



diamond Consortium
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Newsletter # 7

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

SEED AND CAPACITY BUILDING FUNDING RECIPIENTS

The Consortium are pleased to announce that the successful applicants for Seed & Capacity Building funding are:

- **Touran Shafiei**, Rhonda Small, Helen McLachlan, Mother and Child Health Research, LaTrobe University. *'The experience of depression after birth and views about primary care services among Persian-speaking women in Melbourne'*. The aim is to explore views of maternity care, emotional well-being and the experience of depression after birth among Iranian and Afghan immigrant women.
- **Susan Armstrong**, Rhonda Small, Mother and Child Health, La Trobe University. *'Women's Attitudes to Screening for Postnatal Depression in a*

Rural Victorian Community'

The aim is to elicit women's attitudes to the screening process with particular attention to its acceptability.

- **Kelsey Hegarty**, Gail Gilchrist, Mel Irenyi, Department of General Practice, The University of Melbourne, Monirul Haque, Geelong General Practice, *'Men's experience of Partner Abuse and Depression'*. The aims is to describe in a population of probably depressed men attending general practice and the associations (socio-demographic, co-morbidity, childhood abuse) of intimate partner abuse.

Best of luck to our recipients and thank-you to all who applied for seed and capacity building grants.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 17 November 2006– Presentation of results from the *diamond* longitudinal study. Gryphon Gallery, School of Graduate Studies, University of Melbourne, 2.00- 5.00pm
- 17 November 2006– Research Higher Degree Student event. Seminar rooms, Ground Floor, 200 Berkeley St, Carlton, 10am- 1.00pm

COMPLETED SEED FUNDING PROJECT

The following project was recently completed by *Mr Russell Nunn (Royal District Nursing Service)*, *Prof. Marilyn Annells (LaTrobe University & Royal District Nursing Service)*, *Dr Jane Sims (University of Melbourne)*

The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, a proposed methodology for identifying clients with depression was developed and trialled at one RDNS centre. Quantitative and qualitative data obtained from this phase were then utilised to develop a modified depression screening methodology which was trialled at two further RDNS centres. The results of the study indicate that district nurses are able to screen their elderly clients for depression using the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) providing certain conditions are met. Greater acceptance of depression screening is achieved if the process of depression screening is contextualised within the nurse's day-to-day clinical practice. The training should emphasise the importance of attending to mental health issues as part of providing holistic care to the client. The study also found that some nurses are very resistant to using tools such as the GDS. Only staff who have received appropriate training and are comfortable talking to their clients about their emotional problems should be expected to take part in the depression screening process. In general, nurses are not comfortable with routine depression screening and prefer to only screen clients if they are already exhibiting signs of depression. To maximise the accuracy of the screening process, training in the identification of the signs of depression is therefore necessary. Finally, the availability of a Mental Health Clinical Nurse Consultant who is able to review and refer clients if necessary is vital to ensure that the client's depression is handled in a timely and appropriate manner.

MEMBER PROFILE

PROFESSOR HELEN HERRMAN

Helen Herrman is Director of Academic Programs at the Australian International Health Institute and Professor in Public Health and Psychiatry at the University of Melbourne. From 1992 to 2005 she was Professor and Director of Psychiatry in St. Vincent's Mental Health Service Melbourne. She is Director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for research and training in mental health at the University of Melbourne and St Vincent's Health. Last year she was elected Secretary for Publications and member of the Executive Committee of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA). She is Chair of the Organising Committee for the WPA International Congress of Psychiatry, to be held in Melbourne 2007, and hosted by RANZCP.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The World Psychiatric Association (WPA) will hold an International Congress from **28 November – 2 December 2007** in Melbourne. There will be a primary care stream. Abstracts will be requested soon. Further info coming soon!

DR FRANCES GRIFFITHS & THE RE-ORDER PROJECT

Dr Frances Griffiths is Deputy Director of the Centre for Primary Health Care and a senior clinical lecturer in the Medical School, University of Warwick. Her area of specialization is complexity theory in primary care. Frances is also a part-time general practitioner. In a letter to the Department, Frances shed some light on her Melbourne trip in February 2006 for the **re-order** (Re-organizing care for depression and related disorders in the Australian primary health care setting):

“re-order e-mail and telephone communication takes on a new dimension for me now that I have spent time with the team at the Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne. Getting to know the whole team and being part of how they work helps me to understand what is happening alongside the digital communication. Not only that, I had a great time too enjoying the company of team members along with the diversity of food and entertainment



Frances Griffiths

in Melbourne.

Engaging with the re-order team was also an intellectual challenge. Using complexity theory as the framework for guiding the development of the project challenged me to consider the detail of how this could be operationalised. Complexity theory guides us to take particular note of diversity and of dynamics. Each primary care team will be a bit different from each other one and work in different ways yet there will be similarities with other teams. The diversity develops over time as the team works together and interacts with patients and the wider community. Interaction and feedback are key aspects of complex systems. In our discussions, the re-order team

worked on how to use well tried and tested research methods including survey analysis, nominal group technique and Delphi technique but through paying attention to the detail of how they are used, capturing data about the diversity and dynamic of primary health care.

Finally, a family story! My father was born and grew up in Queensland and my English mother lived in Brisbane with him for a few years where she learnt to make Lamingtons. They came to live in the UK before I was born but I grew up hearing about Lamingtons. They became a family legend. So, when I went for a quiet coffee one morning round the corner from the Department, my eyes lit up when I saw Lamingtons. I don't know if stories circulated later about the mad woman taking photos of her cake and coffee but when I brought the photo out for my parents there was great exclamation – a Lamington!”

RE-ORDER PROJECT UPDATE

The **re-order** (Re-organising care for depression and related disorders in the Australian primary health care setting) project is now in the process of collecting stakeholder input regarding the management of depression in the general practice/primary care setting. This phase of the project involves contacting a variety of stakeholders from a wide range of sectors within the community, including health sector employees, policy makers, professional organisations, academics, NGOs,

consumer and carer representatives. Currently, the **re-order** team is compiling a database of all stakeholders to be contacted for this stage of the research, and would welcome the participation of stakeholders interested in improving the management of depression in general practice. If you would like to be involved, or for more information, please contact Ella Butler at e.butler@unimelb.edu.au or (03) 8344 7846.

DIALOG RESEARCH PROJECT UPDATE



The following project is conducted by Dr Ruth McNair from the Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne and is funded by a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) PhD Scholarship;

Disclosure and attitudes towards lesbians: outcomes in general practice (DIALOG) is progressing well. The project is entering the third year. Recruitment of women is complete, with 18 women recruited and interviewed from the *diamond* study screening survey, and a further 15 women recruited via snowballing or from the community. Recruitment of GPs is continuing. So far 16 GPs have been interviewed with a target of 25. Analysis of the interview transcripts is underway including cross-coding with members of the multi-disciplinary Dialog research team.

Ruth has submitted a number of abstracts to conferences in late 2006 to present the emerging findings. These include lesbian and gay community events, the RACGP annual convention and an international women's health conference in Sydney. She is presenting at an International Human Rights conference in Montreal, Canada in July on the excellent patient-doctor relationship as a right or a privilege.

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

Contact: Miranda Hindle on (03) 8344 7449 or e-mail mhindle@unimelb.edu.au