

'Diagnosis, Management & Outcomes of Depression in Primary Care'

Building capacity in primary care mental health research and evaluation



THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

weave—Women's Evaluation of Abuse & Violence Care in General Practice : a Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial



weave

Domestic violence and, more specifically, intimate partner abuse is a common hidden problem for women attending general practice and is often associated with depression. It is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness for women of child-bearing age. Women are often reluctant to disclose to health professionals, who may themselves be reluctant to inquire about abuse. Research shows that doctors are the major professional group that women would want to tell. While this points to the need for partner abuse interventions in health settings, there is a lack of evidence for such interventions, particularly in general practice. This needs to change as general practice is often the first and most frequent point of contact with the health system for women who are experiencing partner abuse.

The weave project is designed to determine if a multi-faceted practice-based intervention in general practice involving screening for intimate partner abuse, health provider education, a brief counselling intervention and organisational change increases abused women's safety behaviours and planning, mental health and quality of life. Secondary aims are to increase women's readiness to change and their comfort to discuss abuse along with health providers' rate of inquiry about the safety of women and children.

The weave project is funded by the NHMRC and is based at the Primary Care Research Unit (PCRU) at the University of Melbourne. Associate Professor Kelsey Hegarty and Dr Lorna O'Doherty are working with a diverse and experienced team of researchers with national and international reputations for research in partner abuse and primary care. The chief investigators also include Prof Jane Gunn (PCRU, The University of Melbourne), Dr Angela Taft (School of Public Health, La Trobe University), Prof Gene Feder (Centre for Health Sciences, Queen Mary University of London), Prof Jill Astbury (School of Psychology, Victoria University) and Associate Prof Stephanie Brown (Murdoch Children's Research Institute, The University of Melbourne). The weave study is currently in its pilot phase, with the main study anticipated to commence in early 2008. It will be a world first trial of this nature with up to 40 general practices involved.

See www.weave.unimelb.edu.au for more details

Welcome David Evans

David Evans has joined the *diamond* research team as the interview co-ordinator for the *diamond* longitudinal study. Before joining the Department of General Practice at the University of Melbourne in November 2007, David worked in a variety of policy positions at the Victorian Department of Human Services, the Association for Prevention and Harm Reduction Programs Australia and the Consumer Action Law Centre.



Introducing Dr Lorna O'Doherty



Dr Lorna O'Doherty is a research psychologist with two years post-doctoral experience in primary care research. The topic of her PhD was psychological adaptation and quality of life in chronic neurological illness. Her work demonstrated the impact of illness cognitions on psychological wellbeing and quality of life, elucidated the mechanisms involved in maintaining quality of life in people with neurodegenerative conditions and highlighted the implications of using different approaches to assessing quality of life. Lorna's general practice experience to date has focused on palliative care, chronic disease management and healthy ageing. She has also been involved in delivering state-wide research training in general practice as part of the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) program in QLD. Lorna recently took up a new role within the Primary Care Research Unit (PCRU) as a research fellow on the weave project.

The *diamond* Consortium began in 2004 with three years of funding from the *beyondblue* Victorian Centre of Excellence. The main aim of the consortium was to co-ordinate and communicate research activities across disciplines, organisations and geographical boundaries. This led to the establishment of an active national and international network of approximately 100 researchers with an interest in depression-related research from Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Canada, Geneva, Spain and the UK. The *diamond* Consortium newsletter has been widely circulated via consortium members to describe the progress of the *diamond* longitudinal study and related projects, profile consortium members and their work, highlight key *diamond* consortium events and advertise seminars and conferences.

Over its duration the *diamond* consortium has hosted 17 seminars, six workshops, nine international visiting academics from the UK, Holland, San Diego, Geneva and Canada and funded seven seed funding projects. With the consortium funding finishing in November 2007, we would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have been part of the *diamond* Consortium and its activities and we hope to maintain this depression-related research network into the future.

Photographs top row: Dr Grant Blashki, A/Prof Evelyn van Weel-Baumgarten, Prof David Pilgrim, Prof Jane Gunn, The mental health research team at the Primary Care Research Unit (PCRU) - Prof Helen Herrman, Helen Evert, Dr Lucio Naccarella, Dr Caroline Johnson, Dr Renata Kokanovic, Maria Potiriadis, Ella Butler, Ben Killingsworth, Melina Ramp, Sandra Davidson, Dr Victoria Palmer, Darshini Ayton, Prof Jane Gunn
Photographs bottom row: Dr Renata Kokanovic, Prof Tony Kendrick, Prof Jane Gunn, A/Prof Kelsey Hegarty, Prof Chris Dowrick, Prof Jane Gunn, Dr Marie-Helene Chomienne, Dr Gail Gilchrist, Prof Jane Gunn receiving the award for the diamond Consortium from the Hon. Bronwyn Pike MP



3rd INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON
WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH
 MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA
 16-20 March 2008
www.iawmhcongress2008.com.au

Opening Minds to Women's Mental Health
 Melbourne Convention Centre
 Melbourne, Australia
 Hosted by
 International Association for Women's Mental Health
 Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre

The 3rd International Congress on Women's Mental Health will be held Sunday 16 - Thursday 20 March 2008, in Melbourne, Australia. Building on the success of the two previous Congresses held in Berlin (2000) and Washington (2004), this multidisciplinary Congress is expected to attract in excess of 1000 delegates involving both men and women in the profession and those whose lives have been touched by Women's Mental Health. Under the sponsorship of the International Association for Women's Mental Health and hosted by the Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre, the Congress will present an innovative program which will be complemented by an extensive trade exhibition.

See www.iawmhcongress2008.com.au for more details.

In the *diamond* Consortium newsletter issue number 11

'Keeping the blues away—a guide to reducing relapse of depression'

by Dr Cate Howell

was reviewed by Professor Jane Gunn. This resource is available for purchase from the Discipline of General Practice at the University of Adelaide.

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DO YOU HAVE ANY RESEARCH OR BEST PRACTICE YOU WANT TO SHARE WITH US?

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