



diamond Consortium
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Newsletter # 9
December 2006

'Diagnosis, Management & Outcomes of Depression in Primary Care'- Building capacity in primary mental health care research and evaluation

DIAMOND 2 PROJECT WINS NHMRC PRIMARY CARE FUNDING IN 2006

Congratulations to Consortium members Prof Jane Gunn (Primary Care Research Unit, University of Melbourne), Prof Helen Herrman (Australian International Health Institute), Dr Gail Gilchrist, A/Prof Kelsey Hegarty (Primary Care Research Unit, University of Melbourne), Prof Mike Kyrios (Faculty of Life and Social Sciences, Swinburne University) and Prof Dimity Pond (Discipline of General Practice, University of Newcastle) on winning funding in the competitive 2006 NHMRC primary care stream for the *diamond 2* project.

diamond 2 (the *diamond* cohort study-examining depressive symptoms in primary care) is a continuation of the NHMRC funded *diamond* longitudinal

depression study (2004-2007). *diamond 2* (2007-2009) aims to explore the patient characteristics and health service use patterns of patients who experience relapsing or chronic depression, within a three year period.

diamond 2 investigators will use the data gathered to develop models for predicting recovery, relapse and persistence of depression. Such models will enable investigators to develop guidelines and design interventions that better target those at risk of this continuing and disabling condition. The work will be of international significance and has potential to influence the entire primary mental health care system and contribute substantially to system change in Australia.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

MEMBER PROFILE

MELINA RAMP

We welcome Melina Ramp (pictured), a Senior Research Assistant on the *diamond* study. Melina is responsible for managing the *diamond* study's database and for ensuring follow-up and retention of *diamond* participants. She is also involved in data analysis.

Before joining the Primary Care Research Unit (PCRU) at The University of Melbourne in September 2006, Melina worked at the Department of Clinical & Health Psychology at Austin Health and was responsible for implementing a number of research projects aimed at prevention and early intervention of perinatal depression.

Melina is also completing a Master of Science (Applied Statistics) at Swinburne University.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Dr Marie-Helene Chomienne from the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Ottawa will be visiting the Primary Care Research Unit (PCRU) from 28-29 March 2007. Dr Chomienne may deliver a talk for Consortium members to attend- we will keep you posted.
- 2007 WPA Congress, Melbourne. 28 November- 2 December 2007. See www.wpa2007melbourne.com. Abstract submissions for Symposia, Workshops, Free papers and posters close 30 April 2007. Online registration opened November 2006.

THANK-YOU AND GOOD LUCK, MIRANDA

Miranda Hindle will be finishing her position as *diamond* Consortium Administrator on 1 December 2006. Miranda has accepted a position in the Communications and Alumni Office in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences at The University of Melbourne. Thanks to Miranda for all her hard work and we wish her well in her future endeavours. For any *diamond* Consortium inquiries, please contact Dr Gail Gilchrist, Consortium Coordinator on + 61 3 8344 4716 or g.gilchrist@unimelb.edu.au.



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL NHMRC FUNDING BID

The WEAVE (Women's Evaluation of Abuse and Violence Care in general practice) project, led by Consortium member A/Prof Kelsey Hegarty, was awarded over \$500,000 from the 2006 NHMRC primary care funding round. WEAVE chief investigators also include Prof Jane Gunn, Dr Angela Taft (La Trobe University), Prof Gene Feder (Barts and the London, Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry), Prof Jill Astbury (Victoria University) & A/Prof Stephanie Brown (La Trobe University). WEAVE aims to evaluate the effectiveness of a multi-faceted practice based intervention model in general practice to increase the safety behaviours and planning, mental health status and quality of life of abused women. The intervention model involves screening for intimate partner abuse, health provider education, development and implementation of guidelines, a brief problem solving intervention and practice organisational change. WEAVE also aims to increase abused women's readiness for change and action with regard to abuse, to increase inquiry rates by GPs/PNs about the safety of women and children and to increase abused women's comfort in discussing intimate partner abuse within the practitioner/patient relationship.

NAPCRG CONFERENCE

In October 2006, Prof Jane Gunn (pictured right), Prof Kelsey Hegarty, Dr John Furler and Dr Lucio Naccarella attended the North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) Annual Meeting in Tuscon, Arizona. Prof Hegarty presented a paper entitled 'Can we predict which women in general practice will have experienced partner abuse?' Prof Gunn also presented a poster on the **re-order** study.

The NAPCRG conference provided a good opportunity for Consortium members to network with other primary care experts. Prof Gunn met prominent mental health academic Prof Ben Crabtree from the School of Public Health, University of Medicine and Dentistry, New Jersey. Prof Gunn also met Dr Marie-Helene Chomienne from the University of Ottawa, who will be a visiting academic to the PCRU in March 2007.



STUDY PROFILE – 'SIM'

Dr Grant Blashki, Senior Research Fellow in the Primary Care Research Unit (PCRU) was recently awarded funding for the SIM (Reducing Suicide Risk in Men through General Practice) study. SIM is funded by the *beyondblue* Victorian Centre of Excellence (bbVCoE) (2006-2007). Co-investigators on the project are A/Prof Jane Pirkis (Program Evaluation Unit, University of Melbourne), Prof Jane Gunn (PCRU, University of Melbourne), Mr John Kroschel (the Alfred Hospital), Ms Ingrid Ozols (Mental Health Information Services) & Ms Jill Day (South City GP Services). The study aims to develop a training course on the assessment and management of suicide risk in men who present to general practice, and to evaluate the impact of this training on GP knowledge, attitudes and competence in dealing with these patients. For further information on SIM, contact **Dr Blashki on +61 3 8344 9010 or email gblashki@unimelb.edu.au**

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ACADEMIC VISIT PROFESSOR GENE FEDER



From 11 November - 8 December, the Primary Care Research Unit (PCRU) welcomed visiting academic Prof Gene Feder, Professor of Primary Care Research and Development at Barts and the London, Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry. Prof Feder is predominately a quantitative health services and clinical researcher, who also collaborates closely with social scientists using qualitative methods. He leads a program of research focusing on health services and domestic violence, aiming to improve how clinicians respond to women experiencing partner abuse. Prof Feder co-authored the book, 'Intimate Partner and Health Professionals: New Approaches to Domestic Violence' (2006) with Dr Gwenneth Roberts (University of Queensland) and A/Prof Kelsey Hegarty. During his stay in Melbourne, Prof Feder was a guest speaker at the launch of the PCRU. He commented on the differences between the PCRU and his own research unit in the UK.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCHER EXCHANGE



Dr Gail Gilchrist was awarded funding from the Royal Society of Edinburgh for an International Exchange Programme to visit the University of Paisley in Scotland. During her stay, from 9-20 October, Gail was based with Prof Avril Taylor, Associate Dean for Research in the School of Social Sciences and Director of the Institute of Applied Social and Health Research. The purpose of the visit was to facilitate the continuation and development of existing research collaborations between the recipients and develop a collaborative research program into maternal substance users and their children.

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BOOK LAUNCH OF 'GENERAL PRACTICE PSYCHIATRY'



Congratulations to *diamond* Consortium member Dr Grant Blashki (pictured, centre) on the publication of the new book 'General Practice Psychiatry' which he co-authored with Professor Fiona Judd and Professor Leon Piterman (pictured) from the School of Primary Health Care at Monash University. The book was officially launched by Mr Rob Knowles, Chair of the Mental Health Council of Australia, on the 12 October 2006 at the Nellie Castan Gallery in South Yarra. A large crowd of academics and staff from various universities and research organisations attended the launch.

'General Practice Psychiatry' covers essential information for all GPs and primary care professionals who are the first port of call for people experiencing mental health problems in the community. The book is designed to help clinicians provide effective consultations by presenting a realistic clinical approach to common psychiatric conditions. The book is also valuable for medical students who are seeking a common sense approach to psychiatry and for specialists who are working within multidisciplinary teams.

'General Practice Psychiatry' is available for purchase through The University of Melbourne bookshop, medical bookshops or online at <http://www.mcgraw-hill.com.au/html/titleDetail.jsp?isbn=9780074713518.html>.

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

Contact: Dr Gail Gilchrist on +61 3 8344 4716 or e-mail g.gilchrist@unimelb.edu.au