

Ageing Mind Initiative Newsletter



Contents

Page

The results are in! Read about the research findings from past AMI studies

2 Foot pain in older adults

3 The Benefits of Gardens and Gardening

4 Hazard Perception in Older Adult drivers, does training make a difference?

5-10 Studies looking for participants



Please direct all enquiries
to ami@uq.edu.au

Welcome to the Final Newsletter for 2010!

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The 50+ registry is advancing with the times and is officially transitioning to an e-Newsletter. By making the AMI newsletter available online, we hope to reach a greater number of community members and a broader range of individuals. We will also be able function at a more sustainable level by conserving resources and having less of an impact on the environment. Lastly, by making the transition to an online format we are able to provide a greater number of pages in each newsletter. With this additional space we will begin to dedicate more space to publishing the results of the research projects that have been advertised in prior editions of the Newsletter. This has become a high priority for the AMI team based on feedback you. As such, **this will be the last paper-based mail out of the AMI Newsletter.**

To ensure that you continue to receive the AMI Newsletter, please mail ami@uq.edu.au with your current email address so that it can be added to our database.

Remember that you will still be able to view both old and new newsletters online at the AMI website. Simply visit the homepage and click on the "Newsletters" link on the right-hand side of the page or type in the website address directly: <http://www.uq.edu.au/ami/index.html?page=99265>. This can be done from any computer, anywhere in the world.

We are very excited about this transition as it will greatly improve the quality and depth of the AMI Newsletters. If you have any questions or concerns about this transition, please feel free to email your enquiries to ami@uq.edu.au

Warmest regards,

Nancy Pachana
Co-Coordinator,

Gerard Byrne
Co-Coordinator

The Results Are In!

ISSUE QUOTE

"Sure, I'm for helping the elderly. I'm going to old myself one day"
~Lillian Carter, spoken when she was in her eighties

Exploring Foot Pain and Function in Healthy Adults

- Sheree Nix

Foot problems can be related to disability and an increased risk of falls in older adults. A study in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (Physiotherapy) at The University of Queensland is investigating foot pain and function in healthy adults with no foot problems.

The results from this study will be used to compare foot pain and functional limitations in people with healthy feet compared to people with a hallux valgus deformity (bunions).

Healthy female volunteers aged 50 to 75 were recruited from the 50+ registry among other sources. The participants had a single testing session out at UQ where they had a foot assessment by a qualified Podiatrist, balance testing, and muscle strength, flexibility and walking tests.

WHAT THE RESEARCH FOUND....

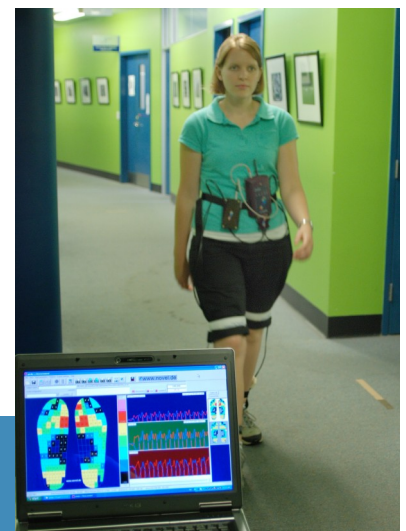
This study compared several measures of foot pain and function in a group of healthy adults with and without hallux valgus (or bunions), which is a common foot deformity in older adults.

The results showed that a group of healthy adults with bunions reported significantly more foot pain than volunteers of the same age without a bunion deformity. They also reported more difficulty with footwear and concerns about the appearance of their feet.

The group with bunions reported poorer function based on questionnaires relating to activities of daily living and sports. They also displayed less muscle strength around the big toe.

There were no differences between adults with and without bunions when we measured their balance and walking speed.

These results highlight the significance of foot pain and functional limitation associated with having a bunion deformity. This gives us insight into factors that may cause people with bunions to seek treatment, which will be of great benefit to clinicians who manage this common deformity and will help guide future research.



The Results Are In!

The Benefits of Gardens and Gardening

- Theresa Scott

Gardening as a therapy, has a history dating back to the Middle Ages. Recent research has examined the role of gardening as a rehabilitative therapy for a wide range of people. According to Biophilia theory, we are not only genetically programmed to respond positively to natural environments, our emotional, intellectual and physical well-being depends upon having access to nature.

In an ongoing research study by Theresa Scott (see page 5 for details on how to participate), she is interested in exploring the importance of the home garden in the lives of community dwelling older adults.

Some preliminary results of this survey study showed that participants reported numerous benefits associated with their gardens and gardening activities, which could be summed up as tangible, physiological or psychological rewards.

For some participants, active pursuit of their gardening activities, despite experiencing physical limitations since first gardening, was extremely important, while for others, simply 'being' in the garden was of value.

Participants reported reminiscence of childhood gardens, and the desire to pass on the benefits of experiences to younger people. Other

benefits that participants obtained from their gardening activities included: a sense of purpose from cultivating plants; having an outlet for physical activity and exercise; and social benefits, which were significantly increased for those who reported that they were members of a gardening club or group.

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that if they had to leave their gardens, it would be important to continue gardening elsewhere.

Some preliminary conclusions include: encouraging continued participation in gardening activities may be one way to support older adults' ageing in place.

Home gardens and related activities afforded older adults the opportunity for increased well-being, meaningful engagement and manageable physical activity.

The results of this study also have implications for the establishment of community gardening programs as a means of providing a common shared interest with other older adults and with future generations, through mentoring younger participants; and for the establishment of gardening activities in residential care facilities as gardens provided a link to the past and a connection to the outside world, according to this sample.



The Results Are In!



Driver Training and Hazard Perception in Older Adults

- Emmaline Falconer

The aim of the Driver Training in Older Adults project was to further research into a specific driving related ability known as *hazard perception* with a sample of adults over 65 years.

Participants completed three sessions over 4 months. Each session included completing some brief questionnaires, simulated driving exercises on a computer and watching driver training videos such as instructional segments and footage of typical road and traffic situations.

Hazard perception is the ability to detect potentially dangerous situations in the traffic environment. It is typically assessed by measuring the average time that participants take to identify potential hazards in video footage of driving.

This project involved two studies. The first study aimed to explore the relationships between hazard perception ability and performance on a range of tests of cognitive functioning. The second study aimed to investigate whether participation in a hazard perception training program would result in faster hazard perception response times and whether an additional training session would further improve hazard perception response times.

WHAT THE RESEARCH FOUND....

Study 1: Contrary to expectations, hazard perception response times did not relate to performance on any of the neuropsychological tests including measures of processing speed, working memory, inhibition, mental flexibility or spatial planning and problem solving. It is likely that the current study did not have enough participants to detect relationships between these different tests..

Study 2: Overall, the study demonstrated that hazard perception training was associated with immediate improvements in the hazard perception response times of older adult drivers. However, these gains were not maintained over one and three month delays. Furthermore, participation in an additional training session was not associated with further improvement in hazard perception response times.

A huge thank you would like to be extended to all of the participants who were involved in this study. There was a large response from the 50+ Registry.



Get Involved in UQ Ageing Research

Seeking participants for a study about gardens and gardening activities

Gardening as a therapy, has a history dating back to the Middle Ages. Recent research has examined the role of gardening as a rehabilitative therapy for a wide range of people. According to Biophilia theory, we are not only genetically programmed to respond positively to natural environments, our emotional, intellectual and physical well-being depends upon having access to nature. We are interested in exploring the importance of the home garden in the lives of community dwelling older adults.

We invite you to participate in this research if you have any interest in gardens and gardening activities. Participation involves completing a questionnaire about your involvement in, and feelings about, gardens. The questionnaire can either be posted to you, with a return-addressed, stamped envelope or completed online at http://uqpsych.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV_2owLkVGZQiqcWyg&SVID=Prod.

If you would like to participate in this study, or you would like some more information, please contact **Theresa Scott** t.scott@psy.uq.edu.au
Phone: **07 3346 7284 / 0430 731 227**



Seeking People with Dementia for Learning and Memory Studies

Have you been diagnosed with mild dementia (including Alzheimer's disease)? We are investigating memory and learning in older adults diagnosed with dementia, and are currently seeking participants.



We are running four studies consisting of between one and three sessions each. You may choose to participate in one, two, three or all four of these studies. In each study you will be asked to complete memory and learning tasks, and answer some questions related to other aspects of thinking and mood. You will be offered entry to a draw for a \$25 shopping voucher for each study that you participate in. Sessions can be conducted in your own home, or at the University of Queensland, if this is more convenient for you.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Dr. Megan Broughton on **3346 7451**, or via email at ml.broughton@uq.edu.au.

Get Involved in UQ Ageing Research

Do you have osteoarthritis in your knee?

The Division of Physiotherapy at the University of Queensland

is looking for people aged over 50 years with osteoarthritis (OA) of the knee who have had knee pain on most days for the past month to participate in a clinical trial.

We are comparing the effectiveness of three treatments for knee OA delivered by physiotherapists:

Treatment involving a combination of exercise and pain coping skills training

Treatment involving exercise alone

Treatment involving pain coping skills alone

All eligible volunteers will be randomly allocated to receive one of the three treatments under investigation from a trial physiotherapist located in your region. You will receive 10 physiotherapy sessions over 12 weeks at no personal cost.

Participants must be willing to:

- Have a knee x-ray to ensure that you are eligible to participate (no cost)
- Attend the Division of Physiotherapy at the University of Queensland for baseline and follow up testing (3 times over a 12 month period)
- Undertake a home based program for your knee OA over the trial period
- Keep a diary of activities and answer questionnaires at three time points

To obtain details and learn more about the trial please contact:

Paul Connellan on Ph: (07) 3365 4691 or Email: p.connellan@uq.edu.au



Memory and Communication Training in Dementia Study.

Do you care for someone with Dementia? We are looking for people with dementia and their caregivers, who are living together in the community. We are trialling a training program for caregivers of people with dementia that provides them with strategies to help maximise communication and every-day memory function for the person with dementia.



You will be asked to take part in two (2 hour) assessment sessions separated by three months. The assessment sessions can take place in your home and will involve completing questionnaires about mood and behaviour, some memory and language tasks, and two every-day activities. Caregivers will also receive the DVD based training package.

If you are interested in taking part (or would like more information) please contact **Dr Erin Smith** on 3346 7451 or email e.smith1@uq.edu.au.

Get Involved in UQ Ageing Research

Seeking Healthy Participants for a Learning and Memory Study

Are you a healthy 65+ year-old who has not had a stroke and does not have dementia? We are investigating memory and learning in healthy older adults and older adults diagnosed with dementia, and are currently seeking healthy participants without dementia.

The study will involve 1 session of up to 1 hour. You will be asked to complete a memory and learning task, and answer some questions related to other aspects of thinking and mood. You will be offered entry to a draw for a \$25 shopping voucher for taking part. The session can be conducted in the comfort of your own home, or at the University of Queensland, if this is more convenient for you.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Dr. Megan Broughton on 3346 7451, or via email at ml.broughton@uq.edu.au.

Ageing, health and emotion

Recent research has found that older adults experience emotion differently to younger adults. Research has also found that our emotions can influence our physical health and well-being. We are extending this research by investigating how the different ways that older adults experience emotion could impact on their ability to fight off infectious disease.

We are seeking adults 65 years and older. Participation involves answering some questions about your mood and your physical health, as well as recounting some memories and viewing some pictures. Participants are then asked to provide a blood sample, which will allow us to investigate your physical health. Participation takes approximately 1 hour, and you will be reimbursed \$25 for your time.

If you would like to participate in this study, or you would like further information, please contact **Elise Kalokerinos** at e.kalokerinos@uq.edu.au or 0466 800 641 or 07 3346 7281

Grandparents Needed for Parenting Study

UQ researchers are on the lookout for grandparents who want to fine tune their parenting skills to take part in a new program. Grandparent Triple P is a nine-week group program that runs at the University of Queensland's St Lucia campus. Early sessions will focus on refreshing parenting strategies with the emphasis placed on working with parents to form a positive parenting team.

The latter part of the program will be conducted by telephone to help grandparents develop these techniques further. To participate in Grandparent Triple P you need to provide at least 12 hours of care per week to a grandchild who is aged between two to nine years. There is no cost to take part.

More information is available at <https://experiment.psy.uq.edu.au/grandparents/>. To register your interest or find out more contact the Project Coordinator **James Kirby** on (07) 3365 6207 or j.kirby@psy.uq.edu.au.



Get Involved in UQ Ageing Research

Reactions to Feared Objects



Researchers in the School of Psychology at the University of Queensland are running a study now investigating the responses of mentally healthy men and women aged 60 and over to common feared objects such as spiders.

Participants will complete some questionnaires and perform some reaction tasks on a computer while their physiology measures such as EMG, skin conductance and respiratory rate are taken. The entire experiment takes 2 hrs to complete.

What we can offer:

- Free parking at the psychology clinic car park
- Free tea and snacks on the day of testing
- A tip sheet of memory strategies to assist you with your daily life

For more information on the project, contact **Shuyang Chen** at shu.chen@uqconnect.edu.au or mobile 0413 426 791.

Family History of Cardiovascular Disease?

The Cardiovascular Imaging Research Centre of UQ (CIRCUS) is looking for people with a family history of early cardiovascular disease to take part in research.

We are looking for men and women between 40 and 60 years of age who have a sibling or parent who was diagnosed with cardiovascular disease before 60yrs.

We offer a carotid artery scan to all participants and a randomisation to either usual care or a risk management program to eligible participants.

Participants must be willing to undergo a short nurse-managed imaging test, a lifestyle management program (including taking cholesterol lowering medications where indicated), blood tests and a questionnaire. Travel to the Princess Alexandra Hospital will also be required.

To learn more please contact Julie Holiday on (07) 3240 6146 or 0466136978.

Alternatively you can email j.holiday@uq.edu.au

Attitudes towards older adults

Attitudes have been shown to effect memory, emotional health, physical functioning , diet and exercise. The difference between having a positive attitude, as opposed to a negative attitude, is significant!

We need your help to better understand the attitudes of older adults towards themselves and the ageing process. By assisting in this study you will help develop an Australian specific measure that will advance research with Australian populations and Australian older adults.

For more information please contact **Matthew Taylor** at attitudes.to.ageing@gmail.com



Hallucinations in Those with Blindness: The Charles Bonnet Syndrome

We assume that those who have developed blindness as a result of such conditions as macular degeneration, cataracts or glaucoma see little in the affected parts of their visual fields. However, this isn't necessarily the case. Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS) is a condition in which individuals with acquired blindness also suffer from frequent visual hallucinations, which are often quite complex, e.g. faces and geometric patterns.

We are inviting people over 70 with good vision (with or without glasses) to be tested at the Queensland Brain Institute, (UQ's St Lucia campus). Participants will be fitted with an EEG cap containing 64 sensors, which, when placed in contact with the scalp, will allow us to record the brain's responses to visual stimuli. The actual task involves identifying a green or red coloured "T" from a series of T's and L's of different colours and orientations. Half the time it will be very easy to identify the letter, whilst the other half it will be a little harder, and will require more focused attention.



There are no side effects in this non-invasive procedure. The cap needs to be placed firmly on the scalp, but we will endeavour to make it as comfortable as possible. It takes about 20-30 min to set the EEG up, with the tasks themselves taking approximately 45min. Gel is used to allow a good contact between the sensors and scalp, so facilities for washing hair are located on site. Taxi or parking costs will be reimbursed.

If you are interested in participating in this research, please contact **Michael Dwyer** michael.dwyer@uqconnect.edu.au

Mapping the Brain Mechanisms of Naming Treatment Post-Stroke

The aim of this research is to find out what areas of the brain are used when people who have had a stroke process language, and what areas of the brain are influenced by different types of naming therapy. Patterns of brain activity in healthy adults will be compared to that in people who have had a stroke.

We are seeking adults over 40 years of age who are right handed, have English as a primary language, no history of neurological disease, mental illness, head trauma, alcoholism, cerebral tumour or abscess, and have no metals present in the body which are not safe in an MRI scanner.

Participation in the research will involve one brainwave recording (EEG), as well as one brain scan (MRI) while you do some language tasks such as name objects or pressing a button in response to words. You will receive \$30 as a reimbursement for your time and travel. Participation in this project is expected to take between 4-6hrs over 3-4 weeks.

Contact Sophia van Hees, to find out more details about the study on **(07)3346 6110** or **0422 135518** or s.vanhees@uq.edu.au



Interested in Neck Pain?

Women and men 65 years and older with and without neck pain are required for a study on the neck's effects on balance, eye and head movement control.

If any of your family members or friends would be interested please contact the Neck Research Unit and leave a message (phone: 33654568).

A member of the research group will then contact you. Alternatively you can email j.treleaven@uq.edu.au.

Volunteers needed to test a new Interactive Radio that helps seniors to connect with friends and family members.

A PhD project at the University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus, Brisbane, is seeking adults 50 years of age or over who lives alone at home to volunteer to be the users of a new interactive radio called "Sonic Interaction Radio". This radio helps people who are living independently to stay connected with friends and family members.

This study will require the researcher to install the radio and its components in the participants' home. Participants are required to keep a diary to reflect on their experience of using the radio. The result from the study will help improve the radio design.

For more information, please email
Hanif Baharin
abaharin@itee.uq.edu.au
or call 0401 876 500.



For additional information or to be added to the AMI mailing list and Listserve, please contact us via email at ami@uq.edu.au.

Alternatively you may contact Dr Nancy Pachana at School of Psychology,
The University of Queensland, ST LUCIA QLD 4072 or
Tel. 07-3365-6832



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