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This is indeed an unprecedented time for all of us. As the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic sweeps across the world, it is causing widespread concern and fear, all of which are natural and normal reactions to the changing and uncertain situation that everyone finds themselves in.

With the disruptive effects of COVID-19 - including social distancing, it is important that we check on the psychological health of ours and also whom we care for. Therefore, this edition of the AMI Newsletter is focused on providing information and guidance to you about the pandemic.

You will notice that there are not many research projects in this edition of AMI. Most research projects involving older adults have temporarily been put on hold due to social distancing. They should be up and running again with time.

Wishing you all health and happiness from the AMI Team.

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ISSUE QUOTE:

“As long as you live, meet wonderful people in your life; hold on to them because they are gifts.”

Patricia Morison (aged 102)

Prof Pachana wins M.Powell Lawton Award in Clinical Geropsychology

Congratulations to Professor Nancy Pachana who won the 2020 M.Powell Lawton Award in Clinical Geropsychology from the American Psychological Association's Society of Clinical Geropsychology.

This award recognises Nancy's 'considerable and sustained efforts in scholarship, publishing, and service, to promote geropsychology in general and the well-being of persons of dementia in particular.'

When the APA returns to holding conventions, Nancy will deliver the Lawton Award keynote address.

When asked to comment about receiving this prestigious award Nancy said:

"I am so thrilled to receive the M. Powell Lawton Award from the Society of Clinical Geropsychology - the professional group I have belonged to for over 25 years. It is especially meaningful coming from an organisation that has always aimed to create the best possible lives for older persons - just as Powell Lawton did in his life and work."

"This honour has underscored for me how much I owe to my mentors, who over the years have provided advice, support and who have been role models, particularly with respect to giving back to the profession, and supporting the careers of younger researchers and clinicians. I owe them all a debt of gratitude."

The Society of Clinical Geropsychology aims to foster the mental health and wellness of older adults through science, practice, education and advocacy and to advance the field of professional geropsychology. They aim to increase scientific understanding of the mental health of older adults; to promote the development of models for the delivery of psychological services to older adults, as well as other ways of enhancing the welfare and mental health of older adults; to foster collaboration and the sharing of information among clinical geropsychologists; and to increase the quality and availability of training opportunities in clinical geropsychology.



AMI Member in Spotlight

Highlighting members of our AMI Community

By Emma Poulsen

It is a Friday afternoon and I am marvelling at the ease with which Liz (Elizabeth McKenna) is simultaneously making me a cup of tea, entertaining my rambunctious two-year-old with a mechanical spider and answering interview questions about her amazing life. It is no wonder she manages such a busy schedule with such calm certainty. I'm delighted she agreed to be interviewed for our AMI Member feature.

Liz has been a member of the 50 Plus registry since it started a decade ago. In that time, she has participated in a number of different research projects. Some have been out at the University of Queensland and some at her own home. Some have involved safe driving and coordination, others cognitive testing of the brain. "It is such an interesting concept and very important" says Liz. "Over time I have moved house and had more difficulty travelling to the University, but I will do anything online if it is advertised".

Liz appears to have an insatiable curiosity about life that has plunged her into the most interesting circumstances. An only child, Liz met and married her Irish husband Patrick in London. They moved to Australia in their early twenties as "10 pound Poms" and settled in Brisbane. They bought a small shop which Liz ran while Pat worked as an accountant. They had four children. Liz's husband (her soul mate) died 24 years ago.

When the Australian Catholic University (ACU) moved to Banyo they held a community event. Liz went along with an open mind and joined the choir (a blend of student and community members). After a year she thought "I've got nothing to lose" and enrolled as a student. Over the next 10 years she chipped away at various subjects and graduated in 2013 aged 77 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree (English Literature). Liz chuckles; "Not bad for someone who never made it past junior level in England".



AMI Member in Spotlight

Highlighting members of our AMI Community

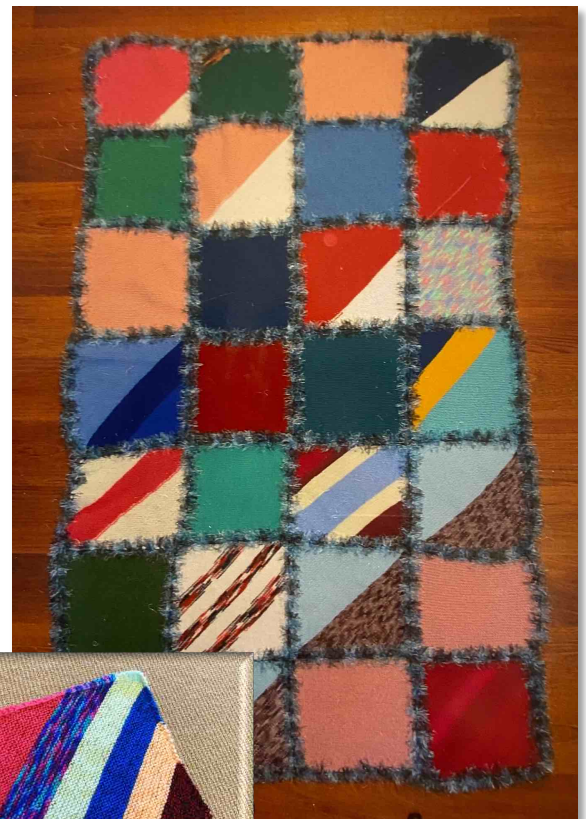
This is Liz's 18th year singing in the ACU choir, conducted by Tim Sherlock. "I hate being bored" she mused. She gives me a quick run through of her weekly commitments and I find myself scrambling to keep up. Liz has knitted blankets for the homeless for years which she drops off to a fellow volunteer when she does her weekly shift at the local Vinnies thrift shop. Her fashionable apartment has the bright colourful squares perched in corners waiting to be joined into a rug.

Liz has started a [Laughter Club](#) at her retirement village because "if you don't organise something nobody will do it for you". She attends happy hour every Friday in the Community room, attends regular fitness classes and is active in her local church. She also participates in the "[Common People Dance](#)" Project where all ages, all abilities, shapes and sizes discover the joy of dance. Another interest is the Improv (improvised acting) group. [The Brighton Wellness](#) Hub also run free daily activities that is open to all including board games, Tai Chi, health information sessions, social gatherings and arts and crafts.

When asked what her secret is to having such an active and healthy life, Liz replies: "I like to keep busy. I don't want to die of boredom. You have to be doing something and put yourself out there. Have a purpose to the day; it is the best way to make friends and help others".

On the mantle overlooking us is a large

family photo with her four children, their partners and assorted grandchildren having a spectacular water fight. There are grinning faces, soaked clothes and an immediate sense of joy bursting from the image. It is an annual Christmas tradition started many years ago. As our interview wraps up along with the now depleted attention span of my toddler, Liz shares "I've had a really truly blessed life. I had parents who loved me, a wonderful husband who loved me and now I have a great family who love me too. I couldn't ask for more". I thank Liz for her time and for opening this small window into her life.



A sample of the blankets
Liz makes for the
homeless

Free national telehealth counselling and support clinic for residential aged care communities

In Australia, nearly one quarter of a million older people live permanently in residential aged-care homes (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2015). Yet most, do not currently have access to psychological counselling and support.

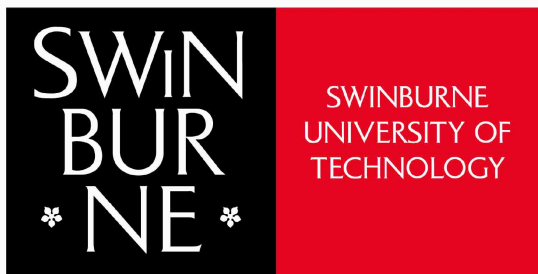
This is a desperately needed service as it is believed that approximately 10% of older Australians have depression or anxiety. However, the National Ageing Research Institute says more than 50 percent of those living in aged care facilities have either or both disorders, and just under 50 percent enter residential with a pre-existing depressive condition (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2013)

Swinburne university is launching a free national telehealth counselling and support clinic for residential aged care communities on 15 May 2020. The clinic will provide ongoing psychological treatment by phone

and video calls to aged care residents and their carers (relatives and professional staff).

The clinic is directed by Psychology Ageing Interest Group (PAIG) national committee member Professor Sunil Bhar and his colleagues. Professor Sunil Bhar is co-director of the Wellbeing Clinic for Older Adults – Swinburne University's mental health counselling clinic for older people living in residential aged care homes. He leads an active research lab focusing on the emotional wellbeing of older adults.

As a national service, the telehealth clinic will reach more than 2695 residential facilities across Australia. Clinic services are conducted by postgraduate psychology students on placement.



New Hotline for Older Australians during the COVID-19 pandemic launched

A new COVID-19 hotline will help older Australians get the critical information they need to stay healthy and safe during the pandemic, providing an accessible one-stop source for personal support, questions and up-to-date guidelines.

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia, National Seniors Australia, Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) and Dementia Australia have banded together, supported by the Commonwealth Government, to create the National COVID Older Persons Information Line. Older people and carers are encouraged to call **1800 171 866** to speak to friendly, specially trained staff from a senior's advocacy organisation.

OPAN CEO Craig Gear said the hotline will provide particular support to those accessing aged care services who are disproportionately impacted by health precautions and restrictions.

"People are scared and confused. Many are unsure what is safe what isn't. The hotline is an important part of what will need to be a big community response. We need everyone checking in and supporting older people in aged care in particular because they are vulnerable to both the virus and social isolation," said Mr Gear.

"Our message to older people is that there is no need to do this alone. There are services there if you need them. There are no stupid questions."

COTA Chief Executive Ian Yates said older Australians often don't have access to the internet and have understandable concerns and uncertainties about how to minimise their exposure while carrying out all their necessary activities.

"The government has very sensibly advised Australians over 70 to stay at home as much as

possible. This means many people have questions about what they should or shouldn't do or how they can get access to groceries, health care and other services. This hotline will provide the information they need and allow them to speak to an organisation they can trust about their concerns," Mr Yates said.

National Seniors CEO Professor John McCallum said the service provides experienced and understanding call centre staff who will be a friendly and sympathetic voice at the other end of the line.

"It's unrealistic to expect older Australians who are living alone and are told to stay home, not to suffer some sort of mental anguish, anxiety and uncertainty.

"This helpline is there to help them through what are challenging times for all of us, but especially our seniors. We're all in this together," Professor McCallum said.

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe said we encourage people living with dementia, their families and carers to call and they will be connected with our trained Dementia Australia advisors.

"We can offer strategies and support for families with concerns about a loved one in residential care. We can support carers of a loved one at home who might be struggling with isolation or changes in routine," Ms McCabe said.

"And we are here for people living with dementia to talk through their own issues and come up with solutions to support them through this period of uncertainty."

Media contact: Afsah Haque, 0410 860 435

Adopt a Grandparent!



We're pairing the lovely residents at our CHD Living homes with caring individuals in the community who want to help combat loneliness.

Would you like to get involved?

ABOUT 'ADOPT A GRANDPARENT'

We launched our 'Adopt a Grandparent' campaign to bring a sense of comfort to young people and the elderly who may not have grandparents/grandchildren of their own, with the aim of creating long-lasting intergenerational friendships.

What started as a local search, reaching out to those local to our home, soon became a global campaign, with kind and considerate individuals hailing from as far as Australia to help bring some happiness to those we care for. It's even made the news, with The Independent, The Metro and The Standard (to name but a few) sharing our story.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

All you need to do is fill in the form below and one of our team will be in touch to pair you with your new 'Grandma' or 'Grandpa'.

After that, these are some of the ways in which you can help:

- Having phone calls/video calls with your new friend
- Sending cheerful pictures/stories/poems (post or email) for them to enjoy
- Sharing stories from different generations
- Sending letters/postcards to your new friend, much like a penpal!

If you'd like to 'Adopt a Grandparent' with CHD Living, please fill out an online form at the following address:

<https://chdliving.co.uk/adopt-grandparent>



Supported by:



What support is available for Seniors?

Seniors are able to contact the Community Recovery hotline on **1800 173 349** to request assistance with food, medication and psychosocial services. Community Recovery will organise for a support agency to provide relevant assistance.

Seniors can now register for priority home grocery delivery assistance at Woolworths, Coles and some independent grocery stores who are part of the Master Grocers Association.

A number of grocery stores also offer a dedicated shopping hour in store for Seniors and people with disability.

Seniors Enquiry Line

The Seniors Enquiry Line is a statewide referral service for Queensland Seniors, families, friends and grandparents and carers. They can assist with concessions, social activities, household assistance, retirement accommodation, financial and legal matters, health, education, and transport. For more information phone **1300 135 500** or visit <https://seniorsenquiryline.com.au/>.

Elder Abuse Helpline

The Elder Abuse Helpline provides free assistance to anyone who experiences, witnesses or suspects the abuse of an older person by someone they know or trust. All calls are confidential and can remain anonymous. For more information phone **1300 651 192** or visit www.eapu.com.au/helpline.

Advice for others living with you

The rest of your household does not need to self-quarantine unless you develop symptoms and are suspected to have COVID-19. Members of the household will be classified in this instance as close contacts, and will then need to be in self-quarantine.

How can you help? Join the Care Army.

Queenslanders are encouraged to join the Care Army, a group of volunteers who are deployed to protect and support older Queenslanders through the coronavirus pandemic.

Inspired by the Mud Army following the 2011 Queensland floods, the Care Army is looking out for those most at risk, including Queenslanders over the age of 70 or over 65 who have existing health conditions or over 50 if identifying Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

There are three simple things we can all do:

1. Make sure seniors have enough food
2. Make sure they have access to all their medication needs
3. Call or video chat to stay connected.

To join the Care Army call the Community Recovery hotline on **1800 173 349**, or visit www.qld.gov.au/CareArmy

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) seeking Care Army volunteers can contact Volunteering Queensland directly at helpdesk@volunteeringqld.org.au or call **(07) 3002 7600**.

Volunteers are now being allocated to organisations to respond to the specific needs of vulnerable Queenslanders in the community.

Additionally, the Queensland Government continues to work with non-government service providers, grocery retailers and pharmacies to support the more vulnerable members of our community.

For more information visit the website

<https://www.qld.gov.au/community/disasters-emergencies/recovery-after-disaster>



CONVERSATION IN ISOLATION

WHAT

We are a student led initiative aimed at providing support to anyone currently self-isolating who would like someone to talk to.

WHO

Anyone self-isolating can sign up. You will be assigned a medical student who will contact you via phone regularly for a chat, or just to listen.

WHY

Social isolation has been shown to have negative effects on mental and physical health, particularly in the elderly population. Conversation in isolation aims to reduce these effects by providing regular over the phone social interaction.

We are a group of friendly medical students who would like to offer our (non-medical) services and support to the community. We understand that mandatory or voluntary self-isolation can affect your health and disrupt your life in a variety of ways.

We are offering to help with:

- having a friendly phone chat to reduce loneliness during isolation
- phoning you everyday while you are in isolation to check-in and make sure everything's alright
- assistance to set up technology for internet banking, streaming services and social networking accounts

All our volunteers have passed police checks and have your safety in mind. All your information will be kept confidential in accordance with the relevant privacy principles.

BENEFITS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION



Improved mental health and lower rates of depression



Associated with reduced inflammatory markers and decreased blood pressure



Improved self esteem



Increased sense of purpose and belonging

SIGN UP HERE

<http://tiny.cc/convoiso>

Ph 0492 837 888 or Email conversationisolation@gmail.com

Recipes from AMI Events

Atlantic Salmon with Pine Mushrooms, Asian Market Greens, Ginger and Chilli

Serves Four

- 4 x Atlantic Salmon or Ocean Trout Fillets 180g ea
- 200g pine mushrooms gills removed and sliced
- 200g oyster mushrooms sliced
- 200g shitake mushrooms sliced
- 1 bunch pak choy sliced
- 1 head broccoli or bunch of broccolini sliced
- 1 tbsp ginger sliced
- 1 large red chilli seeds removed and finely sliced
- Peanut oil
- Salt and pepper
- 1 lime cut into ¼ s

This recipe was from the 2010 Positive Ageing Series cooking Demonstration

Sear salmon in pan at moderate heat and cook until medium rare to medium. Season and keep warm. In a hot pan heat oil and fry mushrooms till golden. Add greens and fry. Add ginger and chilli, season and fry, cooking ginger until golden. To serve place Atlantic salmon beside stir fry on plate with lime wedge.



RESEARCH UPDATE: COVID-19 and Psychogeriatrics: The View from Australia

AMI co-founders Gerard Byrne and Nancy Pachana have collaborated with ageing experts Elizabeth Beattie and Henry Brodaty to write an original research article for the journal of *International Psychogeriatrics*.

Their article “COVID-19 and Psychogeriatrics: The View from Australia” details the Australian perspective of the current global pandemic of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID19), the disease caused by the novel pathogen SARS-CoV-2.

Since it's first recorded case of COVID-19 on 25 January 2020, Australia has undertaken a series of increasingly stringent measures to limit transmission of the virus. Shutdown of services, restriction of travel and social distancing have impacted everyone. None more so than those most vulnerable to the virus, older adults.

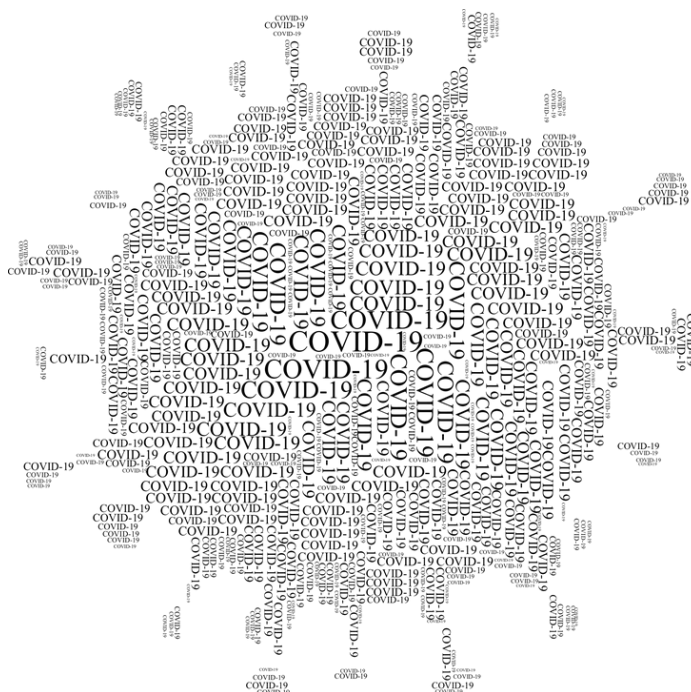
Older people in the community, particularly those living alone, who rely on community services such as meals-on-wheels, home help and community nurses, or access to day centers and communal activities, have been particularly impacted on by these restrictions. Residential aged care facilities have gone into lockdown preventing visitors. Older adults are also concerned about their superannuation given the financial impact on world markets. These stresses increase the risk of anxiety and depression for older adults as well as younger persons .

There have been some swift responses to these identified vulnerabilities. Digital consulting, assessment, management and

prescribing have become the new normal. Practices, regulations, and government and health fund rebates have been modified accordingly. A range of community responses to support the vulnerable have been launched.

The article concludes that “ the pandemic of COVID-19 is the most devastating worldwide health crisis since the 1918 Spanish Flu. It has forced nations to reconsider their health plans and economic decisions. Gandhi in 1931 stated that “A nation’s greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members”. We can now be judged by how well we support and care for our older population, the people most vulnerable to COVID-19.”

Pachana, N.A., Beattie, E., Byrne, G.J., & Brodaty, H. (in press). Covid-19 and geropsychiatry: The view from Australia. *International Psychogeriatrics*. (accepted 09/05/2020)



Current Ageing Research

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

An exploration of values associated with caregiving for elderly family members

The purpose of this project is to investigate the values associated with caregiving for elderly family members. Professor Knight's research team requests your assistance if you are caring for an elderly family member. We would like to know about your experience.

Your participation will involve participation in an interview that will take approximately 50 minutes. Due to current social distancing requirements, interviews will be either by video internet link or by telephone.

The interview will be recorded. If you do not wish for recording to occur, please advise the principal researcher. Being audio recorded is a requirement for participation in this research. Only the research team will have access to the recordings and identities in all reports of the study will be anonymous.

If you would like to participate or have additional questions, please contact Professor Knight at bob.knight@usq.edu.au or (07) 4631 1480

Survey on Accessibility of Mental Health Services by Adults

Your participation will involve completing survey questionnaires on-line. We expect it to take approximately 30-40 minutes to complete the questions.

This project is being undertaken as part of Professor Knight's research into Australian adults' attitudes towards and experiences with mental health services and e-mental-health services.

The purpose of this project is to gain knowledge in relation to adults' understanding, opinions and experiences surrounding mental health, and mental health services in urban, regional and remote areas of Australia

To access the survey, use the following link:
<https://surveys.usq.edu.au/index.php/447255?lang=en>



RESEARCH PROJECTS

Exploring driving and individuality

If you are currently driving a car or have ever been a driver in the past and can spare 20 to 30 minutes we would love to have your input into our research. This is a new study exploring how important driving is to you to get out and about. Your input will contribute to an important area of research into driving and the potential consequences of retiring from driving.

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

https://uqpsych.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bf188x0FEDKFZMp

This study is being conducted by Andrew Lee as part of the requirements for the Bachelor of Psychological Science degree (Honours) at the University of Queensland under the supervision of Dr Theresa Scott.

If you are interested in knowing more about the study, please contact Theresa Scott theresa.scott@uq.edu.au or Andrew Lee andrew.lee6@uq.net.au

Thank you for your time. Your participation in our study is greatly appreciated.

Contemporary Understandings of Dementia

You are invited to participate in a study aimed at understanding societal views of Dementia.

Researchers at The University of Queensland are exploring current understandings about how societal views of dementia may impact the lives of people living with dementia, either directly or indirectly. This is a new study in 2020. We are grateful for your participation as the success of our ongoing research into this important area depends on the assistance of participants.

To be eligible you need to be aged 18 years or over. Participation involves taking an anonymous online questionnaire which should take 20-30 minutes to complete. Please click on the link below if you wish to participate:

https://uqpsych.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ex1IICo7Sbnl8up

By helping with this research, you can go into the draw to win 1 of 2 \$50 Coles Myer Gift Cards!

This study is being conducted by Alana Eggins as part of the requirements for the Bachelor of Psychological Science degree (Honours) at The University of Queensland under the supervision of Dr Theresa Scott.

To know more about the study, please contact Dr Theresa Scott at The University of Queensland's School of Psychology, email: theresa.scott@uq.edu.au



RESEARCH PROJECTS

SEX AND INTIMACY AFTER SPINAL CORD INJURY

Participants required for research

Looking for people who had a spinal cord injury within the last 10 years to participate in an interview.

The interview will focus on whether sex and intimacy was addressed during your recovery and how this area could be improved. Topics may include- sexual activities, relationships and reproduction.

Considering current events, the interviews will be either online or over the phone.

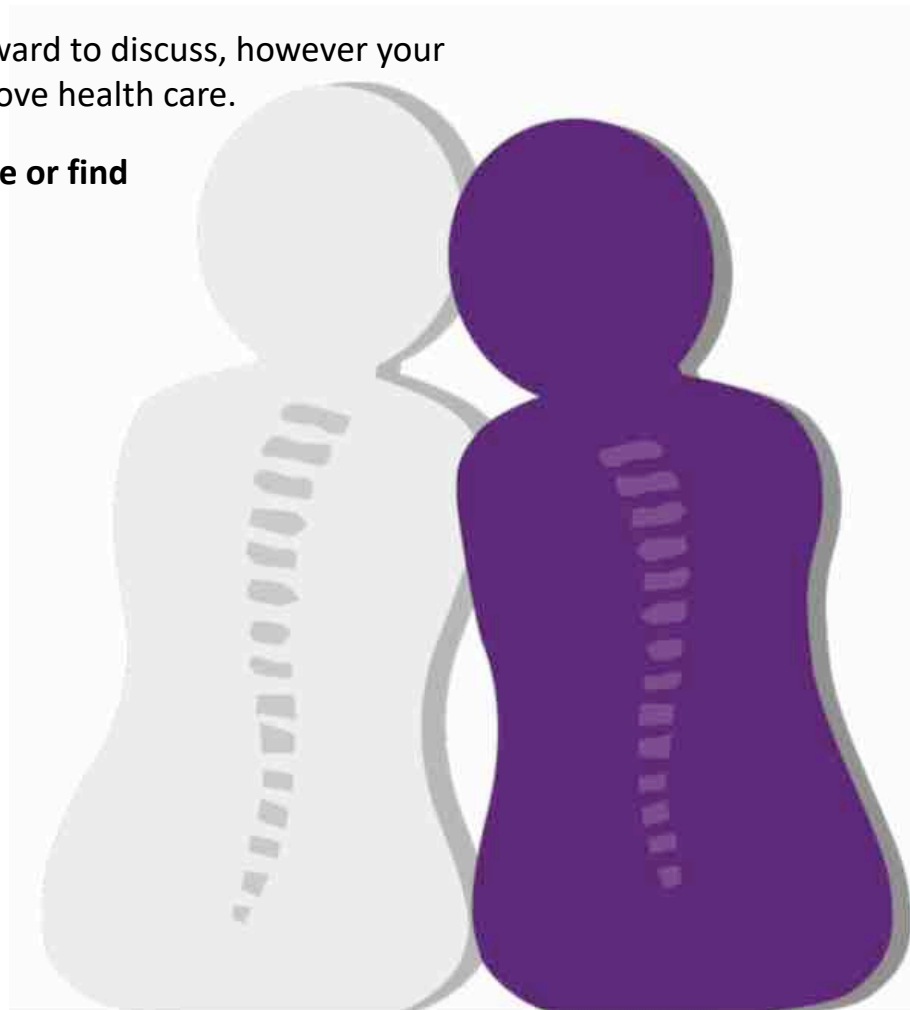
We understand it can be awkward to discuss, however your participation will help to improve health care.

If you would like to participate or find out more, please contact

Chloe Bryant:

0432 833 338

chloe.bryant@uq.net.au



RESEARCH PROJECTS

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 TPC. 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.

[Read more about our study](#)

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, on: (07) 3139-7208.