The University Of Queensland
AUSTRALIA

Ageing Mind Initiative

Issue 30 December 2016 Newsletter
www.uq.edu.au/ami

Page

Coinciding with the 30th edition of the AMI Newsletter, it gives us great pleasure to announce the launch of our new website at www.ami.group.uq.edu.au! Our old website will now redirect to this new site and we hope you enjoy its sleek new features and easier navigation.

From humble beginnings, AMI started as a simple idea amongst passionate ageing advocates, Nancy Pachana and Gerard Byrne. Now, it is a thriving online community of inspired researchers and generous community dwelling adults who are willing to dedicate their time to ageing-related research projects.

As yet another year roles around, it gives me such joy and pride to see how this project has evolved. I would like to thank everyone for their ongoing involvement. I wish you all a merry festive season and I hope the new year brings you great joy and happiness.

Ageing Mind Initiative

ISSUE QUOTE:

"Showing gratitude for one another is one of the simplest yet most powerful things humans can do for each other" ~ Randy Pausch

A Dutch Approach to Aged Care

Article by Emma Poulsen

Having spent the past year living in the Netherlands, I have been impressed with many of their creative and novel approaches to aged care, particularly in the area of Dementia.

The village of Hogeway sits in the small town of Wheesp, just outside of Amsterdam. It is a classic example of this innovation. With 152 residents who all have severe cases of Dementia, the village is roughly the size of 10 football fields.

For all intents and purposes, Hogeway resembles a real town. I has a quaint town square, garden, and post office. The houses are modelled to resemble homes from the 1950s, 1970s, and 2000s to create a familiar and homey feel for the residents. There are no stark hospital lights, or facility uniforms. It appears just like a normal Dutch town but with a few significant differences.

The main difference however is the elaborate security system designed to unobtrusively monitor its residents and the care staff dressed casually as civilians. In fact, 250 full- and part-time geriatric nurses and specialists spend their days disguised in all manner of roles e.g., postal clerks and gardeners. All of this is designed to offer the residents a more natural form of care while still ensuring the residents safety.

This is a stark contrast to available aged care facilities in Australia who in general, appear to have a much more hospitalised approach to aged care.

Another creative approach to aged care is the offering of free rent to students in exchange for them spending time with the other residents. This merging of generations seems to benefit all involved. Students receive affordable housing and the elderly tenants receive vibrant social stimulation. Interestingly both parties report forming lasting friendships.

The Residential and Care Center Humanitas is one such facility that offers this scheme. It is a long-term care facility in the riverside town of Deventer in the eastern part of the Netherlands. In exchange for 30 hours of volunteer work per month, students are able to stay in vacant rooms there free of charge. Often the students teach their older flatmates new skills such as how to use social media, skype and sending emails. The residents share stories of their life and a wealth of life experience.

Both these approaches seem to highlight the ways in which aged care facilities can more closely resemble a normal home environment. Hopefully Australia can be inspired by the models being used internationally to improve the way we deliver care to our citizens.

Event Update: Book Launch

Join Nancy A. Pachana for the launch of **Ageing: a Very Short Introduction.**

Ageing is an activity we are familiar with from an early age. In our younger years upcoming birthdays are anticipated with an excitement that somewhat diminishes as the years progress. As we grow older we are bombarded with advice on ways to overcome, thwart, resist, and, on the rare occasion, embrace, one's ageing. Have all human beings from the various historical epochs and cultures viewed aging with this same ambivalence?

In this Very Short Introduction Nancy A. Pachana discusses the lifelong dynamic changes in biological, psychological, and social functioning involved in ageing. Increased lifespans in the developed and the developing world have created an urgent need to find ways to enhance our functioning and well-being in the later decades of life, and this need is reflected in policies and action plans addressing our ageing populations from the World Health Organization and the United Nations. Looking to the future, Pachana considers advancements in the provision for our ageing populations, including revolutionary models of nursing home care such as Green House nursing homes in the USA and Small Group Living homes in the Netherlands.

She shows that understanding the process of ageing is not only important for individuals, but also for societies and nations, if the full potential of those entering later life is to be realised.

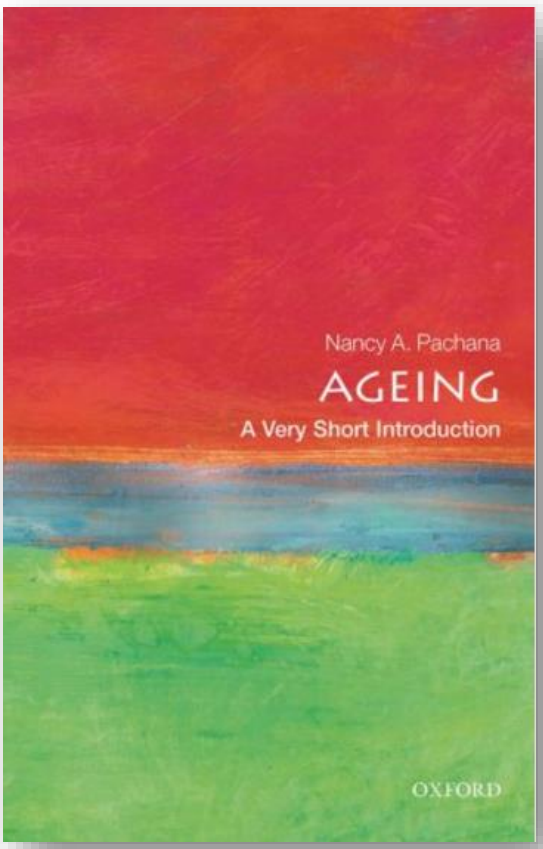
Professor Nancy A. Pachana is the Director, Clinical Psychology Training Programs at the University of Queensland's School of Psychology and Co-Director of the Ageing Mind Initiative.

EVENT DETAILS

Thursday 16 February 2017
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
In store at Avid Reader Bookshop

193 Boundary St, West End Qld 4101

Register until 16 February 2017 6:00 at http://avidreader.com.au/events/nancy-a-pachana-ageing-very-short-introduction

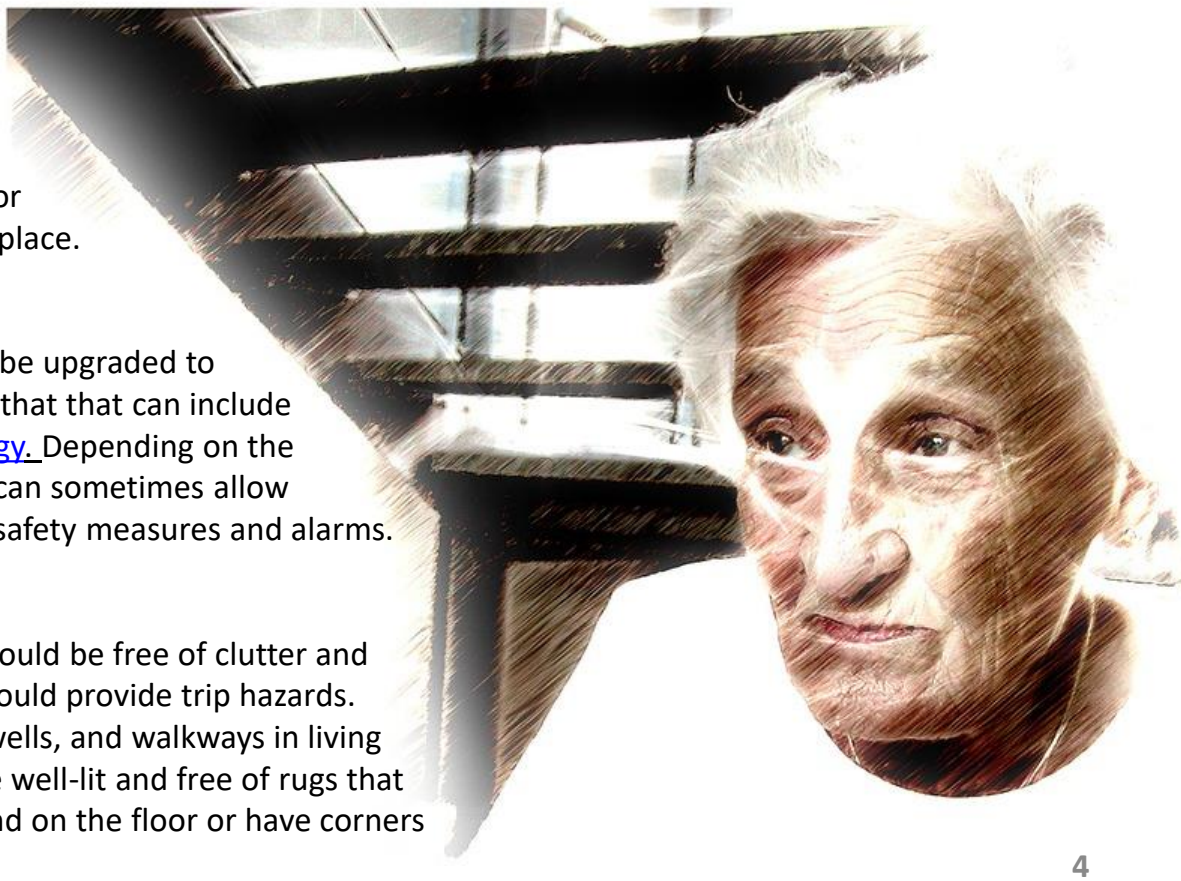


The Best Ways for Seniors to Age in Place

Many seniors retire and continue to live active, healthy lifestyles and are able to remain in their pre-retirement environment. More specifically, people can stay at home longer rather than transitioning into an assisted living environment. However, aging in place--or continuing to live at home well after retirement—can often mean making changes to the home in order to take a senior individual's safety into consideration.

Even when a senior is healthy and feels good, the body undergoes ageing-related changes that may benefit from some adjustments to the home environment. Often by making these changes, an individual can stay at home for longer within the comfort of their familiar environment.

Here are a few tips for how to improve the safety of a senior who is aging in place.



Appliances
Appliances can be upgraded to a newer model that that can include smart technology. Depending on the appliance, this can sometimes allow the user to set safety measures and alarms.

Walkways
All walkways should be free of clutter and furniture that could provide trip hazards. Hallways, stairwells, and walkways in living areas should be well-lit and free of rugs that could slip around on the floor or have corners that turn up. One of the biggest risks for older adults is falling, so keeping walkways clear is a simple way to reduce that risk.

Bathrooms
Handrails, non-slip rubber mats on the floor and in the bathtub, and/or a shower seat are excellent ways to improve the safety of the bathroom environment. Counter corners can be rounded and the toilets should be tall enough to be used by a senior who may have trouble bending down or getting up to a standing position. It might also be helpful to have a phone installed in the bathroom that can be reached from a position on the floor in case of a fall.

The Best Ways for Seniors to Age in Place

Organization
Closets, pantries, and cupboards need to be well-organized so that the individual can access their belongings easily. Lazy susans are wonderful tools for deep cabinets in the kitchen or under the bathroom sink that can make reaching hard to get items much easier. Shelving should be anchored to a stud-bearing wall, as should heavy dressers or television stands to prevent items from tipping over if unexpectedly grabbed.

Colours
For some people, changes in vision can be a significant problem. In this instance, it can be helpful to have contrasting colors on the edges of counters, on/off switches, stairs, and appliances to make them easier to locate.

Alarms
Fire and carbon monoxide alarms should be installed in every room and should have bright lights as well as sound, for seniors who have issues with hearing.

There are many other tips, tricks and items out there that can assist individuals to improve their home environment and make it safer. These are just a few ideas to get you thinking.

Article by Lisa Marshall

Photo via Pixabay by StevePB

Research Update: Can Brain Stimulation Improve the Ability to Learn?

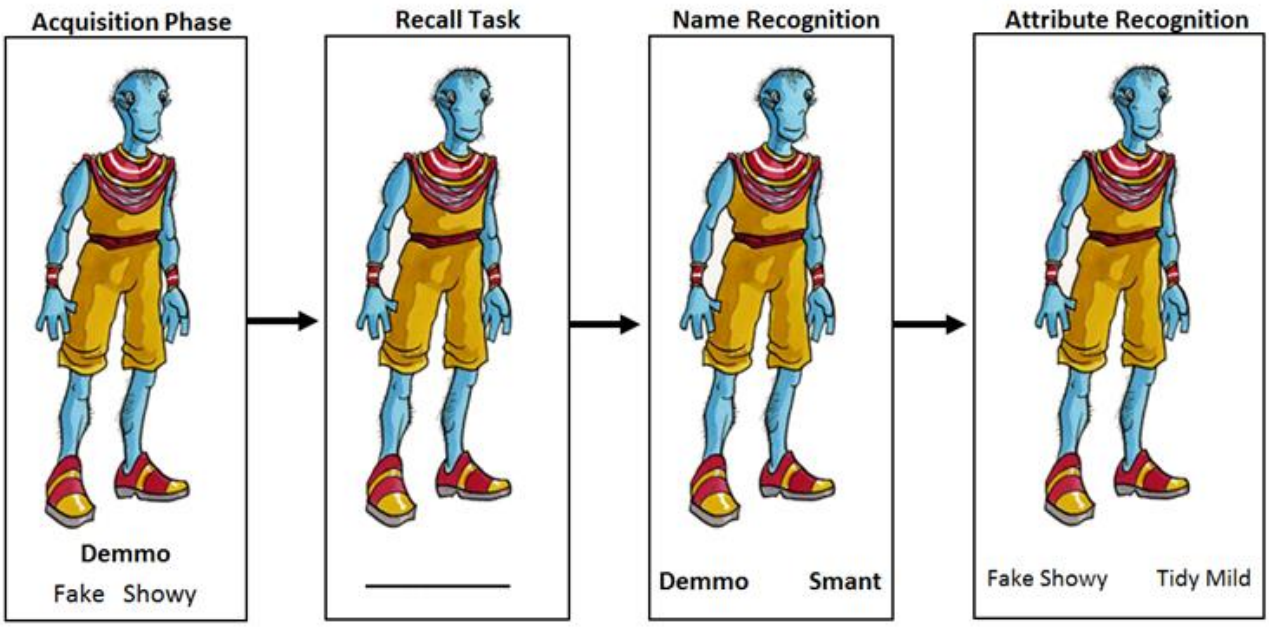
The UQCCR recently ran a study investigating whether non-invasive brain stimulation can improve the ability to learn and maintain new vocabulary in healthy older individuals.

52 participants trained over five days to learn a proper name, and two descriptive words for "space alien" pictures, while receiving active brain stimulation or a placebo version. They were tested daily before and after each session, and again 24 hours, 1 week, and 3 months later.

Participants in both the active stimulation and the control groups successfully acquired the novel vocabulary (63% correct on day five). The stimulation group did not do better overall than the control group. However, in a subgroup of lower-scoring participants, who had more difficulty remembering the vocabulary, those who received active stimulation retain the vocabulary over the three months significantly better than those who did not.

These results suggest that brain stimulation over five days may be a useful tool to enhance learning ability in those who struggle with learning and memory as they age. It may also be an option for treating patients in the earliest stages of Alzheimer's and other dementias. These promising results are due to be presented to an international conference on brain stimulation in the coming year, and subsequently submitted to a peer reviewed research journal.

Our thanks again go to those who participated in this research. Volunteers are crucial to the work we do and with your help we hope we can provide real benefits to the health and quality of life of our ageing population. If you have not participated in our research and have an interest in doing so, please see the accompanying advertisement for details of our current research.



Research Update: Adjustment to Retirement Study

You may recall being asked to participate in a survey about the factors that influence people's quality of life after retirement. This study was conducted by Polly Fong, a student at The University of Queensland, under the supervision of Prof. Catherine Haslam in the School of Psychology. We know that up to a third of people do not adjust well to retirement and this is despite the many efforts they make to engage in financial planning. What this suggests is that there is more to retirement adjustment than financial planning, and the present study aimed to identify these other factors.

We want to take this opportunity to thank those who took part in the study and to share with you some of the key findings:

Key Findings

1. Social connections with groups of others (e.g., family, voluntary, activity, and interest groups) were more important than finances in predicting quality of life in retirement. What was particularly interesting here, was that it was the social groups people gained in retirement that was key.

2.Gaining one group is good, but gaining more is even better for your quality of life in retirement.

3. Of these new groups, feeling a sense of belonging with other retirees (i.e., developing a retiree identity) and seeing this as positive was a particularly effective in improving quality of life in retirement. In fact, it was better than all the factors that we usually associate with retirement adjustment i.e., financial status, physical health, financial pre-planning, and marital status

So the message from these findings is that we need to seek out opportunities to join new groups and to embrace our retiree identity to ensure a good quality of life in retirement. These results highlight just how important social planning is, in addition to financial, to make the most of our transition into retirement and beyond.

This study is part of an ongoing program of study into the social factors that influence retirement adjustment (http://www.groups4health.com/survey).

If you are interested in knowing more or being part of further investigations please get in touch with the study lead Prof. Catherine Haslam (c.haslam@uq.edu.au) and the project co-ordinator Dr Ben Lam (ben.lam@uq.edu.au)

Current Ageing Research

The following projects are looking for participants. Make a difference in Ageing Research today. Sign up now!

Sleep and Neuroplasticity

Amongst its many functions, sleep plays a critical role in consolidating the memories and skill that were acquired during the day. When we learn a new skill or store a memory, certain physiological processes, known collectively as ***neural plasticity***, take place that retain the acquired information. During a particular phase of sleep known as slow wave sleep (SWS), large, highly synchronous bursts of low-frequency brain activity known as ***slow-wave oscillations*** are critical in consolidating these plastic changes. Consolidation is important in promoting long-term storage of information.

Despite the undeniably important role that sleep plays in promoting neural plasticity, there are many amongst us who find it difficult to sleep properly, and thus, to gain benefit from a good night's sleep. One demographic particularly prone to poor sleep is the elderly, and poor sleep in this group has recently been causally linked to memory dysfunction. Impairments in memory manifest because of impaired plasticity mechanisms.

Recently, non-invasive brain simulation, transcranial discrete current stimulation (tDCS), has been used to induce these oscillations in the awake human brain, and has consequently enhanced memory. The project described uses tDCS to harness the beneficial effects of sleep in promoting plasticity in the brain in young and elderly people.

The Queensland Brain Institute (QBI) are currently running studies to investigate these processes further.

For more information, please contact:
Claire Bradley
claire.bradley@uq.edu.au

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Delaying The Onset of Alzheimer's Disease

Researchers at The University of Queensland and the Royal Brisbane Hospital are seeking volunteers to take part in an international study looking at the effectiveness of a new drug in delaying the onset of Alzheimer's disease.

The investigational drug aims to block an enzyme involved in the formation of amyloid plaques in the brain, one of the hallmark pathological features of Alzheimer's disease. The aim of the study is to slow down or prevent the formation of these plaques before they cause any of the memory problems usually seen in Alzheimer's disease.

The study will be conducted over 5 years with participants being asked to take the study medication once a day over that period of time. There is a one in three chance that they will be allocated to receive placebo (a look-alike tablet with no active ingredient), a one in 3 chance they will receive a low dose of the study drug, and a one in three chance they will receive a higher dose of the study drug. They will need to attend the Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital approximately 35 times over the duration of the study and will undergo rigorous safety monitoring throughout the study with frequent blood tests, ECGs, and MRIs. They will have their memory tested on a 6-monthly basis and undergo 3 PET scans of their brains. Travel and parking costs will be reimbursed.

To be eligible for this study, participants must be at least 60 years of age, in good health, and showing no signs of memory loss. They must have someone who knows them well who is able to accompany them to the hospital, at least annually, to answer questions about how they're going. For people between the ages of 60 and 65, they must also have a first degree relative who has been diagnosed with dementia. Potential participants will be tested for the presence of amyloid plaques through a PET scan of their brain. If the test is positive, they will then be asked to participate in the study.

If you would like further information about this study, please contact either Liz Arnold or Lisa Mackenzie on (07) 3365 5147 or email adtrials@uq.edu.au

A neuron with amyloid-plaques. Credit: Juan Gärtner/ Fotolia

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Understanding sideways balance in older adults with hip osteoarthritis

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED!

Balance problems in older people can be made worse by the presence of disease, such as joints wearing out. However, what we don't clearly understand is how common diseases affecting the hips and trunk impair sideways balance. This study will look at how hip osteoarthritis affects people's ability to respond to a sudden loss of balance in a sideways direction.

What is involved?

You would be required to come to the Gait Laboratory within the Physiotherapy Department, Princess Alexandra Hospital, for up to 2 hours. We will measure your balance, how your body segments move, and how your leg and trunk muscles work, when you are standing, stepping, walking, and in response to a sudden pull at your waist

Who can participate?

To be eligible to participate in this important research study you **MUST:**

- **be 65 years old or over**
- **have been diagnosed with osteoarthritis in one or both your hips**

Unfortunately the study isn't suitable if you have:

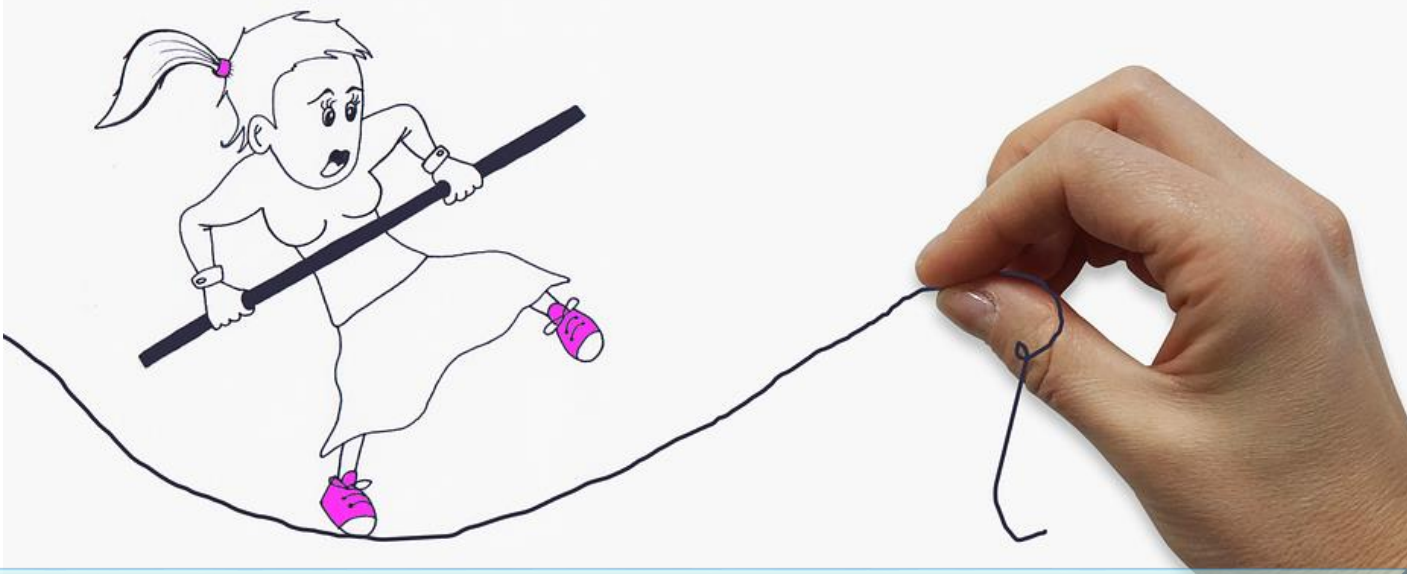
- Symptomatic ankle or knee osteoarthritis
- Low back or lower limb pain or disease that effects your daily activities
- Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, or you have had a stroke
- Sensory problems (e.g. visual, inner ear disorders, peripheral neuropathy) that affect your balance or walking
- Dementia/Alzheimer's Disease

What will you receive?

We can provide complimentary day parking. Refreshments will also be provided.

Interested?

Please contact Alexandra Picorelli
Tel: 0412 933 810
Email: alexandra.picorelli@uqconnect.edu.au



RESEARCH PROJECTS

Tennis Elbow Study

Do you have pain on the outside of your elbow? Is it getting worse or not improving?

We are seeking volunteers with tennis elbow to participate in a study investigating differences in sensation between people with and without tennis elbow. The information obtained will contribute to our knowledge of some of the physiological processes occurring in tendon pain, and will help us to develop more effective treatments.

What does the study involve?
Completing an online survey: We would like you to answer some simple questions about your health and elbow pain to ascertain that you do not have any medical or health related matters that exclude you from the study. This will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

2 sessions of testing: The sessions will be 2 hours and 1 hour long and will be held at the University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus. The sessions will involve:

- **A physical assessment** to confirm that you do have tennis elbow
- **A battery of non-invasive sensory measurements**: Sensory measurements test either sensation (i.e. first perception of a stimulus, such as light pressure, stroking, pin prick) or pain thresholds (i.e., the first onset of pain with a stimulus, such as pressure, heat or cold).
- **Series of questionnaires**

Parking is provided as well as a $20 gift card reimbursement.

For further information please email Viana Vuvan at v.vuvan@uq.edu.au

To register your interest for the study, please go to
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TennisElbow

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Older adults (50-plus) chosen for Griffith University's Leisure Activities Survey

Are you "chronologically gifted" and living in Queensland?

The global ageing population and the increasing number of baby-boomers who are now entering retirement raise the need for leisure activities that contribute to the health and wellbeing of ageing societies.

Teresa is a 60 year-old doctoral candidate at Griffith University. She and her supervisory team are conducting research that is designed to investigate the leisure choices of older Australian adults and evaluate the benefits and challenges of such participation.

"We are conducting this research so that we can better understand the motivations for, and obstacles to, the leisure choices of older adults. We also want to use the knowledge we develop in this research to develop resources and materials that can facilitate community participation by older adults in the future. We hope that this research will enable more adults to actively engage in leisure activities that help to benefit an ageing Australian society."

Your participation in this online survey may help to make future community leisure activities more accessible for older adults.

The survey takes about 15 minutes and can be accessed through the following link:

https://prodsurvey.rcs.griffith.edu.au/LeisureActivities

Please contact Teresa for further information.
Teresa.Kunaeva@griffithuni.edu.au
Griffith University Ref No: 2015/874

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Social Perception Across the Adult Lifespan

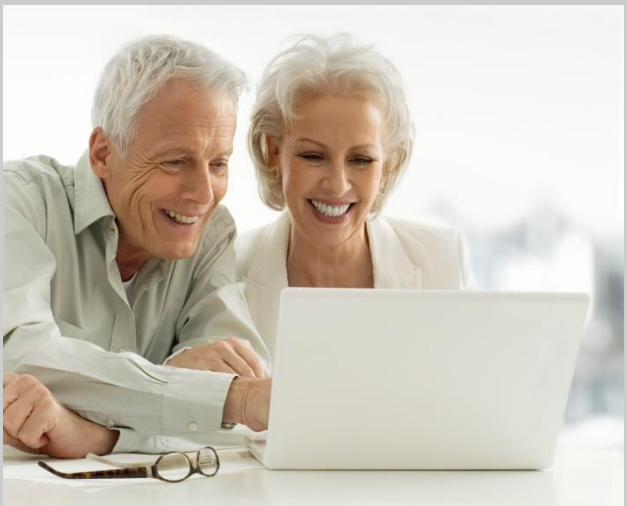
Email: sarah.grainger@uqconnect.edu.au,
Mobile: 0423734605

We are currently looking for people 65 years + (males in particular) to participate in a two-part research study at UQ in St Lucia. Participation primarily involves watching videos depicting different social scenarios and making judgements.

Each session will take approximately 2.5 – 3 hours to complete and we are compensating people $30 per session. If required, we can also arrange complimentary car parking.

If you would like any further information, please send me an email or give me a call. We plan to run sessions up until March 2017 so can happily arrange a time after the festive period if it is more suitable for you. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Maintaining Mental Abilities as We Age



If you're aged 55 and over, you may be eligible to participate in a University of Queensland brain science study.

Researchers are trialling a unique, non-invasive brain stimulation technique to improve attention and speed and accuracy in decision making.

Time: **2 sessions** of about **90min**
Location: UQ Centre for Clinical Research, **Herston**
Reimbursement: **$50**

For more information or to participate, email **uq.brainstim2@gmail.com**

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Cognitive impairment in Parkinson's disease: fMRI study

We are conducting a research study examining cognitive impairment in Parkinson's disease. The main purpose of this study is to identify markers for early detection of mild cognitive impairment in Parkinson's disease and underlying brain mechanisms.

We are seeking for healthy individuals, aged 50 – 85 years, with English as a first language, fMRI eligible and no history of neurological disease, mental illness or brain injury.

We will assess each participant with comprehensive interviews and scanning of brain images using fMRI while participant perform specific tasks.

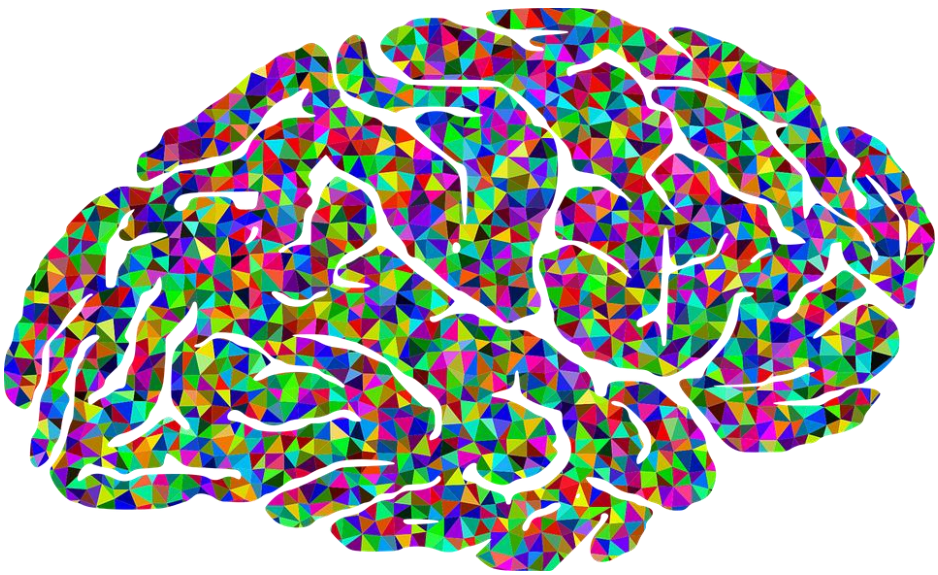
If you wish to participate, you will be invited to

- complete a questionnaire mailed to you
- complete an interview (2 to 3 hrs) conducted at the University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research, Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital
- complete fMRI session where you lie on the magnetic imaging scanner which will measure the blood flow of the brain.

This fMRI session will be conducted at the brand-new imaging facility located at University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research, Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital.

You will receive $50 per visit for your time and travel for your appointment.

If you are interested in taking part in this study or if you want to know more about this study,



Please contact:
Julia Yang
Ph (07) 3346 5582 or
j.yang1@uq.edu.au

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