



Psychology and Ageing Interest Group

Newsletter Issue No. 13

2009

Getting old is a fascinating thing. The older you get, the older you want to get.
Keith Richards

Forward

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new newsletter editor. I'm a lecturer at the Australian National University and my research is in the neurocognitive factors of depression in both younger and older adults. I'm originally from Canada and my new hobby is decoding Australian slang.

I would like to thank Deborah Gardner, who has been the newsletter editor for many years. Everyone who is part of PAIG is grateful for her hard work and dedication to the group.

Jay Brinker
Editor

Report of the Chair, PAIG AGM, 2008

Psychology and Ageing Interest Group Members-

I am happy to report that in 2008-09 the National Psychology and Ageing Interest Group continued to quietly gain members and sponsor important initiatives.

We are continuing to support efforts to facilitate psychology postgraduate trainees working in residential aged care settings. This follows a number of position statements and appeals to government to try to improve access for persons in RACFs to psychological care. Late last year the cover story of *InPsych* featured the role of psychologists in nursing homes. This issue generated quite a bit of interest across the country. David Stokes and APS are continuing their efforts to expand Medicare coverage for psychologists interesting in improving access to mental health for older adults, especially for those in nursing homes. Hopefully training opportunities (which APS is also active in supporting) will continue to improve for psychology students.

Once again I have enjoyed member's interactions via the e-mail listserv, which is a good way to keep members in touch. If you know anyone in the ageing area who would like to join the listserv, have them send me an email.

As has been the case in the previous years, PAIG appears to be steadily attracting numbers (we now stand at 336 members total, including 12

Fellows of the Society, 29 students and 2 international members [one in Hong Kong and one in Singapore] as well as members in all states and territories in Australia). I note that many of these new members are students – always a positive and welcome sign! We are now the 6th largest Interest Group in the APS – let's see if next year we can move ahead!

I would like to thank everyone who helped with PAIG activities this year – there are too many to thank individually, but I thank you heartily one and all!

Warm regards,



*Nancy Pachana,
National Convener,
APS PAIG*

WINNERS, PAIG's ED HELMES STUDENT TRAVEL AWARD

Dementia: Who Cares? A comparison of community needs and primary care services in Mackay, Queensland.

Dr Fiona B Millard, Professor Bernhard T Baune - Dept Psychiatry, School of Medicine, James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland, Australia

Frontal cortical volumes and cognitive performance in young-old adults in the PATH through life study

Prapti Gautam, Nicolas Cherbuin, Kaarin J. Anstey, Perminder Sachdev - Centre for Mental Health Research, The Australian National University, School of Psychiatry, The University of New South Wales, Sydney.

SA Branch

Paul Kemp

State Convener, PAIG (SA Branch)

2009 has been a quieter year for the PAIG (SA Branch) due in large to competing work commitments of those involved on the committee. There are plans to have the group meet over the coming months to appoint new office bearers and a new

committee to take the group forward in 2010 and beyond.

That said a number of members of the PAIG (SA Branch) have been active in a number of different forums in 2009 and a snapshot of these is summarized below:

On September 17th 2009 Mary Luszcz and others from the Flinders Centre for Ageing Studies attended the Ageing Research Expo. The Expo is sponsored by the Office for the Ageing, the ARC/NH&MRC Research Network on Ageing Well and the Healthy Ageing Research Cluster. The key feature of the event is to launch the State of the Ageing in SA report, which was commissioned by OFTA as part of their 'Kickstart Initiative.' It showcased the current work of researchers in diverse ageing related fields across South Australia. The Expo also acted as the launch of the State of the Ageing Report, a tri-university project which provides an in-depth look at what population ageing means for South Australia.

The 10th annual SA Gerontology Conference presented by the SA/NT Division of the Australian Association of Gerontology at the Stamford Grand, Glenelg. This conference brought together a wide range of people with an interest in Ageing. A number of PAIG (SA Branch) members were in attendance at this conference.

The Website of the Flinders Centre for Ageing Studies has recently been re-designed The Flinders Centre for Ageing Studies (FCAS), led by Prof Mary Luszcz. It has a multidisciplinary focus on research, education and professional gerontological activities locally, nationally and internationally.

<http://flinders.edu.au/socsci/fcas/>

In July 2009 Professor Mary Luszcz and others from the Flinders Centre for Ageing Studies attended the XIXth World Congress of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics in Paris. Prof Luszcz gave a presentation entitled Policies related to family (informal)

caregivers of older people in Australia, as part of the Symposium State social policies for family caregivers in four countries: what lessons can we learn?

Two PhD candidates, Chris Materne and Linda Isherwood are currently undertaking research pertaining to older adults.

Finally, I will be standing down as State Convener of the PAIG group after some 6 years in this role, and would like to take this opportunity to thank all on a national and state level for the support and assistance they have provided to me over this time.

ACT Branch

Tim Windsor
ACT Co-ordinator

The highlight for the ACT PAIG in 2009 was the half-day symposium Psychology and Ageing: Clinical and Research Perspectives, organised by the group and held at the Australian National University in August. The symposium featured a number of local presenters and PAIG members from both the Ageing Research Unit that forms part of the Australian National University's Centre for Mental Health Research, and The Aged Care Evaluation Unit from The Greater Southern Area Health Service. Katrina Anderson and Annaliese Blair discussed practical issues and experiences around neuropsychological assessment, while Kerry Sargent-Cox and Allison Bielak presented research findings concerned with self-perceived health and activity engagement and cognition respectively. Mike Bird and Tushara Wickramariyaratne provided perspectives on clinical psychology in the context of residential care, while Nicolas Cherbuin outlined current thinking and presented research findings concerned with predictors of mild cognitive impairment. Finally, Sarah MacPherson reported on the evaluation of an art gallery access program for people with dementia. The symposium attracted a wide range of attendees with an interest in Psychology and Ageing, including

researchers, clinicians and policy makers. Special thanks go to the presenters, the ARC/NHMRC Research Network in Ageing Well for their sponsorship of the event, and to Sarah MacPherson and Allison Bielak for doing a great job in organising what turned out to be a most successful day. We anticipate a return to our popular breakfast meeting format in 2010, and look forward to another stimulating year of Psychology and Ageing in the ACT.

QLD Branch

Nancy A. Pachana
Qld Co-ordinator

This year has been relatively quiet for the QLD PAIG group. However, we had two well attended events in Brisbane in August of this year. Professor Julie Byles from the University of Newcastle spoke on her research in aged care. There is a critical need for applied research that enables aged care to meet the needs of increasing numbers of older people. However, to date there has been a limited amount of research into aged care, but this is a rapidly emerging field. The aged care research agenda is being increasingly well defined, and includes strategies to monitor and improve the quality of life of clients, identify and meet workforce needs, enhance practice development, and enable organisational change. Julie's presentation discussed the emerging aged care research agenda and highlighted recent research in residential aged care including the development of instruments for the measurement of quality of life among aged care residents. The Enhancing Best Practice in Nutrition and Hydration project which is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing under the Encouraging Best Practice in Residential Aged Care (EBPRAC) program, was discussed as one example how quality of life can be effectively assessed in aged care settings with a view to facilitating best care.

Also in August Professor Bob Knight, the Merle H. Bensinger Professor of Gerontology and Professor of Psychology

at the Andrus Gerontology Centre at The University of Southern California, and a Honorary Professor at the University of Queensland, gave the first UQ School of Psychology Public lecture. The talk was partly sponsored by PAIG and attracted APS generalist points. Bob presented his latest research in a public forum entitled "Older and Wiser"; an exciting seminar that raised some interesting ideas about ageing and the acquisition of wisdom in later life. While Bob researches and publishes in a variety of fields including late-life depression, mental health policy and training in clinical psychology, his more recent work explores the concepts of emotions and wisdom. To access this recent work please see:

Knight, B.G. & Laidlaw, K. (2009). Translational theory: A wisdom-based model for psychological interventions to enhance well-being in later life. In V. Bengtson, M. Silverstein, N. Putney, & D. Gans (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of aging* (2nd ed.) (pp. 693-706). New York: Springer.

Bob will be returning to Melbourne next year as an invited speaker at the International Congress of Applied Psychology, held in conjunction with the APS national conference in Melbourne in July, 2010.

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Regular meetings of the State Interest Groups are held in Sydney (NSW), Brisbane (QLD), Perth (WA), Adelaide (SA), Melbourne (VIC) and Canberra (ACT). On occasion these forums are held jointly with groups whose interests extend into the Ageing arena. The Interest Group is also active at the National Australian Psychological Society conferences, with symposia and papers of interest to researchers and practitioners as well as those involved in the teaching and supervision of psychologists. Social activities as well as student opportunities such as research and travel awards are also available to members. Contact your local convener for details!