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A man of ninety years old was asked to what he attributed his longevity. I reckon, he said, with a twinkle in his eye, it's because most nights I went to bed and slept when I should have sat up and worried.

(Dorothea Kent)

Forward

From the reports that have come in it appears that IG branches in the East have been very busy this year. Attendance at most branch meetings is either growing or is being maintained. Thanks go out to the branch co-ordinators for organising such interesting programs for their group members.

The co-ordinator role for the South Australian Branch was taken over this year from Lynn Ward by Paul Kemp (Southern Mental Health Services for Older People, SA). Thanks to Lynn for the work she has done for the Branch in previous years. Thanks also to Paul for taking over. Hopefully the Group's outcomes will be as successful in future years as they were for Paul this past year.

Kaarin Anstey (Centre for Mental Health Research, ANU) hopes to start up an IG branch in Canberra very soon. So Canberra members, watch out for notification from Kaarin of the first meeting date.

Thanks to Dr Jonathan Munro (Project Officer, Older People's Psychological Telemedicine Outreach Service) for the information provided in the article reproduced in this issue about the NSW service.

Best wishes to all group members for another successful year in 2004. Hope to see you at the APS conference in Perth.

Deborah Gardner
Editor

APS Conference Message

A reminder to all IG members that at the APS Conference in Perth, our IG is presenting a forum on "What does psychology contribute to our understanding, management and prevention of dependency (disability) in older adults?" The forum is Friday the 3rd October at 4:00 pm.

The APS has organised a time slot on Friday 3rd October, at 3:30 pm for the

Psychology of Ageing Interest Group
AGM at the APS Conference. Please
check your program upon registering or
with the conference organisers for the
location of the AGM meeting room.

Deborah Gardner

Feature Article

The older peoples psychological telemedicine outreach service (OPPTOS)

'GP Speak' article for Divisions of General Practice



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Background

The state average of the population over the age of 65 is 13%, however, in the Northern Rivers Area Health Service (NRAHS) the figure is 16.3%. It is estimated that by 2011 that 19% of the NRAHS population will be over the age of 65. The local government areas of Tweed and Ballina are showing the greatest increase in the population over the age of 65 in the NRAHS. Prevalence estimates of the population over the age of 65 indicate that 13.5% meet the criteria for mental disorder and so by 2011 some 8002 older people will require some level of mental health intervention. A significant increase

in resources will be required if the NRAHS is to provide adequate mental health services to the over 65 age group.

Older Person's Telemedicine Outreach Service (OPPTOS)

OPPTOS involves the establishment of a specialist health care telehealth network. The network will use clinical grade interactive videoconferencing to deliver older persons mental health (OPMH) services within and between the NRAHS and Concord Hospital. NRAHS Mental Health currently has three Telehealth sites from the Child and Adolescent Outreach Service (CAPTOS) project in Tweed, Lismore and Grafton and the OPPTOS project includes the development of services at Ballina, Maclean, Urbenville and Concord Hospital to facilitate the clinical network. OPPTOS will facilitate:

- Access to expert specialist assessment, advice, recommendations, treatment planning and monitoring and review of patient progress
- Improving the clinical effectiveness and quality of staff in service delivery, case management and collegial support and networks
- Enhanced access to education, training and supervision for staff
- Development of local networks of services
- Assisting consumers, carers and service providers to participate in case consultation and care planning and
- Increased understanding of the complex issues involved in providing mental health care to older persons which is mindful of their dignity

The OPPTOS project will enhance the current aged care and mental health service provision for older people and their carers by providing tertiary psychogeriatric services in the NRAHS. Dr David Kitching, the psychogeriatrician, will provide assessment and treatment planning and monitoring of clients with

complex problems. In conjunction there will be access for referring clinicians to tertiary clinical information, best practice management strategies and quality clinical supervision.

The target group are generally older persons over the age of 65 or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) clients 55 and over who:

- Have had a mental illness for many years and who may now also be experiencing complicating issues relating to growing older or
- Develop a functional illness (eg. Depression, paranoid psychosis, anxiety) in later life
- Have a dementing or other organic disorder
- Clients who present with challenging behaviours and/or problematic and complex diagnosis and treatment options or
- Clients well known to mental health services or Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs) and who continue with management challenges and would benefit from a psychogeriatrician consult

Referrals

The OPPTOS project will provide two hours per week for NRAHS and Concord Hospital clinical case consultation with Dr David Kitching. Recommendations will be made for the management of client's clinical and environmental needs based on clinical information provided in the Psychogeriatrician Referral Form and the Pre Clinical Psychogeriatrician Summary Form and as a result of consultation with the key service providers and/or clients at the interview. Referrals will be managed by Area Mental Health or ACATs and prioritised according to protocols developed in consultation with the clinicians involved. As the amount of information that has to be collated and investigated is considerable, GPs who wish to take advantage of the service will need to closely liaise with ACAT or Mental Health concerning any referral to

OPPTOS. Any assessment conducted by OPPTOS is facilitated by the collaboration of all treating services and will need to fall within service protocols.

Elsie Harwood Award



Christina Feldman, 2002 winner of the Elsie Harwood Award, was presented with the award by Nancy Pachana at the Interest Group AGM, held during the 2002 APS annual conference on the Gold Coast. The title of her thesis was “An over-reliance on gist memory and a deficit in verbatim memory in old age: Evidence from false memories”. Her advisor was Jonathan Foster.

The winner of the Elsie Harwood Award for 2003 was Rhonda Shaw from James Cook University. The title of Rhonda's thesis was “Age-related decline in verbal, visual and special memory”. Her advisor was Ed Helmes.

Nancy Pachana

Electronic Newsletter

A reminder that the newsletter will be e-mailed to you if you register an e-mail address with the APS for that purpose. So please let the APS know if you would like to be registered on a contact e-mail list.

You will also be able to find each new newsletter and some back issues on our Interest Group's publications page on the APS web site:
www.psychsociety.com.au/units/interest_groups/aging/

Deborah Gardner

Across the Nation

South Australian Branch

Paul Kemp
SA Co-ordinator

2003 has been one of change for the SA Branch, with a new convenor and treasurer / secretary being elected at the AGM held in November 2002. It would be remiss not to take this opportunity to thank the previous executive of Lynn Ward (Convenor) and Malcolm Bond (Treasurer / Secretary) for all their hard work with the group in the past.

The group in SA is a diverse one and comprises of clinicians from a variety of settings, academics, and students. At the beginning of the year two aims for 2003 were identified – namely to better represent and cater for the needs of psychologists in SA with an interest in the area of ageing, and to increase the overall numbers of people attending the seminar series. It is pleasing to note that as 2003 draws rapidly towards a close it appears each of these objectives has been met.

Seminars in 2003 have continued to be held quarterly, and this year we have had a good blend of both drawing upon the knowledge and expertise of members of

our group, as well as hearing from presenters of high calibre from outside the group. The seminar series for the year commenced in March with the topic "Perspectives on Geropsychology: Current Practices and Future Directions". Three members of our group representing different sectors of employment shared their views of this topic, which stimulated much interesting discussion from and amongst the audience. In June two of our members provided an informative account of their NHMRC funded research. The August seminar saw a prominent psychiatrist and head of psychiatry training in SA, present on "Recent Advances in Psychogeriatrics". The AGM, presentations from students undertaking pertinent research, and an end of year social function will be held in November. Attendance at all seminars this year has been excellent, with the numbers attending representing a significant increase on that of previous years.

Several new initiatives have been undertaken in 2003. A successful venture was a joint seminar conducted with the APS Clinical College in SA, with a focus on clinical challenges for psychologists working with older clients. An extensive email network has been established in order to keep as many people as possible advised of relevant upcoming seminars / workshops / conferences. Additionally, the interest group is currently exploring ways of being involved in activities the APS SA Branch has planned for National Psychology Week in November.

In summary, 2003 has been one where the SA interest group has taken on new challenges and sought to grow and evolve. I anticipate 2004 being one where the interest group can continue to develop into a body that truly represents and caters for all psychologists in SA with an interest in ageing.

Victorian Branch

Yvonne Wells
Vic Co-ordinator

We have had another interesting and successful year in the Victorian Branch. We kept to the policy of having relatively few meetings during the year, hoping for a good attendance at each meeting. This policy has worked well, with over 20 people attending each meeting.

Meetings have been held in the early evening at the City campus of La Trobe University, which is a central location that is relatively convenient for most people. We successfully applied for generalist PD points for the first meeting of the year, and an application for the second meeting has been lodged.

The third and final meeting in November 2002 focused on the topic 'Women growing older; Ageing as a feminist issue'. A variety of issues were covered, including the impacts of policies to move post-acute care into the home, social connection and isolation, and family violence. Speakers at the meeting included Briony Dow (National Ageing Research Institute), Colleen Turner (Australian Institute of Family Studies), and Heather Gridley (Victoria University of Technology).

In 2002, we have had two meetings so far this year. In April, Adele Gibson, from Deakin University, coordinated a session on Positive Ageing. First, Tess Knight (Deakin University) spoke about her PhD research on "Successful Ageing". Tess ran three studies looking at older people's perceptions of successful ageing and compared these to definitions and concepts described in the relevant literature. Secondly, Sue Jill Bodnar (COTA (Vic)) spoke about the work undertaken by the Council on the Ageing, including the "Challenging Ageing" program. Finally, Nan Lasry (a volunteer therapist with the Gawler Foundations) and Ron Newberry (a retired metallurgist) spoke about their own personal

experiences of ageing and maturing positively.

In June, Lesley Hall (Deakin University) presented her research on body image and older woman and Sue Paxton (La Trobe University) discussed her research on this topic.

Two more meetings are planned for this year, one on older people as Holocaust survivors and issues in residential care, led by Kerrie Haines, Miriam Tisher, and Judy Becher, and one on older people and pain, led by Steve Gibson and Steve Malkin (NARI).

Western Australian Branch

Deborah Gardner
WA Co-ordinator

The Interest Group in Western Australia has met twice this year. At the first meeting in April Deborah Gardner talked about her research on interpersonal dependency in older adults. She discussed how interpersonal dependency in older adults affects their health service utilization and described the process she used to develop an interpersonal dependency measure for use with older adults.

In August the group met again to listen to Dr Eyal Gringart (Edith Cowan University) talk about his research of age discrimination in hiring practices against older adults. Eyal discussed stereotypes among employers and undergraduate students.

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