

Ageing Mind Initiative Newsletter

www.uq.edu.au/ami



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

Welcome to the Ageing Mind Initiative Newsletter

The Ageing Mind Initiative has been in full swing over the past few months. Thanks must be extended to all students and staff at The University of Queensland who have been producing such high standards of research in the field of ageing. Thanks must also be extended to all the community participants for their ongoing involvement and support with studies on issues related to older adults.

Some of the research projects have been running this year include but are not exclusive to:

- Neuropsychiatric Symptoms in Alzheimer's Disease
- Synaptic Dysfunction in Alzheimer's Disease
- Caregiver Burden in Alzheimer's Disease
- Home-based Music Intervention Study
- Horticultural Therapy in Aged Care
- Clinical Drug Trials for Alzheimer's Disease

In addition to all of the research happening at UQ, members of the AMI network have been organising a range of conferences, symposiums and workshops (pg 5) that cover topics as varied as positive ageing to longitudinal research development. These events have in most cases been produced with collaboration from external organisations, contributing to the constant expanding of the AMI network.

Between the redevelopment of the AMI website, visiting international collaborators and travelling to international conferences, it has been a busy year for those at AMI. From those of us at AMI, I hope you enjoy this months Newsletter!

"Old Age and Treachery Will Overcome Youth and Skill"
~ Greek Proverb

Updates on AMI Projects and Research

AMI Website Facelift

The AMI website has recently undergone some renovations (www.uq.edu.au/ami). The development, prompted by AMI Coordinator Assoc Prof Nancy Pachana, aims to provide an accessible source of information on all ageing related topics being conducted by AMI.

"We wanted the Ami website to reflect the constant advancements in ageing research at UQ and make that information accessible to the public" Pachana said. "There are so many exciting developments happening in ageing research but the information can be difficult to locate if you don't know where to look."

The AMI website will provide a hub where people can

become informed about current research projects, upcoming events and conferences and work opportunities.

A new feature of the AMI website is the archiving of the AMI National Listserve. Past Listserve stories, news articles videos and images can now be downloaded off the AMI Webpage and are sorted alphabetically, according to date and topic. There is now no reason to panic if you accidentally delete your listserve emails!

Some other features of the website that are worth investigating are inspiring stories (archived in the listserve), motivating quotes on ageing and an "academic spotlight" that highlights the work of AMI researchers and collaborators.

If you would like to sign join the AMI listserve, send an email to ami@uq.edu.au

New Release APA Fact Sheets!

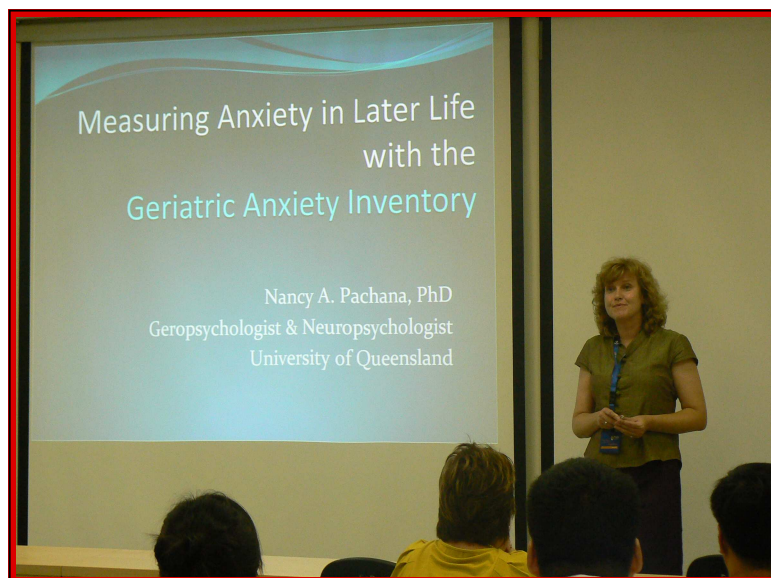
The American Psychological Association has produced two new fact sheets that are freely available to the public. One is on **Memory & Ageing**, the other on **Stress & Anxiety**.

To view these fact sheets visit: <http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/publications.html#FactSheets>

Geriatric Anxiety Inventory goes to Singapore

Since the publication of the Geriatric Anxiety Inventory (GAI) in 2008, the GAI has been making its way slowly across the globe. In early 2009, Dr Pachana travelled to Portugal to meet and plan future research with colleagues concerning the GAI (story covered in the Summer 2009 Newsletter).

On 15th June 2009, Dr Pachana again set off across the globe to give a talk on the development of the Geriatric Anxiety Inventory at National University of Singapore (pictured). The talk was part of the regular TRENDS series (Topics in Research and Education for Nursing Development in Singapore). Professor Desley Hegney who has recently taken up an appointment in the Nursing School at NUS, graciously hosted her during her visit and now acts as a AMI international collaborator on a number of projects.



Updates from Members of the AMI Network

Research Project Spotlight: Home- based Music Intervention Study



A research project headed by Dr Felicity Baker from the School of Music is currently being conducted and is seeking recruits.

The project focuses on home-based music intervention for couples where one partner has dementia.

A music therapist demonstrates and educates spousal caregivers in using music purposefully and effectively to enhance spousal intimacy and create opportunities for shared meaningful experiences with their partner.

The focus of the project is on evaluating the effects on spousal anxiety, depression, burden, and satisfaction with caregiving. The project is specifically interested in working with couples from cultural and language diverse backgrounds.

Couples in Melbourne, Sydney, Darwin, Brisbane or Gold Coast regions interested in participating in this project should contact Felicity on 07 336 53740 or email f.baker1@uq.edu.au

Better Care for Dementia Patients

Written by: **uniqld** (reprinted with Permission)

With Australia's ageing population, diseases like dementia are on the rise. According to Associate Professor Pachana, deciding which if any aspects of their financial affairs a person with dementia or suspected dementia can responsibly manage is a difficult process for health and legal professionals as well as for guardianship boards and tribunals.

Associate Professor Nancy Pachana from UQ's School of Psychology has received \$547,250 from the NHMRC Dementia Research Grants Program to help the Office of the Adult Guardian (OAG) determine financial capacity in people with dementia, particularly where there are allegations of fiscal abuse.

Associate Professor Pachana's research aims to trial an improved means of assessing older adults who are the subject of investigation by the OAG.

"We will test a methodology for assessing the capacity of individuals to manage their own financial affairs where dementia is an issue," she said.

Associate Professor Pachana said that while most of the research will be conducted in SE Qld, an important component of the project is its extension to rural and regional areas throughout Queensland. "This is particularly important as specialist advice to the OAG is often harder to access in less populated areas in the State."

The project team is comprised of Assoc Prof Pachana, Prof Jill Wilson and Assoc Prof Cheryl Tilse from UQ's School of Social Work and Human Services, and Assoc Prof Gerard Byrne from UQ's School of Medicine.



Assoc Prof Nancy Pachana (pictured above)



Dr Bob Knight lectures in Brisbane



Tues 4th August 2009
Emma Poulsen

Squeezed in between his hectic international schedule, Professor Bob Knight from University of Southern California was kind enough to spare an hour with the Ageing Mind Initiative to discuss his current work in ageing research and reflections about working in the field.

Growing up in a three generation family himself, Prof Knight has always been exposed to and interested in the many stages of the lifespan. Combined with exciting research opportunities in the field and a supportive faculty, his interest in the field was sparked and soon enough, a career was born.

Prof Knight is now the Merle H. Bensinger Professor of Gerontology and Professor of Psychology at the Andrus Gerontology Center. While Prof Knight 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 and has brought him to The University of Queensland (UQ).

Currently Prof Knight, in conjunction with Assoc Prof Nancy Pachana and Professor Ottmar Lipp from the School of Psychology are conducting a new and exciting research project at UQ. The project explores how age differences impact on the way emotion affects thinking in different populations.

"The study compares results of healthy populations of young and older individuals in order to better understand the differences in the way anxiety affects attention and emotional reactions of these two groups" Prof Knight explained. "We also investigate the effects of anxiety disorders, more specifically phobias to objects like spiders, and how responses are affected when these individuals are exposed to emotionally arousing stimuli."

This new research will provide valuable insight into the

emotional functioning of older adults and how it impacts their responses to stressful situations.

When asked about what motivates him to conduct his research with ageing populations, Prof Knight replied "I think it's intrinsically interesting as well as being extrinsically rewarding with the professional opportunities. Working with older adults gives you flexibility to become involved in a lot of different topics which are not as available to you in research with younger populations".

"Wisdom is always a topic that is brought up when discussing the value of working with older adults yet it is such a difficult thing to define" Prof Knight comments. "One thing I have learned in working with older adults, is that you learn things that are interesting and valuable to younger adults. Older adults can really help make younger adults become better old people".

If this topic sounds interesting to you, on Thursday 13th August, 6:30-7:30pm, Prof Knight will be discussing the topic "Older and Wiser" in a public forum in room 212, Sir Llew Edwards Building (14), Campbell Road, St Lucia, UQ. All are invited to attend.

As the interview concludes Prof Knight makes a positive reflection about the journey that ageing research has taken over recent years. "One of the most exciting discoveries that has come out of the ageing research is challenging the stereotype that older adults are sad. Research has shown that they are one of the happiest cohorts from across the lifespan. It's changing perceptions such as this that have the most profound impact."

With constant advances in the field of ageing our knowledge and understanding of the ageing population is constantly growing. Ageing research is one of the most rapidly expanding research fields and with the fantastic contributions to research from individuals such as Prof Knight, there has never been a better time to grow old.





AMI Date Claimers!

The Psychology and Ageing Conference

12th- 14th November 2009

This conference is a two-day event being held at the Gold Coast from 12th- 14th November 2009. The event is supported by AMI and is the first joint conference of the APS Psychology & Ageing Interest Group (PAIG) and the Royal Australia/New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) Faculty of Psychiatry of Old Age (FPOA).

This conference presents an exciting opportunity to come together on the Gold Coast to participate in presentations with a strong clinical focus. Professional development opportunities for both psychologists and psychiatrists will be offered, but all mental health disciplines with an interest in clinical practice with older adults are invited to attend.

For more details visit their website or contact Local Conference Organising Chair, Deirdre McLaughlin:
deirdre.mclaughlin@uq.edu.au.

The Positive Ageing Journey Symposium

24th & 25th September 2009

This symposium is an innovative educational event that will offer constructive advice on how to prolong independent living, social, cognitive and functional wellbeing into later life. The symposium will be held in Brisbane with a pre-event evening cocktail party on the 24th September and a full-day program on the 25th September 2009.

AMI coordinators Nancy Pachana and Gerard Byrne have been working with ARC/NHMRC Research Network in Ageing Well in order to produce this conference for baby boomers, older adults and care givers for the older adult. Presented by community, clinical and academic experts, session topics will range from continued social interaction to active lifestyles and financial management to sexual health. In addition to descriptive presentations, a celebrity chef and celebrity gardener will be present on the day to assist with demonstration.

For more information please contact Tim Henwood on ph 3720 5303 or t.henwood@uq.edu.au



Visit www.uq.edu.au/ami/index.html?page=113519 for more event details

Seeking Participants for an Osteoarthritis Study

Osteoarthritis (OA) is an extremely common condition among older Australians. It is rated as the leading cause of disability in older people, with estimated costs to the Australian economy of more than \$24 billion a year in medical care.

A trial of an innovative non-pharmacologically-based intervention to assist with pain and coping in osteoarthritis is underway in the School of Psychology at the University of Queensland.

We are looking for subjects aged 65 and over, with a diagnosis of osteoarthritis, who are willing to participate in this 8 week trial at the University.

Interested parties can contact Dr. Natasha Koloski on 0407-126-897 for details about the study and how it could benefit you!

Seeking Participants for Driving Study

Are you a driver aged 65 or older?

Drivers over the age of 65 years are needed for research examining the relationship between thinking and planning and video based driver training.

Research has shown that beginner drivers benefit from some types of video based driver training. As adults over the age of 65 typically have extensive driving history, it is of interest to see which aspects of these programs are also useful for older adults.

Participation in this research involves three sessions over 4 months, conducted conveniently in your own home. Each session includes 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.

If you are interested in participating please contact Emmaline Falconer, School of Psychology at The University of Queensland on **Ph:** 0410 906 191 or **Email:** e.falconer@uq.edu.au

IMPORTANT! if you have previously participated in research at UQ which involved watching videos of traffic scenes then you are not eligible.

For additional information, please contact:

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