



Psychology and Ageing Interest Group

Newsletter Issue No. 16

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Why do people talk of the horrors of old age? It's great. I feel like a fine old car with the parts gradually wearing out, but I'm not complaining. Those who find growing old terrible are people who haven't done what they wanted with their lives.

Martha Gellhorn

Forward

It is another exciting year for the Psychology of Ageing Interest Group. One of the highlights for me of belonging to this group was our conference last year in Melbourne. It was wonderful to meet so many people dedicated to work in the area, be it research or practice. But what was truly remarkable was the breadth of areas covered in the different presentations and talks. It really struck me that in ageing, all aspects of the human condition continue – relationships and sexuality, independence and achievement, health and finance, anxieties and challenges, thriving and life satisfaction all together in one place. We may focus on a specific population, but we are certainly not limited in vision!

Jay Brinker
Editor

Report of the Chair, PAIG AGM, 2012

Dear Psychology and Ageing Interest Group Members,

The 12 months since our last newsletter have been relatively quiet, with a few key events of note. In September of this year Dr Greg Hinrichsen, noted IPT therapist working with older adults, help a well-attended workshop on IPT in Melbourne. Many PAIG members presented their research at the International Psychogeriatric Association Conference in Cairns, Australia – again a well-received event. Look for other events under State and Territory reports in this issue of our PAIG newsletter.

As has been the trend in previous years, our interest group has continued to be a very popular one, and grew by 34 members in the past 12 months. Current (and 2011) figures are below:

Victoria	104 (111)
New South Wales	123 (113)
Queensland	66 (54)
South Australia	26 (18)
Western Australia	24 (15)
Australian Capital Territory	12 (15)
Tasmania	3 (3)
Northern Territory	1 (0)
Overseas	8 (4)

Countries with overseas members include Singapore (4), UK (2), and one each in Sweden and the USA.

Ageing also continues to be an issue for the APS, as reflected in the numerous submissions to state and federal committees looking into extending Medicare and other benefits to older adults, particularly those in residential aged care facilities. The members of the National PAIG committee contributed to several of these submissions.

A new PAIG forum discussion group portal has been established. Many thanks to Dr Leander Mitchell for her work on this. The web link is:

<http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/Forum/ForumConsent.aspx>

I'd like to remind members to nominate their students for our Elsie Harwood Award. The award aims to raise awareness in the field of psychology and ageing and to encourage students to carry out research in this field. The award is for the best empirical research project in the field of ageing, submitted as part of an accredited fourth year program in psychology or an accredited Masters by coursework program in psychology. Nominations close 31st October, 2012.

Information about eligibility criteria and submission instructions can be obtained at:

<http://www.psychology.org.au/about/awards/harwood/>

Finally I'd like to sincerely thank Dr. Deirdre McLaughlin, a terrific scientist as well as an excellent breeder of fine livestock and our own PAIG treasurer for

over 10 years, who is stepping down this year. Thanks Dee for helping us grow and become fiscally able to host our great national conference and support individual state initiatives!

Warm regards,



**Nancy Pachana,
National Convener,
APS PAIG**

SA Branch

Carol Hunter
SA State Convener

The South Australian branch has had a successful year to date, with some interesting presentations and increasing membership.

Our first meeting of the year had consultant geriatrician Dr Raluca Tudor to present on the clinical aspects of suicide in older people, which was well attended and highly relevant to many clinicians in the field. Our second meeting explored cultural aspects of ageing and we had Rosa Colanero from Multicultural SA to speak with us about approaches to individuals from different cultural backgrounds. PAIG SA continues to maintain a wonderful, dedicated committee to oversee meetings and ensure the group continues, so thanks to Dr Tim Windsor, Julia Scott and Doreen Garcia.

We have also seen a pleasing increase in membership through 2012, with more student members. This is an encouraging sign, and we are always delighted to welcome new members and students to become part of this group.

Our October meeting will focus on case presentations of real-life clients. The purpose of this is to both provide support and professional development opportunities, and to enhance our learning and knowledge in this complex field.

ACT Branch

Nicolas Cherbuin

ACT Convenor

Our meetings continue to attract a loyal audience of clinicians, researchers and other interested parties. Earlier in the year Mr Kim Kiely who is in the final stages of his PhD research at the Centre for Ageing, Health and Wellbeing, ANU, presented research on associations between sensori loss and cognitive decline in large Australian longitudinal cohorts.

Our next PAIG event on 25th October is a symposium entitled “The psychology of healthy ageing” which has been developed in collaboration with the Centre for Excellence in Population Ageing Research. It will feature four speakers. Professor Mary Luszcz will discuss the advantages that accrue from having a strong sense of control, self-esteem, morale and cognitive resources. She will argue that the importance of examining psychosocial variables stems from their modifiability and capacity to enhance ageing well.

Clinical Psychologist Annaliese Blair will present case studies from the Aged Care Evaluation Unit to illustrate the type of contributions psychologists can make in Residential Age Care Facilities. She will also discuss plans to evaluate the clinical outcomes of her unit’s services. This is a good news story about forging a service for older adults who currently have limited access to psychology services.

Based on two large Australian longitudinal studies, Dr Richard Burns will present recent findings that paint a complex picture of wellbeing and mental health as Australians age. Whilst clinical depression is no more prevalent in older adults, there is evidence of increasing depressive symptomology and suicidality. Conversely, drawing on a burgeoning positive psychology literature which promotes the value of positive components of health and wellbeing, there is evidence that adults are flourishing as they age.

Finally, Dr Kerry Sargent-Cox report on her work regarding older adult’s perceptions of their own ageing, and how these perceptions influence major health outcomes, including mortality. The findings of her work demonstrate the importance of maintaining positive perceptions of ageing and also provide us with a greater understanding of the psychological mechanisms surrounding healthy aging and adaptation to age-related changes in late life.

Our semi-regular breakfast meetings will resume in 2013 and another symposium is planned for the middle of the year.

Kind Regards,
Nicolas Cherbuin

QLD Branch

Leander Mitchell

QLD Convenor

This year saw a significant changing of the guard for PAIG (Qld), with long-serving state convenor Nancy Pachana standing down and handing over the reins to myself. Many thanks to Nancy for all her hard work and the important contributions she has made within PAIG (Qld).

It has been a bit of a slow start as I find my feet within this new role and look to establish the needs of the membership. We had a very successful turnout to our movie night earlier in the year, where members laughed and cried with the characters in *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*. There have also been a number of opportunities for me to spread the ‘good word’ about ageing to both community and other professional groups.

It was a pleasure to catch up with a number of our members at the recent IPA meeting in Cairns.

In 2013 I am looking to re-establish more regular meetings and will also explore the potential of a workshop for the Queensland members.

VIC Branch

Yvonne Wells

VIC Convenor

The Victorian Branch of the Psychology and Ageing Interest Group currently has about 120 members from a range of academic, clinical, and business backgrounds. The group meets 3 or 4 times a year at a range of locations in Melbourne, typically a university campus. Meetings usually last for about one-and-a-half and consist of a combination of presentations, informal discussion and networking. Our meetings are topic-based, with invited speakers giving a brief presentation and leading the discussion. We invite non-members who work at the venue to attend the meeting to raise the profile of the group and invite local comments on the topic at hand.

So far in 2012 we have had three meetings. The first, held at the National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) late in March, addressed the topic of brain plasticity, especially after stroke. Professors Michael Saling and Steve Gibson led the evening's discussions.

Our June meeting was supported by Swinburne University's School of Psychology and held at their Hawthorn campus. The meeting began with a discussion about working with older adults in community and residential settings. Dr Tanya Davison gave an overview of the funding arrangements for psychologists in aged care settings. Dr Hema Sivakumaran introduced the topic of Medicare Locals. Finally, Dr Sunil Bhar talked about his students' experiences in placement in residential care settings, and some of the students presented outcomes from their work, including a reminiscence booklet. After the presentations, there was a brief AGM.

Our September meeting addressed the issue of helping families with end-of-life issues. Dr Barbara Hayes spoke about the legal structures available in Victoria to support Enduring Power of Attorney, Guardianship, and Refusal of Treatment

and the issues facing practitioners and families related to palliative care.

A highlight of the year is our end-of-year dinner, held in November, where we combine a great meal with a range of speakers on controversial topics. At the end of 2011, we were fortunate to have Professor Nancy Pachana, our National Convenor, talking about older people and disaster response. Our topic this year is "Skype Me!" Speakers will bring us up to date on some of the current innovations in technology to support healthy ageing and social inclusion. This year's speakers include Dennis Wollersheim, who will discuss some of his work with refugee groups and older people. It promises to be another fun and informative evening.

Our meetings are open to all interested parties, regardless of whether they are members of PAIG-Vic, and input is always welcome.

NSW Branch

Deborah Koder

NSW convenor

Attendance at our meetings has been consistent with an increasing number of new members from the aged care rehabilitation area, as well as new student members which is always wonderful to see.

We continue to meet quarterly at various venues across Sydney so as to maximize attendance. Professor Michael Nicholas discussed his work in the area of treating pain in older adults at our November 2011 meeting, held at Royal North Shore Hospital. November also saw a good attendance at the National PAIG conference in Melbourne from NSW members, several of whom were presenters at this event. Our other topics for the past year were cognitive rehabilitation and Beth Stone presenting on the Pictured Feelings Instrument (PFI) and its use in communicating in dementia.

The NSW group has been planning a workshop for early 2013 focusing on

coping with chronic conditions and grief. Members are also involved with developing a database detailing specific areas of members' expertise.

NSW North Coast Branch

Ian Johnston
Branch Convenor

Whilst our numbers are small we as a group of psychologists working in aged care have a large area to cover. We have 60 aged care facilities between the Qld border and Grafton together with 11 hospitals. As an indicator of the numbers of ageing population in the NSW Northern Rivers area, the 3 aged care assessment teams Tweed, Richmond and Grafton receive around 500 new referrals per month.

Two of our team members, Brad Ward and Steve Conroy have in the last few months been awarded their Doctorates, and both of them have demonstrated a commitment to assisting the elderly. These awards come after a long and often difficult gestation period (as they often remind me!).

We are fortunate that we all have a close working relationship which mean the two areas we concentrate on, training post graduate students in Clinical Geropsychology and running training sessions across the North Coast for staff in both NSW Health and in Residential Aged Care facilities can be conducted on an ongoing basis.

In the last 12 months we have supervised 6 psychology students for various times and Steve and I have had a one day lecture for post graduate students in psychology @ USQ on the opportunities of work in the area of Clinical Geropsychology. It is unfortunate that the exposure many students have at university on the variety and opportunity that work in the area of geriatrics presents across the whole world is limited and we would like to do more in this area.

I look forward to the next 12 months working alongside my valued colleagues

here in this most rewarding area of practice.

MEMBER PROFILE



Dr. Daniel Parker is a clinical psychologist with the WA Health/North Metropolitan Older Adult Mental Health Service in Perth, providing clinical services to inpatient and community teams; and in private practice with a focus on older adult, LGBT and HIV psychology services.

Dan completed his PhD training at the Wright Institute in Berkeley, California, and moved to Western Australia in 2005 to work with the WA Health Department. His professional interests include the impact of changing ageing demographics on mental health needs of older adults; and innovations in the provision of mental health services to LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) older adults.

He is a Board Member of GRAI (GLBTI Retirement Association, Inc. of WA), which in 2011 published best practice guidelines for accommodating older LGBTI people in aged care services. Dan is also an active participant in the National LGBTI Health Alliance's focuses on mental health and healthy ageing for LGBTI individuals and communities.

During 2010-2011, Dan returned to California to oversee the development of an outpatient mental health program specifically for LGBT older adults. This Prevention and Early Intervention project provided services in an LGBT community centre setting, using evidenced-based treatment models (Gallagher-Thompson & Thompson's Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Late Life Depression, and the problem-solving therapy, Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives for Seniors). Services were offered in combination group therapy, the peer-led Chronic Disease Self-Management program, and other fitness, health, education and social activities. Dan was also instrumental in obtaining state funding for training psychology interns in LGBTI ageing. Dan returned in early 2012 to his current position within WA Health.

Dan has been an invited member of advisory boards both in Australia and the US charged with the assessment of needs and the development of policy in the area of LGBT ageing. He is currently serving on the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing Steering Committee for the development of a National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Strategy. Formerly he served in California as a Key Informant and co-chair of the Older Adult Advisory Group of the Reducing Disparities Project, a state-funded project to identify obstacles to use of public mental health services by LGBT individuals. He participates in clinical research, provides community consultation and lectures regularly on LGBT older adult mental health, and on the intersection of mental health and changing social conditions for older adults. He can be contacted at daniel.parker@health.wa.gov.au. More information about the National LGBTI Health Alliance's involvement in developing the National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Strategy, and aged care reforms and training regarding LGBTI older adults is available at info@lgbtihealth.org.au.

STUDENT PROFILES



Mary Castellani is currently completing a Doctor of Clinical Neuropsychology at La Trobe University in Victoria and is an APS and PAIG member. Her research thesis is examining cognitive training in older adults, with a particular interest in computerised interventions. Mary became interested in older adults and cognitive stimulation while doing her honours research. After interviewing many volunteers about their leisure activities post retirement, she found that people were involved in a wide range of challenging and meaningful activities. Interests ranged from learning new skills like music and language, serving on committees, caretaking of community and church infrastructure, organising conferences, travelling, cycling, bushwalking, caring for grandchildren, mentoring others and much more. However, many of these active older adults worried about their memory and wondered if they should be doing "Brain Training" games as well. As computerised and video game technology becomes more sophisticated, she wondered if there is valid place for it alongside other evidence based recommendations for healthy aging. Mary grew up in Ballarat and has lived in Melbourne all her adult life; she is married and has two teenage sons.



Sofia Robleda graduated with an honours degree in Psychology in 2009 and is currently completing a Doctoral degree in Clinical and Geropsychology at the University of Queensland. Her interest in older adults began in her honours year, when she took Professor Nancy Pachana's aging seminar.

She has been working as a research assistant for Nancy Pachana since 2010 and this has increased her knowledge and interest in therapeutic issues related to later life. Her doctoral thesis is looking at what quality of life and wellbeing means in adults aged 50 and above, and what variables (i.e., optimism, attitudes to ageing, life events, social support, and psychological distress) affect these constructs. Other areas of research and clinical interest include dementia, animal-assisted therapy, depression and anxiety in older adults, as well as parasomnias and other sleep disorders.

Sofia currently completed her clinical externship at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, Continuing Care North team, where she was exposed to a range of severe and complex mental disorders in adults. This was a great experience, and she is very excited for her next placements, which will see her working more closely with her main population of interest, older adults.

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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!