

Ageing Mind Initiative Issue 39, May 2019 Newsletter

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Welcome to the May edition of the AMI Newsletter. It is a busy time of year for research and there are a range of research projects. We would like to draw your attention to a new study (page 8) asking you to tell us about your daily life so that we can better understand people's daily activities, social networks and sense of loneliness.

We also have some interesting feature articles on Older Adults engaging in Climate Change (page 2) and Improving access for psychological services for older adults in aged care (page 3). There is a guest article on talking medical histories your physician and it's importance in preventative health care (page 4).

May is a big month in Australian politics with an upcoming election. At AMI we encourage everyone to research the policies of all the political parties and have your say with your vote.

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.



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA



ISSUE QUOTE:

"Enjoy music to stay young at heart." ~ Irving Fields (aged 100)





Older Adults Engage in Climate Change

Climate change has been a hot topic in the media and on the political landscape of late, particularly in the lead up to the election. It will affect the environment in a number of ways that will place increased stress on everyone, but disproportionately on the most vulnerable populations, including the young, the old, those with chronic illness, and the poor.

It is important to note that elderly are particularly vulnerable due to decreased mobility resulting from age, changes in physiology, and more restricted access to resources. All of these factors may limit adaptive capacity should a crisis emerge.

At present, baby boomers are bringing higher levels of consumption to middle and later life and currently have the highest carbon footprint of any other age group (Haq et al., 2007; 2009).

The Stockholm Environment Institute released a report in 2010 presenting the case for better engagement of older people on climate change and environmental issues.

The report states that "Climate change and an ageing population will have wide ranging socio-economic and environmental impacts. Public engagement is therefore critical to implementing policies to tackle climate change and to address the needs of an ageing population".

The report summarises research indicating that factors such as income, education, social support network and access to social services will determine how well an individual will cope with a climate-related threat (Haq et al., 2008).

If climate change is something you wish to be more engaged in, there are a number of different ways to make a positive impact including:

- Become a climate voter. Research policies and vote for the political party prioritizing this issue
- Talk to your local MP, write an email or give them a call. This is an issue all political parties are engaging with
- Investigate renewable energy. You can select green power on your power bill or put solar panels on your roof
- Green up your commute by walking, ridesharing, cycling or using public transport.
- Use energy wisely with energy saving light bulbs, unplug electrics, washing in cold water, turning off lights.
- Eat less meat and waste less food
- Divest from fossil fuels by taking to industry.
 Talk to your university, superfund, workplace or bank about making sure they are not investing in fossil fuels.

There are many helpful resources out there to provide more support and information e.g., The Australian Conservation Foundation https://www.acf.org.au/







The urgent need for improved access to psychological services in aged care

A recent review by the National Ageing Research Institute on behalf of Beyondblue has highlighted that older Australians in residential aged care facilities are five times more likely than those living independently to experience mental health issues.

While approximately 10 percent of older Australians have depression or anxiety, it is estimated that more than 50 percent of those living in aged care facilities have either or both disorders, and just under 50 percent enter residential with a pre-existing depressive condition.

In Australia, you have the right to consult with your General Practitioner about obtaining a Mental Health Care Plan through the Better Access Initiative, which provides 10 subsidised sessions with a psychologist through Medicare so that mental health support in the community is more accessible.

Unfortunately, this service is not available to individuals living in aged care facilities. This means that an individual receiving a high level home care package in their own home could access the program, but a someone in an aged care facility on the same street, could not.

The reason for this discrepancy is the assumption that aged care providers will step in to fund access. Unfortunately, this is rarely done. It also places resident in a vulnerable position where they are not in control of the process, and are reliant on the facility they reside in to provide the service.

A 2016 study completed by Stargatt and

colleagues (including AMI co-founder Prof Pachana) found that:

- access to psychological services in aged care was poor.
- Psychologists were employed at a rate only one third that of other providers of mental health services.
- Residents were rarely referred to psychologists or to psychological treatments.

In this same study, the most important barriers to access were the low availability of psychologists specialising in treating older adults, lack of government funding for such access, and limited staff training in detecting depression and anxiety.

The study concluded that services could be improved by:

- developing a workforce of clinical psychologists specialising in older clients
- improving funding mechanisms for residents to access services
- addressing staff knowledge about depression and anxiety

Ensuring that older adults have adequate access to mental health care support is crucial.

The Australian Psychological Society, which represents Australia's psychologists, continues to call on the government to allow residents to access the Better Access initiative. To date, this has not yet been actioned.

If you are experiencing depression or anxiety, support is available by calling beyondblue on 1300 22 4636.





Talking Medical Histories with your Physician

As we age, taking the time to watch our health carefully becomes increasingly important. Scheduling doctors appointments and screenings may fall by the wayside of a busy life, but staying up to date is an important part of cancer prevention. Everyone should make an annual appointment with a primary care doctor to test blood pressure, cholesterol, and additional symptoms. During these appointments, it's crucial to discuss family history, occupational history, and personal health history.

Family health history doesn't always speak to our future health, but it can give you clues on which symptoms or potential cancers to be wary of. Breast cancer is a notoriously genetic cancer that has a better prognosis in its early stages. Those who have a family history of breast cancer are at a higher risk of developing it, and should be screened more regularly. Whether through mammograms, routine screenings, or self checks, monitoring your health could make all the difference. Ovarian cancer in women and prostate cancer in men are other genetic cancers that should be closely

watched.

Discussing occupational history with your doctor could also lead to insights about your health. The environments that we spend the most time in during the day can affect our wellbeing, and many occupations that work with toxic materials and carcinogens can cause issues later in life. The most common occupational cancer is mesothelioma, originating from exposure to asbestos on mining sites and construction zones.

Unfortunately, symptoms of mesothelioma emerge later in life, so communicating occupational history with your doctor can give them insight into symptoms that appear to be ambiguous.

The environments we spend the most time in can greatly affect our wellness, and medical professionals will be aware of what occupations are most at risk. Keeping an open and up to date dialogue with you physician is fundamental in preventing disease in the future.

Article by Molly McGuane







Book Review

Book Summary

A Dog Takes a Bite Out of Alzheimer's is the new title of the book formerly known as Connections: Animal Assisted Therapy for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD).

The book is both a touching story about the author's own journey with a parent suffering dementia/Alzheimer's, and a practical guide for healthcare professionals, caregivers, Animal Assisted Therapy teams, families, friends, etc. who are dedicated to helping those with ADRD reconnect with the world.

The book provides a better understanding of what to expect and how to interact with those affected by ADRD through the author's own personal experiences with her mom, her dad (her mom's full time care giver), and Rufus, her therapy team partner of 11 years. Rufus and his therapy dog friends demonstrate how some ordinary activities can make an extraordinary difference in the lives of people affected by ADRD.

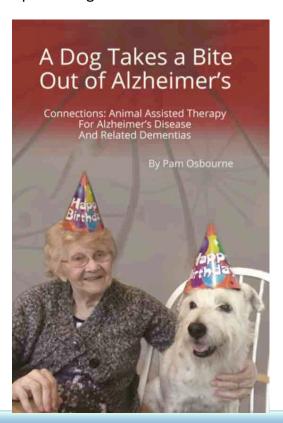
Included are over 40 Animal Assisted Therapy activities (including 150 colour photos) that the author and her therapy dog Rufus used to help her mom and others affected by Alzheimer's Dis- ease. The book is designed to show how Animal Assisted Therapy can help those with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) connect, focus and function in ways that might otherwise seem impossible

Author Bio

Pam Osbourne received her Bachelor's Degree from Northern Illinois University and her teaching credentials from Iowa Wesleyan College before beginning a long career of over 30 years of writing and editing in the publishing business. She edited and published Animal Assisted Therapy Activities to Motivate and Inspire in 2009. Pam and her therapy dog, Rufus have over 12 years of experience including schools, hospitals, libraries and senior/memory care communities. When Pam and Rufus aren't delighting residents, patients or students, she can be found at the gym where she deadlifts more than her body weight. Long marathon runs have given her plenty of time to strategize treatment options and ways to make the connections that are so critical to successful Animal Assisted Therapy interventions.

Formats/Pricing Soft cover—\$19.95, Ebook—\$9.95

Retail Outlets: amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, pyowpublishing.webs.com







Research Updates

AMI research update – helping adults living with dementia and hearing loss treat their hearing loss.

In the February AMI newsletter, UQ researchers were seeking volunteers with dementia and hearing concerns and a family member to pilot and reflect on an information booklet aimed to help people choose options for treating hearing loss. This research was completed by Anthea Bott, for her thesis that is exploring 'Optimising Hearing Services for Adults living with Dementia and Hearing Loss in Aged Care Homes.' Earlier exploratory research conducted as part of Ms Bott's thesis identified that individuals living with dementia and caregivers wanted to know all options available for treating hearing loss. Thus, the information booklet was developed to address this need.

It is important to consider the hearing ability of people with dementia, because most care instructions and conversations are spoken. When adults living with dementia also have a hearing loss, communication interactions and caregiving is more difficult. Within aged care, over 90% of adults living with dementia will also have a hearing loss. But, fewer than 20% will treat it. One reason for this is that caregivers perceive that hearing aids are more problematic than beneficial. Alternative options are available for treating hearing loss, such as assistive listening devices – devices that help you hear in a specific situation, such as when watching TV - as well as hearingrelated communication programs. The information booklet, HEARMyChoice®, listed these options and three groups of participants

used the booklet to help them decide which option they would like to try.

This pilot study found that the information booklet helped people choose an option for treating hearing loss, with most participants choosing a combination of options – such as hearing aids and communication programs. These findings are favourable for using an information booklet to help consumers choose options for treating hearing loss and also suggests that clinicians should consider providing multiple options to optimise hearing-related communication, not just hearing aids. Further research is needed to explore audiologists' experiences of using the information booklet in their day-to-day clinical practice.



Figure 1 Image of an assistive listening device - Bellman Maxi-Pro -





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 and their care partner/support person. Participants may be still drivingand 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, telephone: 07 3365 6392; or CI Dr Theresa Scott email: theresa.scott@uq.edu.au telephone: 07 3443 2546.







Tell us about your daily life

UQ researchers are looking for volunteers living independently for a study of older people's daily activities, their social networks, and their sense of loneliness.

What's involved?

The study involves completing a questionnaire, which is expected to take about 30 minutes. It also includes documenting your activities over a 24-hour period in a time-use diary.

After completion, some participants will be invited back for an in-depth study of their activities over two weeks, recorded using a time-use diary and an actigraphy watch (similar to a Fitbit). At this stage, you will also be asked for an interview in which you can

describe your experiences of daily life.

What will you receive?

To thank you for your time, all participants will be given the opportunity to go into a prize draw for a \$200 gift card. Additionally, indepth study participants will receive a \$40 gift card.

Contact us:

For more information, please contact the Lead Researcher Dr Jack Lam by email at j.lam@uq.edu.au or phone 3346 7630.

This study is conducted by the Institute for Social Science Research and the ARC Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course













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

phone: 07 3365 9765











What do you think about connecting to people and places using technology?

A study at the University of Queensland and the University of Exeter is exploring the nature of connections through technology, with a focus on older people.

Participation would involve one recorded interview about your perspectives, experiences and thoughts about connections through technology.

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

email: j.liddle@uq.edu.au

phone: 07 3365 9765





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 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

More information: Valerie Wang | yunxivalerie.wang@uq.net.au







Do you know someone who uses a Roger hearing device?

Receive a \$25 gift card by participating in research conducted by The University of Queensland

Who can participate?

• Family members or communication partners of adults with hearing impairment who use a Roger hearing device

What does it involve?

One 30-minute interview with a researcher (in person or telephone)

How do I get involved?

Email Bonnie at bonnie.cheng@uq.edu.au



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





Sterling's Dream Study

Sterling is a boy with a dream. His dream is to find a cure for Dementia. When Sterling was 3 years old his Grandmother was admitted into a nursing home with Dementia and since then he has always wanted to find a cure. Sterling is now an Ambassador for The Common Good at The Prince Charles Hospital. He highlights that dementia has an impact on everyone, even someone so young.

There is no cure for dementia. Right now, there are more than 44 million sufferers worldwide, and that number is expected to treble by 2050. The impact this will have on individuals, their families and our health system will be devastating.

Alzheimer's Disease is the most common form of dementia, accounting for up to 70% of all dementias. In health, the brain relies on neurochemicals to send messages between nerves. One of the typical features of Alzheimer's Disease is a decline in function of these chemical signals. The nerves and chemicals most vulnerable to these changes are in the memory forming parts of the brain.

The "Sterling's Dream" Study

This study is led by Dr Eamonn Eeles, Geriatrician/Physician and Head of Research of Internal Medicine Services at TPCH. His team



includes researchers from the Australian E-Health Research Centre, CSIRO and the Queensland Brain Institute.

By using innovative imaging the team will measure the chemical signals in the memory-forming part of the brain. They hope this study will help us better understand if there are certain brain characteristics in people who don't have Alzheimer's Disease which differ in people who have early stages of the disease. This information may also assist us in understanding which patients may respond better to treatments that are used in Alzheimer's Disease and therefore help target management of this disease more effectively.

We are inviting people over 55 years of age who have Alzheimer's Disease who can have an MRI to participate.

We are also inviting people over 55 years of age who don't have Alzheimer's Disease and can have an MRI. These people will be part of our control group.

What will the participants be asked to do?

We will ask people who would like to participate to come to The Prince Charles Hospital for a clinical assessment, neuropsychology assessment and memory tests. Participants will then be asked to undergo brain imaging using state of the art technology at the Herston Imaging Research Facility. Travel costs will be met by the study. Refreshments will be provided.

How can you be invited to participate?

Phone the study Research Assistant, Anne Bucetti, Ph (07) 3139-7208.







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 10-15minutes.

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@ug.edu.au or

phone: 07 3365 2649







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 or phone on 0411 641 079 to find out more.







The Tailored Activity Program-Australia Supporting people with dementia and their carers living at home



Are you living with dementia or caring for a family member with dementia?

We would like to know what you think about a program that researchers from the University of Queensland and elsewhere are undertaking to assist people living with dementia and family /care partners who provide care for them.

It is called the Tailored Activity
ProgrammAustralia (TAP-Australia) and
involves 7-8 sessions with an Occupational
Therapist working with a person with
dementia and their family/care partner to
enhance participation in enjoyable activities in
their own home and improve their quality of
life. It shows family/care partners strategies to
communicate with people with dementia,
respond to changes in behaviour, and can
make everyday tasks a little easier.

The program is not available in Australia yet but we want to know if it might work here. We hope to provide it from late 2019.

For now, we would like to know what supports you think would be helpful and what you think about this program and whether you think it might be useful for people in your situation.

We will come to your house (or anywhere that

suits you) at a time & place that is convenient for you.

The interview will take about 40 mins. There is no cost associated with talking to us, and there is no obligation to participate.

If you are interested in participating or would like more information about the project, please email Catherine Travers or Sandra Smith at: TAPdementia@ug.edu.au

This research project is called "Implementing the Tailored Activity Program for People with dementia and their family living at home: i-TAP (Australia).It is funded by NHMRC: APP1137749. The contents of this brochure are solely the responsibility of the individual authors and do not reflect the views of NHMRC







Dementia and Technology: A Story Telling Project

Would you like to share your views on technology?

You don't need to be an expert on technology. We would like to hear from everyone, including people who don't use technology.

This project involves making short stories or videos about living with dementia and using technology.

Who can make a story? We would like to hear from people who have dementia and are living at home, care partners and families.

What can I talk about in my story? These stories are about your experiences of living at home with dementia and using technology. Do you use any technologies? What are they helpful for? If you don't use technology, what are your feelings about it?

What kinds of technology do we want to hear about? Any technology you use that helps you manage your day, like mobile phones, iPads, computers or apps. Or any other health, safety, or home technologies like medication reminders, emergency call systems, or GPS pendants or watches.

How will I make my story? We can make the stories in many different ways. Our Brisbane videographer will help you to make a short video, or you can write your views as a short story. We can offer a voucher to video participants, or discuss an arrangement that covers your costs. We will not share any personal information, including your name, address or any other details. The stories will be available to the Australian public on websites or in education resources.

How long will it take? It will involve a 1-hour interview with our researcher, and a little more time to write your story (1 page). It will take around 90 minutes with the videographer if you decide to make a short video.

Who is running this study? This study is an approved research study, conducted by LifeTec Australia and researchers at the University of Queensland. This project has received approval from UQ Human Research Ethics Committee (no. 2017001871)

Who should I contact? Contact Zoe du Cann at zoeducann@lifetec.org.au or 1300 543 383







Knowledge and perceptions of living with dementia

For this study we are very interested in community opinions, knowledge of, and attitudes toward living with a dementia. If you are aged over 18 years, and can spare 20 minutes for this important research we would love to hear from you.

Participation involves filling in an online questionnaire. Participants in this study are asked to provide responses to demographic questions and to several questions about your understandings and perceptions of living with a dementia or being close to someone living with a dementia. The

questionnaire is anonymous and should take up to 20-30 minutes to complete.

Please email theresa.scott@uq.edu.au for an updated study link to access the survey.

Thank you in advance of your time and valued opinions.

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

Phone: 07 3443 2546

Driverless vehicles have been heralded as an easy solution to older person's transport and mobility — what do you think?

Our study is exploring knowledge and attitudes towards advanced technology and autonomous vehicles. Specifically, we are exploring the level of existing knowledge of, and attitudes toward driverless vehicles. There are still a lot of unanswered questions and we are interested in your opinions of these.

This study involves filling in an online questionnaire. The questionnaire is anonymous and should take up to 20-30 minutes to complete.

Please email theresa.scott@uq.edu.au for an updated study link to access the survey.

Thank you for your consideration of our study.. If you are interested in knowing more about the study please contact Dr Theresa Scott at email: theresa.scott@uq.edu.au Phone: 07 3443 2546

