Research Council

- \$75,000

- \$63,500

VicHealth

- \$24,987

- \$100,000

State Department of Innovation, Industry & Regional Development

- \$60,000

State Department of Human Resources

- \$10,000

World Health Organization

- \$4,807

- \$9,615

Seminar Program

KCWHS had a weekly Seminar Program which featured research findings from KCWHS Staff, invited experts from Australia and overseas, and KCWHS PhD students. For a full listing of the 2003 Seminar Program see our website.

Enrolments

In 2003 KCWHS had a total of 95 students which included 45 studying their Doctor of Philosophy and 1 a Doctor of Public Health. There were 5 Master of Public Health students, 2 Master of Medicine and 16 Master of Women's Health students. There were 15 Graduate Diploma in Women's Health students, 11 of who were in the Intensive program for Japanese Health Professionals. There were 9 Advanced Medical Science students, 5 of who were from Indonesian Advanced Medical Science.

Scholarships

9 of our PhD students received University of Melbourne Scholarships. There were 2 NHMRC and 3 VicHealth scholarships awarded to 3 of our PhD students.

Key Centre Graduates

KCWHS congratulates its 2003 graduating students. These include 9 who were awarded their Doctor of Philosophy, 3 Masters of Public Health, 4 Masters of Women's Health, 7 Graduate Diplomas in Women's Health and 2 Advanced Medical Science students.

International Short Courses

The international short courses held in 2003 by KCWHS were Adolescent Health Program Planning, Psychological Practice in Women's Health, SAGRIC Indonesian Women's Health and Family Welfare Project Study Tour, Health Program Planning and Evaluation and Gender and Reproductive Health. Attendees were from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, Ethiopia, India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

RESEARCH

Federation Fellowship



L-R Back row: Alex Gartrell, Celia McMichael, Peter Disler, Sarah Drew, Tony Williams, Lenore Manderson, Saw Saw.
Middle row: Kathleen Nolan, Milica Markovic, Siripom Chirawatkul, Sari Andajani-Sutjahjo, Elizabeth Bennett, Cate Bailey, Natasha Maharaj. *Front Row:* Bhensri Naemiratch, Kenichi Kurioka, Pensri Rukwong, Wiporn Senarak, Garrick Hitchcock, Liz Gordon

The ARC Federation Fellowship program consists of a series of related and complimentary projects. It aims to contribute to our understanding of how – in different cultural, social and economic settings and under different, more immediate circumstances – ideas of the self and social relationships and their meanings are revised and restructured as a result of bodily change. Such change may be due to a chronic health problem or degenerative disease, or due to traumatic injury or sudden illness requiring major surgery. Program activities include the following:

- * The completion of research on gender, sexuality and embodiment – **Surface Tensions**
- * The investigation, in an interdisciplinary context, of the personal, social and economic impact of changes in wellbeing – **Rethinking Wellbeing**
- * Continuing research on body change, illness and other biological disruptions, to understand how women experience the embodiment of gender – **Disrupting the Idea of Woman**
- * The exploration in cross-cultural contexts of notions of self, and the relationship between self and embodiment, in the context of chronic disease and disability – **Resilience**

Gender, HIV/AIDS and Human Rights

5 day course, including field visits
Short Course Coordinator -
Dr. Mridula Bandyopadhyay

Suitable for: health planners, program managers, policy makers, researchers, NGO workers

Course dates: June/July 2004

Venue: Seminar Room, Key Centre for Women's Health in Society, University of Melbourne Campus

Fee: AUD \$1500 (Australian-based applicants, add 10% GST) (including tuition and readings)

Course Objectives:

- To examine the frameworks and approaches in HIV/AIDS and Human Rights with an emphasis on gender
- To identify key barriers and opportunities in advancing HIV/AIDS and human rights
- To identify and examine the standards and approaches in HIV prevention, treatment and care, and in impact mitigation.

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students from Indonesia in the areas of the psychosocial aspects of antenatal detection of soft markers for chromosomal abnormalities and screening for gestational diabetes, and in domestic violence and pregnancy health in Southeast Asia.

We have been commissioned to prepare a number of expert reports. With Professor Jill Astbury and Dr Mridula Bandyopadhyay, we have written an evidence-based review, for the World Health Organization, on the links between mental health and reproductive health. Systematic reviews of the effectiveness of early parenting interventions and of the relationship between physical infrastructure and quality of maternity care have been prepared. We have been assisted in these projects by Ms Amy Timoshanko.

Jane and Heather are members of **DIAMOND** - a large Victorian research consortium, funded by **beyondblue**, the national depression initiative, to build research capacity at the interface between primary and specialist mental health care and the communities they serve.

An important outcome of this program of research is the generation of sound evidence regarding psychological and social factors in women's health status and health care.



Ms Amy Timoshanko, Dr Jane Fisher & Ms Mandi Cooklin (with baby Ravi again!)

PEOPLE

New Staff Members

Dr Sari Andajani-Sutjahjo joins KCWHS as a Research Fellow working on the **Resilience** Project. Sari completed her PhD last year entitled "Motherhood and Emotional Wellbeing of Women in Indonesia" at the Key Centre.

Ms Cate Bailey has joined Professor Lenore Manderson's Federation Fellowship program as an assistant statistician. She recently graduated from her Masters in Applied Statistics at Swinburne.

Dr Louise Keogh is a new Research Fellow at KCWHS who is collaborating with the Genetic-Epidemiology Unit on women's decision making about genetic testing and screening for breast cancer.

Ms Kathleen Nolan has taken up permanently the position of Personal Assistant to Professor Lenore Manderson after performing the job on a casual basis. Kathleen has recently opened up her own yoga studio in the country.

In the February/March issue of *UniNews* (13(2)), there was an article featuring Dr Saw Saw and her PhD research on tuberculosis control. Saw Saw came to the University of Melbourne from Myanmar to follow in her mother's footsteps. Saw Saw's mother completed her PhD in Nuclear Physics at the University of Melbourne in 1974-78.



KCWHS Staff & Students last Christmas

Farewell to Staff Members

Ms Anne Edmonds, Personal Assistant to Professor Lenore Manderson left KCWHS late last year to take up an administration position at Emily's List.

Ms Jude Edwards, Research Officer with Project i has taken up a Statutory Planner position at the Hume City Council.

Goodbye Julie

Prof. Julie Cwikel is the founder and director of Israel's first academic center on women's health, the Ben Gurion University Center for Women's Health Studies and Promotion. The center's approach to health is a gestalt one - encompassing physical, psychosocial and community approaches. Prof. Cwikel is a social worker (originally trained in community psychiatry and rehabilitation) and social epidemiologist by training (with an MSW and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan). She is the author of numerous scientific articles and has edited two books. She recently completed the first textbook of social epidemiology which will be published by Columbia University Press in the next year. She has been a visiting scholar at the Key Centre for Women's Health in Society at University of Melbourne.

During her stay in Melbourne, she travelled to the Northern Territory, the Great Barrier Reef, Sydney, Tasmania and New Zealand and enjoyed every minute. This year she worked on joint projects with Key Centre researchers in the areas of young women's health and especially breastfeeding, trafficking of women, interventions in the area of sexually transmitted diseases and infertility, and chronic illness and coping among never-married older women.



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