Celebrating a Year of Achievement

The Centre for Health Initiatives (CHI) kicked off their 2011 Research Seminar Series on Thursday 10th February with a celebration of the Centre’s achievements over the past year. The presentation highlighted projects completed, new grants awarded, publications and presentations, students who graduated with PhDs and Masters, collaborations with various organizations, and continued engagement with the community.

CHI completed eleven major research projects in 2010, several of which have already resulted in substantial changes to policy and/or practice. Completed projects include: the development and testing of messages discouraging drug-driving, the development of alcohol-related curriculum for secondary students, and the development of an undergraduate nursing competencies assessment tool for use across Australian universities.

CHI researchers have been extremely successful in having their work published in 2010, with a 38% increase in refereed publications since 2009. The 2010 output included: 5 book chapters, 59 journal articles, and 12 refereed conference papers. A particular highlight were the three papers published in the A-ranked Cancer Causes and Control; two of which reported on the findings from CHI research conducted in partnership with the National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre.

The Annual Report represents the combined efforts of an amazing team of research staff and students, in partnership with other individuals and organisations who share our passion for making a difference.

If you would like a copy of the CHI 2010 Annual Report, please contact Christine Cairns on ccairns@uow.edu.au or on 4221 5106.
The year has started with a bang, and looks like it will be even bigger and better than 2010. We have all been very busy with grant submissions, especially ARC and NHMRC, but CHI-ers have still found time to publish a number of papers (see page 5), welcome new staff and students (pages 3-4) and take part in a number of university and community events. Welcome to an action-packed year (and newsletter), and we look forward to seeing you all at the next CHI Research Seminar (details on page 6).

A Note from the Director

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Systems Lady’s News

Go virtual CHI! The foundation quality management system, staff intranet and Wiki have been gaining wider use. It is very exciting to report that now when I visit the Wiki other CHI’ers names are frequently popping up in the Recently Updated List on the home page, hoorah. I love the watch page function too; I get an automatic email letting me know when people make changes to information that I am most interested in.

Despite my regular reorganisation of folders on the shared drive there have been no lynch mobs storming my desk, so I will keep the changes coming. In February three options for project tracking were released for the team to evaluate. Monthly workshops were held to provide CHI staff with systems orientation and introductory training in the new pilot systems.

February marks the end of the successful design phase of the systems project. The transition into the implementation phase is well underway with major focus on project management procedures and tools. Keep an eye on the UOW Public Website as Helen Hallingu “renovates” our CHI web pages. The CHI motto of the month: “Have a question? Ask the wiki. Have an answer? Tell the wiki.”

By Donata Palinkas

Healthy Heart Healthy Mind

The last day of the quarter saw the official launch of the ‘Healthy Heart Healthy Mind’ community campaign to raise awareness of the link between hypertension and dementia. This project is a partnership between CHI and the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health Network (ISLHN), funded by NSW Health. This is yet another demonstration of the commitment of people working throughout the Illawarra to improve the health of our community. For more information visit: www.healthyhearthealthymind.com.au
Conferences & Presentations

The Melanoma Summit, Wellington, New Zealand

Melinda Williams attended the Melanoma Summit in New Zealand on the 11th March and presented the outcomes of the Adolescent Sun Protection research to New Zealand’s Health Sponsorship Council. The forum provided a great opportunity to share the substantial research we have completed in adolescent sun protection to date.

NSW Population Health, Healthy Weight Network, Professional Development Seminar

Professor Sandra Jones presented a seminar entitled “An Introduction to Social Marketing” in North Sydney on 15th March to NSW Health staff and interested people from other organisations working in population health, nutrition, physical activity, and healthy weight promotion.

CHI People: Andrea Garner

“I am an educator with a love for learning, which has found me both in attendance and taking attendance! I began in the education field at a very young age as a peer tutor and maintained my role as a learner and teacher throughout school - completing co-op placements, volunteering and directing most of my free time towards working with children and youth at risk. By the time I reached University I was running recreation programs for children with exceptionalities, home programs for children affected by autism and taking photography courses - I enjoy variety!

I began training as an ABA therapist, worked as an outdoor educator at a therapeutic camp, counseled youth at risk, played basketball (badly) and worked as a bartender before going to teachers college in Scotland.

My year in Scotland taught me a great deal about the strength and fragility of a child. Having worked at schools located on some of the largest housing estates in Europe, I met children with courage and conviction to survive their circumstance with humour and grace. My time in Scotland taught me to look past challenging behaviour towards the child’s potential, create a plan to help them see their own potential, and support them in reaching it.

After Scotland, I taught in Ottawa for a short while before moving to England to run a Provision for children with autism at a public school. While working with the 21 incredible children in the Provision I completed my Masters of Education in Autism at the University of Birmingham. I feel privileged to have worked with such fascinating children and I continue to learn something new about children, autism, and myself with every interaction.

I left England to travel ‘the long way home’ to Canada and ended up in Australia, working for a brief period at UOW in 2005/2006. Experiences gained from living in, and visiting, other countries and cultures have enriched my life and provided me with my current perspective on ‘value’ and ‘success’.

I was working on a new direction in my life when the opportunity to return to Australia presented itself. To expand my knowledge in a field I am very passionate about, while gaining knowledge in a new field was very exciting. I am not one to snub the universe when it makes decisions obvious, and therefore seized the opportunity whole heartedly. I anticipate a steep learning curve with a supervisor that has knowledge and experience in both of the fields I’ll be working within, and look forward to meeting members of CHI and the Uni that have so much experience to offer.

Thank you for the kind welcome,
Andrea
Welcome New CHI Staff & Students!

The new year has brought with it a number of new faces for the CHI team. We welcome two new research students Emma Healey and Marielle Clearly, who are studying under the supervision of Gillian Stillfried. International BSScience Honours student, Emma Healey, is working on a project to compare patient and physician preferences for oral verses IV chemotherapy treatment of colorectal cancer. School of Health Sciences student, Marielle Clearly, is conducting a short research project to examine the lung cancer risk and preventative behaviours of Illawarra residents.

We welcome Andrea Garner from Canada, our newest PhD student, who is working on her thesis “The representation of autism in entertainment media”.

This semester we also have two students from the Bachelor of Communications and Media Studies (BCM) completing an internship at CHI, Sam Carey and Chris Brennan.

Spotlight on Our New Interns

Sam Carey

“ My name is Sam Carey and I am very excited to have joined the CHI team! I am doing the BCM internship here as part of my undergraduate Media and Communication Studies course and have felt very welcomed by my colleagues. My role as an intern has seen me preparing media releases on CHI research projects, helping prepare summaries for the Live Life Healthy Expo that ran through Seniors Week and I am now very enthusiastic about my work for the upcoming Illawarra Innovation Festival that CHI is involved in. I look forward to collaborating with Chris, our other intern, as well as the rest of the team to make an impact on local businesses and potential partners to generate funding for the Centre. Hopefully the rest of my time here will be as rewarding as the previous few weeks have been and I get to meet some more great people before I finish up at the end of June.”

Chris Brennan

“ I am undertaking my BCM internship here at CHI. I will be working on various media related tasks – primarily developing and implementing promotion strategies for the CHI internet panel, assisting in the further development of CHI’s online presence and, along with fellow intern Sam, promoting the upcoming Illawarra Innovation Festival. Thanks everyone for being so welcoming and I look forward to working with everyone in the coming weeks.”

New Projects, Grants & Scholarships

Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)

[Louise Turner] - Predictors of wellbeing and psychopathology in an ageing population: The effects of age and illness self-perceptions

(Supervised by A/Prof Craig Gonsalvez, A/Prof Peter Caputi, & Prof Don Iverson)
**CHI Helps Celebrate Seniors Week**

The Live Life Healthy Expo on 25th March was a great opportunity for the CHI to get involved with the seniors of our community. Showing the amount of effort that goes into improving our knowledge of healthy ageing, CHI was able to showcase their significant research in this field.

The team put forward their findings on the focus areas of asthma, dementia and the associated stigma, as well as promoting healthy lifestyles in IRT self-care communities. All in all it was a great experience for those who attended and a chance for seniors to be reassured that CHI is one of many research centres dedicating their work to the wellbeing of the ageing community.

*By Sam Carey*

**Papers Accepted for Publication**


Jones SC (in press). “You wouldn’t know it had alcohol in it until you read the can”: Adolescents and alcohol energy drinks. *Australasian Marketing Journal* (accepted 25/3/11).


Phillipson L & Jones SC (in press). ‘Between the devil and the deep blue sea’: The beliefs that caregivers of people with dementia have regarding the use of in-home respite services. *Home Health Care Services Quarterly* (accepted 17/02/11).

The Centre for Health Initiatives (CHI) is a Research Strength of the University of Wollongong. It is composed of appointed academic and general staff, affiliated academic staff, and research students. CHI’s key streams of research are:

1. Initiatives in Social Marketing and Community Engagement,
2. Initiatives in Critical Marketing and Media Analysis, and
3. Initiatives in Health Education, Leadership and Practice Development.

CHI prioritises the conduct of research that will impact on professional practice, policy or individual health behaviours and facilitates the application of this research in the relevant organisations or community environments.

CHI News is published quarterly. The deadline for submission to the next issue of CHI News will be the 24th June 2011. Please contact Uwana Evers on 4221 5441 or uwana@uow.edu.au.

For the Calendar...

Illawarra Innovation Festival

The Illawarra Innovation Festival has invited UOW and CHI to showcase their research at the Innovation Campus on Tuesday, 24th May, 2011. The festival is open to all members of the community. Essentially it is aimed at attracting local businesses, government and organisations that may wish to increase their social responsibility by funding or partnering with CHI.

As part of the research theme “Innovation in Health and Medicine for improving lives”, the team at CHI will be offering health information for members of the community from 4pm-6pm. Research relating to alcohol, aged care and dementia, cancer, health professional education and workplace health, safety and productivity will be presented at the festival. These focus areas will be open to discussion with members from the CHI team who are working to make the Innovation Festival a very worthwhile experience.

By Sam Carey

CHI Seminar Series

The monthly CHI Research Seminar Series will continue throughout 2011 at lunch time (12.30-1.30pm) on the following dates:

**7th April** (Communications Building 20.5)
“Development and evaluation of programs targeting brand loyalty segments in adult sun protection”
Dr Keryn Johnson and Melinda Williams

**12th May** (Communications Building 20.5)
Lyn Phillipson

A delicious free lunch is provided, so come along!