

# Ageing Mind Initiative

Issue 38 February Newsletter  
[www.uq.edu.au/ami](http://www.uq.edu.au/ami)



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It is time to celebrate a DECADE of AMI Newsletters. For ten years our small team has been dedicated to promoting ageing-related research for free, across Australia. From humble beginnings in a quiet office at The University of Queensland, we have since opened our doors to any project subject to ethical approval across the Nation. Our database of community dwelling older adults (the 50Plus registry) has over 1000 members who receive our Newsletter quarterly.

Prof Pachana reflects on the past ten year and says “AMI has been a wonderful community right from the start. The community has been brilliant in supporting the research efforts of the next generation of researchers keen to understand and improve the lives of older people. My colleague Gerard Byrne and I have been please to help mentor students and also try to give back to the wider community”

CELEBRATORY EVENT AHEAD! Stay tuned – we will have a small event coming up in the future to celebrate our 10 years – all will be invited! We will keep you posted. MANY THANKS for all of your support over the last decade!

Always remember you can share the newsletter widely, and we are more than happy to add folks to our AMI list. We want to reach as broad a slice of the older community as we can.

Email any questions to [ami@uq.edu.au](mailto:ami@uq.edu.au).



## ISSUE QUOTE:

“Something which we think is impossible now is not impossible in another decade” ~ Constance Baker Motley

## Prof Pachana engages with the community on topics related to ageing

Often there can be a communication divide between the academic communities where so many research discoveries are made, and the general public. Findings are often published in peer reviewed journals, in technical language and you often have to pay to access them. The question is then how can we best make this information accessible, easy to read and free to our local communities?

Here at AMI we strongly believe in communicating and engaging with the public. That is why we release AMI every quarter to bring you research updates and promote upcoming studies that still need participants.

Professor Nancy Pachana has been busy this past month promoting ageing-related research and engaging with the community on a broad range of important topics. She's been interviewed for articles, appeared on the radio and has been active in the Society of Clinical Geropsychology. We decided to collect these recent activities and provide you with the links so you can view them for yourself.

Prof Pachana was recently interviewed by RN Drive on the topic of "How old is too old to drive?". She challenged the myth that older drivers are inherently less safe and argued that elderly people are often more skilled at driving than their younger counterparts. This is a very interesting topic. Listen to the full interview [here](#).

Professor Nancy Pachana is also the current President of the Society of Clinical Geropsychology, part of the American Psychological Association. She recently made public her statement that her presidential initiative for 2019 is to bring a greater international presence to the organisation. If you are interested in this organisation, please visit their website:

<http://www.geropsychology.org/>

Prof Pachana also appeared in Lateral Mag discussing Age-old stereotypes. The media often portrays ageing as a time of isolation and loneliness but new research shows that this perception is inaccurate. Learn more about challenging these stereotypes and myths in this poignant piece. Read the full article [here](#), edited by Sumudu Narayana and Ellen Rykers.



## Research Updates

### AMI research update – Experience of receiving home support services

In 2017 AMI advertised a research project run by Dr Tammy Aplin on older adult's experiences of home support services/home care. The interviews for this study have now been completed and we wanted to take the opportunity to provide a summary of the findings.

The interviews with 15 older adults spoke to the complexity and challenges of My Aged Care and the new funding model for people receiving home care, for example assistance with cleaning, self-care and shopping. While there were many challenges, there was also many people who had positive experiences.

Two main themes emerged from the analysis, these were, "what makes it work in the home" and "when choice isn't choice".

**What makes it work in the home:** This theme describes what it is that the service providers and home care workers do that leads to positive and negative experiences of home care. The participants described a range of staff characteristics that lead to a positive experience. These included being efficient, professional, and respecting the values and routines of how the person kept and ran their home. Other valued qualities included being willing to help where needed and being empathetic and flexible.

What was consistently reported by participants as being important for their service provider to provide, was consistency in staff. Having

regular workers in the home and not constantly having new people was highly valued by older adults. Furthermore, communication about and consistency in the timing of services was valued. A common negative experience of participants was a lack of consistency in staff and frequently changing or uncertainly in timing of services. Participants described often being unsure of when or who was coming. This impacted participants day to day lives as they were unable to plan their day and do the things they wanted as they were waiting for a shower or their cleaner to arrive.

**When choice isn't choice:** One of the strongest findings of the study was that people valued having choice. Everyone appreciated and was glad to have the ability to choose their service provider. However there were strong feelings of frustration with a lack of control over the services. This included, when, how and what types of services were offered. For example policies such as no moving of furniture, regular changing staff, and only entering the home when the person is present, was very frustrating for participants and limited choice and control over the help they wanted in their homes.



## Research Updates

### Continued...

Another difficulty frequently experienced was difficulty in communicating with service providers. Many people commented that they often spoke to different staff and had to ring multiple times to ensure what they wanted happened.

Policy and My Aged Care also influenced peoples experience of home care. A number of people reported that they were receiving inadequate services, that they had been assessed at a higher package level than they were actually receiving. Others raised concerns about My Aged Care and the new system. That is could be confusing, lengthy and a frustrating process. Many people also reported a lack of information about what was available to them, how to know what to do, and how to make the best decision for them.

**Older adults had recommendations** as to how their experience could be improved. These included:

- More quality assurance mechanisms – many people discussed that they had had little or no follow-up to them to assess the quality of the services they were receiving.
- More information
- more information on the transparency of costs from their service provider
- the need for an advisor role, someone to help older adults navigate the system and decide on their service provider
- Clear information from providers about what is and isn't provided from them
- Need for continuity in staff

These preliminary findings were presented at the Cepar International Conference of Long-term Care Directors and Administrators in August 2018. The presentation was well received and picked up by the Community Care Review Magazine - the story can be found in this link

<https://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2018/08/03/choice-under-cdc-not-translating-into-practice-study-finds/>





## Research Updates

### Quality of Life and Wellbeing in Australian Adults Aged 50 Years and Above

Research completed by Sofia Robleda-Gomez for her thesis entitled “Quality of Life and Wellbeing in Australian Adults Aged 50 Years and Above” shares important insights as we race towards an ageing population.

Dr Robleda-Gomez states “although it is very important to understand psychological problems and illness, it is just as vital to develop our comprehension of wellbeing and quality of life (QOL) in order to complement the largely disease-based focus of scientific research. However, this type of research is lacking particularly in older adults. Because the population of the world is ageing, and the proportion of the population aged 60 and over is increasing at an unparalleled rate, it is vital that more research be conducted in this population”.

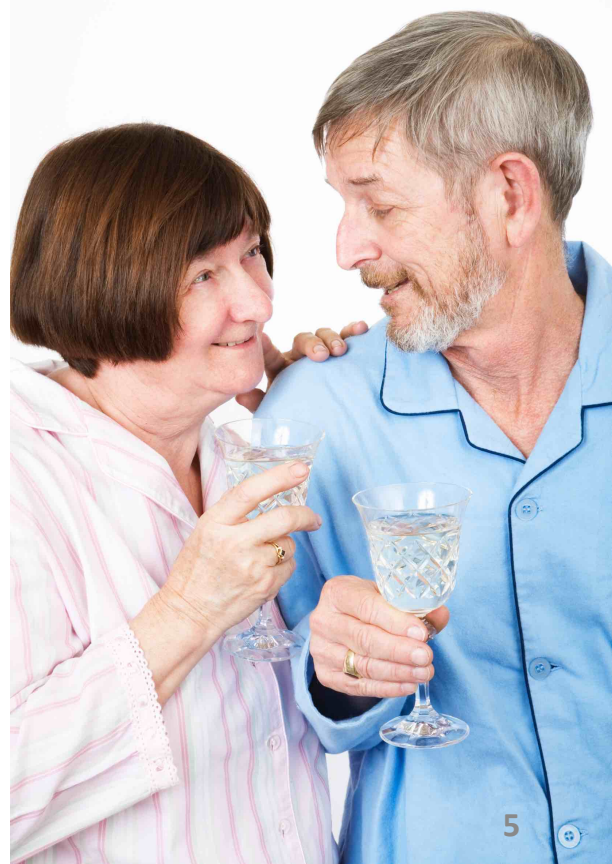
Dr Robleda-Gomez completed a pilot study with 50 participants to determine the practicality of administration of the Schedule for the Evaluation of Individual Quality of Life—direct weighting ([SEIQOL-DW]; Hickey et al., 1996), in a sample of Australian adults aged 50 years and over (Age range = 54-89 years, 58% female). This individualised self-rating of QOL had not been tested in Australia before.

It was concluded that the SEIQOL-DW was a feasible instrument to utilise for measuring QOL in Australian older adults living in the

community. The main study of this thesis aimed to explore a set of holistic factors that could be related to QOL and psychological wellbeing (PWB), and to increase our knowledge and explore QOL and PWB in different age groups of Australian older adults.

One hundred and fifty one participants were included in the analyses (Age range 50-95 years, 68.9% female).

The study aimed to investigate several holistic factors that could be related to QOL and PWB, as well as to expand our knowledge and explore QOL and PWB in different age groups of Australian older adults. Cognitive factors including optimism, attitudes to ageing and perceptions of ageing were studied. It was found that several of these variables were important predictors of QOL and especially PWB.



## Research Updates

### Continued...

Greater optimism and positive attitudes and perceptions of ageing likely influenced PWB and QOL by preserving motivation, and perseverance, as well as searching for positive coping strategies in the face of diverse challenges. Different age patterns were found for the Positive and Negative Consequences of ageing, as well as the Control Negative perceptions of ageing. Factors in the psychosocial domains, including psychological distress, life events, and social support, were Quality of Life and Wellbeing in Australian Older Adults 140 also explored.

Life events influenced QOL mostly via psychological distress. Older adults with higher levels of psychological distress had lower levels of QOL and PWB. Limited support was found for a relationship between social support and QOL and PWB. Additionally, physical and environmental aspects including SRH, SES, and living arrangements were explored. SRH had only a weak relationship with QOL, compared to PWB. Participants with higher SRH also scored higher on PWB. SES was measured via education level and expectations about ability to manage on available income in the next 12 months.

Participants with higher income management expectancies also had higher QOL and PWB. Education did not differ between QOL and PWB levels, although it was moderately related to Personal Growth. Living arrangements had a stronger relationship with QOL, with participants scoring higher on QOL being more

likely to live alone. However, the effect of living arrangements on QOL became non-significant after age was included. Age as a continuous variable was a significant predictor of QOL. There were also age group differences found in the QOL domains elicited by participants.

Additionally, there was an overall trend to preferring more social domains with increasing age. It was thought that the process of selecting relevant QOL domains, focus' older adults' perspectives on what is most vital to them. The selection of these specific QOL domains means that older adults invest in what is truly important to them, leading to greater satisfaction. This then translates to higher ratings in their chosen domains, which leads to higher scores on the QOL Index.

These findings have important implications as they help to advance the literature on predictors and factors related to QOL and PWB in different age groups of older adults, and provide new insights into different holistic ways of enriching these important positive health variables in Australian older adults. Because health is not merely the absence of disease, it is vital that a clearer understanding of the factors that lead to a sense of psychological, social, and physical wellbeing as well as a high QOL be identified.



# Current Ageing Research

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

## CarFreeMe driving cessation program and clinical trials for people living with dementia

If you or someone you know needs support, we are currently recruiting for participants (people living with dementia and their care partners/family member) to take part in our 'living with dementia and driving study', supported by the NHMRC. Brief details of the program are outlined below. Our current sites include South East Queensland (in person, or by telehealth delivery); and the ACT and Southern NSW (by telehealth). We aim to expand our trials to other areas of Queensland and Northern NSW; and by telehealth to other parts of Australia, so if you are interested please get in touch.

CarFreeMe is an education and support program that uses effective, research-based, client-centered methods to support people living with dementia. Our program supports the emotional and practical challenges that are faced by people living with dementia who must inevitably give up driving. Our trials are open to people living with dementia, aged 60 years + and their care partner/support person. Participants **may be still driving** and planning to stop in future **or have stopped driving** and are **needing support** to cope with the life changes, to find alternative means of transportation, and remain engaged in the

community. The intervention includes seven modules which are usually delivered across seven weeks (approximately 1-1.5 hours each module) to participants in their own homes, by a registered health professional who is trained in CarFreeMe. Participants may elect to take part in one or more group sessions [depending upon preference and location]. There is no cost to participants. As part of the study, participants will take part in three assessments; pre- and post-intervention, and follow-up. Control group participants will receive the intervention after the wait period.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Project Coordinator: Donna Rooney, email: [donna.rooney@uq.edu.au](mailto:donna.rooney@uq.edu.au), telephone: 07 3365 6392; or CI Dr Theresa Scott email: [theresa.scott@uq.edu.au](mailto:theresa.scott@uq.edu.au) telephone: 07 3443 2546.






## RESEARCH PROJECTS



ARC CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR  
THE DYNAMICS OF LANGUAGE



Are you living with  
dementia?  
Or caring for  
someone who is?

### Building technology

We are looking  
to work together to  
design and build  
personalised  
technology to help  
with everyday lives.

Participation would involve working with a team including health and technology people to help make technology personalised to your needs. It would involve up to 10 visits to your home to try out and give feedback about the technology.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions about the study - please contact Dr Jacki Liddle at the Florence Project at the University of Queensland on:

email: [j.liddle@uq.edu.au](mailto:j.liddle@uq.edu.au)  
phone: 07 3365 9765



## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Testing a Memory Aid

Want to find ways to improve your memory for things in the future?

*Find out if you can join this study!*

The University of Queensland is looking for **healthy** people who would like to take part in a study using memory aids for prospective memory (remembering to do things in the future).

Research shows that as we get older, our memory naturally declines. Prospective memory is very important in everyday functioning and we need to find new strategies to help with this. This study is looking at the effect of a memory aid to help older adults to remember to do tasks in the future.

You may be **eligible** if you:

- Are aged 60-85
- Have a mobile phone

The study will include:

- Screening of your memory and thinking ability
- 10-day training for the use of a memory aid, using your
- mobile phone!
- A **memory tip sheet** at the end of the study

This study is **free** to take part in. In addition, all participants will be offered a **\$10 Coles/Myer gift voucher** at the end of the study as a thank you for your time.

For more information and to find out if you can take part, please contact Miss Patricia Macdonald at The University of Queensland on **Phone 0421 995 244** or on email at **p.macdonald@uq.net.au**

### Are you living with younger onset dementia or supporting someone with younger onset dementia? Stopped Driving or Planning to Stop?

Researchers at The University of Queensland are investigating ways to support people living with younger onset dementia and their care partners.

We would love to hear from you about your experiences and needs related to driving and stopping driving .

Participation involves a 30-40 minute interview, in-person, or by telephone or Skype, at a time convenient to you. For more information or to participate please contact Dr Theresa Scott:

Email: [theresa.scott@uq.edu.au](mailto:theresa.scott@uq.edu.au)  
Phone: 07 3443 2546



## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Participate in short term memory training project

Have you ever wondered what is really happening with your memory as you age? Or if your memory is actually failing you? Maybe you are forgetting more often where you parked your car or put your keys. If yes, then this study will be of interest to you. I am studying the potential of a new short term memory training program in answering those questions, as well as teaching some basic memory skills that you can use in everyday life. The aim of this study is to help you feel more secure about your memory and to be able to use it better. This study runs over five mornings (or afternoons) over a two-month period. We are currently

looking for older adults aged 60+ who can commit the time to improve their memory. Having a smartphone is good but not essential. At this point of time we are only looking for older adults that have not been diagnosed with neurological disorder such as Dementia and Alzheimer's and have unimpaired/corrected vision and hearing. The training will be held at the University of Queensland and a certificate of completion will be provided once the training is completed.

Please contact me on 0425 207 506 or email me at [h.jensenfielding@uq.edu.au](mailto:h.jensenfielding@uq.edu.au) for more information or if you would like to sign up.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

### Sustainability of Physical Activity in Older Adults

**You are invited to participate in a study aimed at understanding the maintenance of physical activity in older adults.**

In this we hope to explore whether the way people engage in physical activity (e.g., alone and/or in groups) and see themselves (e.g., as active) play a role in how much people engage in this activity. In order to participate in this research, you just need to be **over the age of 60 years**.

This study involves an online survey that **takes between 30-45 minutes to complete**. You will be asked to answer questions related to your physical health, physical activity levels and how you engaged

in any activity (i.e., alone and/or in a group) and the extent to which you identified as physically active and older.

To participate in the study, go to: [https://uqpsych.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8jMKPyVefhOw5sF](https://uqpsych.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8jMKPyVefhOw5sF)

More information: Valerie Wang | [yunxivalerie.wang@uq.net.au](mailto:yunxivalerie.wang@uq.net.au)



## RESEARCH PROJECTS



### SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR RESEARCH

#### Participate in an interview on RAoger and FM system devices

##### Adults with hearing impairment

Own a Roger or FM system device  
(even if currently not in use)

##### Family members/

##### Key communication partners

Have regular interaction with an adult  
with hearing impairment who uses a  
Roger or FM system device

Receive a \$25 Coles/Myer gift card by sharing  
your experience of Roger or FM system devices  
All participants must be aged 18+

More information: please contact Bonnie Cheng  
([bonnie.cheng@uq.edu.au](mailto:bonnie.cheng@uq.edu.au))

### Does your family member have dementia? Do they live in a nursing home? Are you also concerned about their hearing?

UQ researchers are seeking volunteers with dementia and hearing concerns and a family member to pilot and reflect on a decision-making tool about treating hearing loss.

The study involves attending a standard audiology appointment and using a decision-making tool to discuss hearing treatment options during the appointment. You will also be asked to complete pre-appointment and post-appointment questionnaires and complete a brief interview to reflect on the decision-making tool and hearing treatment choice.



**For more information:** Email: [anthea.bott@uq.net.au](mailto:anthea.bott@uq.net.au)  
Phone: 0402 131 518 (Anthea)

## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Interested in Boosting Your Memory Capacity?

If you're between **55-80 years old**, then a University of Queensland clinical trial might be just the thing for you.

Researchers are trialling a unique, non-invasive brain stimulation technique in improving memory in language learning for older adults.

Studies indicate that stimulation (tDCS) can boost neuroplasticity, a key mechanism in regulating learning, memory and recovery of brain function.

**Duration:** Two 90-minute sessions measuring various aspects of cognitive function before and after stimulation, with \$50 reimbursement.

**Location:** UQ Centre for Clinical Research, **Herston**. Parking can be covered if driving in.

**Requirements:**

Right-handed

Native English speaker

No current psychiatric or neurological conditions (or psychotropic drugs)

**For more information or to participate in this exciting area of research, please contact:** [jasmine.huang@uq.edu.au](mailto:jasmine.huang@uq.edu.au) | **0405798394**





## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### **Would you like to pilot a decision-making tool when discussing hearing rehabilitation options with adults with dementia and hearing loss living in aged care?**

UQ researchers are seeking audiologists to assist pilot a decision-making tool to use when discussing hearing rehabilitation options with adults with dementia and hearing loss living in aged care and a family caregiver.

The study involves using the decision-aid to discuss hearing treatment options with adults with dementia and hearing loss living in aged care and a family caregiver. You will be asked to complete a one-off reflection on your perspective of the decision-making tool after you have used it.

**For more information:** Email: [anthea.bott@uq.net.au](mailto:anthea.bott@uq.net.au) Phone: 0402 131 518 (Anthea)



Create change



## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Share your experiences of home

We are seeking volunteers to participate in a study to further develop an evaluation tool for home modification practice.

#### What is the purpose of this study?

Home modifications are a common service for older adults and people with a disability and have the potential to enhance independence, safety and well-being. Occupational therapists who provide home modifications however have few tools to guide their practice. The Dimensions of Home Measure provides a tool for therapists to understand their client's experience of home and the impact of the modifications on their life. The development of this tool will provide therapists and home modification services with information to improve their practice and put the client's needs and experience first.

#### Who can participate?

We are seeking people over 18 years who have some support (paid or unpaid) in their home or who use equipment or have had home modifications in their home.

This would include having help with cleaning, shopping, showering, using any equipment (wheelchair, walker, hoist) or having

modifications such as grab rails, a ramp or lift installed.

#### What does the study involve?

Completing some background questions and the Dimensions of Home Measure online, over the phone or via mail, depending on your preference. It is expected this will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

#### What will you receive?

To thank you for your time, researchers will offer you the opportunity to go into a prize draw for one of five \$100 gift vouchers.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

If you would like to participate online simply follow the link

(<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DOHMstudy>) and complete the questionnaire.

If you would like to know more about the study or complete the questionnaire over the phone or have it mailed to you **please contact Dr Tammy Aplin**, email: [t.aplin1@uq.edu.au](mailto:t.aplin1@uq.edu.au) or phone: 07 3365 2649



## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Attitudes towards driving and non-driving and alternative transport

If you have a driver's licence, are currently driving or have ever driven, and can spare 20 minutes for this important research we would love to hear from you.

We are exploring attitudes toward driving and stopping driving, alternative modes of transport, and community engagement.

Participation involves filling in an online questionnaire. The questionnaire is anonymous and should take up to 20-30 minutes to complete. Please click on the link below, if you wish to participate:

[https://uqpsych.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_5bh3mFiib9QL7pj](https://uqpsych.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5bh3mFiib9QL7pj)

Thank you for your consideration of our study. Your participation in the study is very appreciated.

If you are interested in knowing more about the study please contact Dr Theresa Scott at the University of Queensland's School of Psychology

Email: [theresa.scott@uq.edu.au](mailto:theresa.scott@uq.edu.au). Phone: 07 3443 2546





## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Brain training project for older adults

#### What the study is about:

We are conducting research on the effect of a new brain-training program on cognitive function in older adults, and seek healthy participants aged 60-75. The program has already been tested on young adults with promising results, but has yet to be replicated in older adults. This is the largest study of its kind, and will help us to answer important questions about the utility of brain-training methods for enhancing cognitive function in older adults.

#### What's involved:

The study involves a total of 8 sessions over the course of three months, held at the University of Queensland St Lucia Campus. Sessions vary in duration from 1-4 hours, and

are paid at \$20 per hour (approximately \$300 payment in total). This includes five sessions of cognitive training, and four cognitive assessments at various time points.

This study has been approved by the University of Queensland Human Research Ethics Committee, and all *data provided will be anonymous*. You are free to withdraw from the experiment at any time without prejudice.

#### Eligibility:

To be eligible, participants must have normal or corrected to normal vision, and normal hearing. You must also not be taking psychiatric or neurological medication.

#### Contact us:

If you are interested in participating, please contact the Lead Researcher Kristina Horne by email at [k.horne@uq.edu.au](mailto:k.horne@uq.edu.au) or phone on 0411 641 079 to find out more.

