

Ageing Mind Initiative

Issue 52, August 2022 Newsletter

<https://ami.group.uq.edu.au/>

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We have some amazing new research projects that we are delighted to share with you. There's something for everyone.

If you would like a \$20 Gift card, Amaya Fox is seeking healthy middle-aged volunteers aged 40-65 for a study investigating concussion (page 6).

Perhaps you are more of a green thumb and would be interested in helping grow food for families in need, to also see if this improves the wellbeing of people living with dementia and their care partners? (page 7).

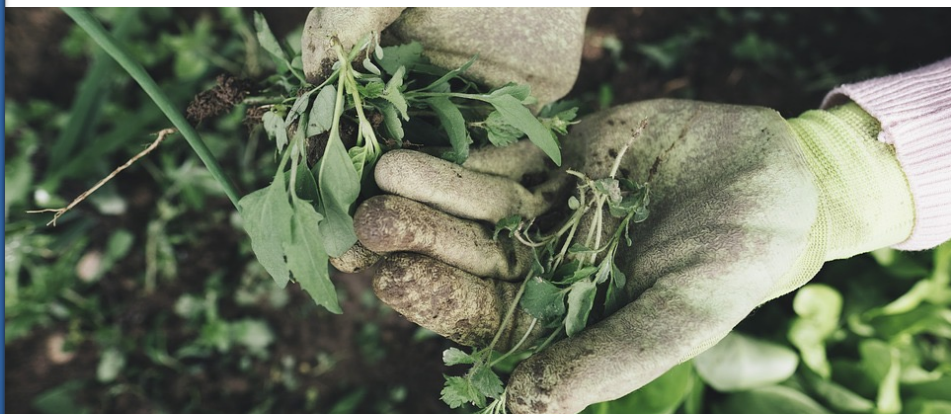
Maybe you're more of an animal lover, curious about the

impact that the COVID pandemic has had on animal ownership and other impacts (page 5).

For those of you more technologically inclined, a study exploring the LIV app aims to improve connection with others including community services, and help gain a better understanding of dementia (page 4).

For more information or to sign up to receive the AMI Newsletter please email ami@uq.edu.au

Thank you for your ongoing support!



ISSUE QUOTE:

Getting old is like climbing a mountain; you get a little out of breath, but the view is much better! ~ Ingrid Bergman

Benevolent Ageism

Director of UQ's Healthy Ageing Initiative, [Professor Nancy Pachana](#) spoke with [ABC](#) about benevolent ageism.

The conversation sparked after a video went viral of a young man filming himself staging what looks like a random act of kindness, giving a bunch of flowers to an elderly woman sitting on her own in a food court in Melbourne.

It looks beautiful, even moving but the woman who received the flowers didn't see it that way. She felt the video was artificially staged and it left her feeling dehumanised. She felt stereotyped as old and lonely.

Professor Pachana says benevolent ageism is thinking you are doing the right thing, however it ends up being wrong and making the recipient feel bad.

"With any of the 'isms' you're basically just doing something because the person is of a certain gender or because the person is a certain age- so that's the definition of ageism," Professor Pachana said.

"The benevolent part is when you put yourself out as though you are helping this 'poor older person'.

"The message you are then sending is 'you can't do it yourself' or 'you're lonely so I get to make you less lonely' and it's robbing that person of personhood.

Professor Pachana says it has the same kind of damaging effect as non-benevolent ageism, say- denying someone a job because they are a certain age.

"So, for example, if someone is just sitting alone at a table it doesn't mean that they are lonely, lots of people sit alone at a food court, so it's a pretty big step to make that assumption," Professor Pachana said.

"I would say the first thing to do with any person in any situation would be to ask yourself 'does this person really need help?' and then maybe ask them."

Listen to the interview [here](#)



Benevolent ageism

5 August 2022

G.O.L.D. Growing Older & Living Dangerously

The Growing Older and Living Dangerously activity is part of the Brisbane City Council **Active and Healthy Lifestyle program** that provides free or low-cost activities for people over 50. These activities are open to the public and all are welcome to attend.

Try yoga, tai chi, group bike rides, Zumba, boxing, aqua aerobics and [GOLD events for our seniors](#).

With such a large variety of group fitness classes, there are so many ways to build strength, increase your cardio fitness and help relax and ease your mind.



Brisbane
City Council

Our active and healthy events are just one of the many ways we're creating more [things to see and do](#) in Brisbane.

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Being physically active can improve your [brain health](#), help [manage weight](#), reduce the [risk of disease](#), strengthen [bones and muscles](#), and improve your ability to do [everyday activities](#).

Adults who sit less and do any amount of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity gain some health benefits. Only a few lifestyle choices have as large an impact on your health as physical activity.

Everyone can experience the health benefits of physical activity – age, abilities, ethnicity, shape, or size do not matter.

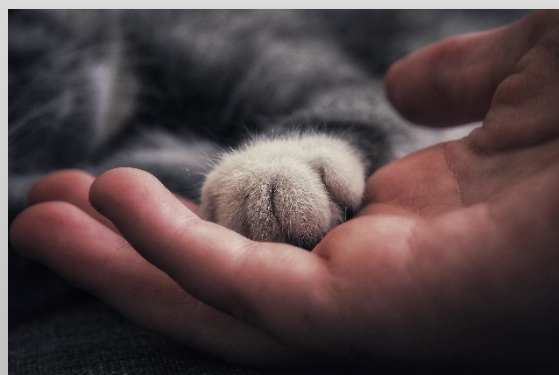
More pets than people in Australia

Did you know that there are more pets in Australia than people? Recent surveys show that pet ownership has reached an all-time high, with approximately 70% of households owning a least one pet.

COVID-19 restrictions were a major reason for this increase, as many Australians used the mandated time at home as an opportunity to introduce a new furry friend to the family.

Researchers for The University of Queensland are looking to talk to individuals about their

experiences as pet owners during the pandemic to understand more about the possible benefits and disadvantages of pets. For more details please see page 8.



Research Project Update

Challenging Age Stereotypes to Improve Cognitive Performance

Last edition of the AMI Newsletter, Professor Pachana's reviewed "Breaking the Age Code: How Your Beliefs About Aging Determine How Long and Well You Live" by Becca Levy. Since then we have all been reflecting more on the impact of ageing stereotypes on mental, cognitive and physical well-being. In keeping with this theme, we looked back through our previously advertised research projects with a focus on this theme of the impact of ageing stereotypes on health and ageing.

Rupa Kar published his honours thesis in 2015 at the University of Queensland under supervisor Catherine Haslam entitled "Age stereotyping and underperformance: Resistance through challenging legitimacy"

In his abstract he writes:

It is common to hear that older adults are very forgetful. Empirical research on age stereotyping maintains how awareness of age stereotypes lead older adults to experience social identity threat and underperform in cognitive tasks especially those related to memory.

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of challenging the legitimacy of age stereotypes as an intervention to counter the negative impact of age stereotypes on cognitive performance in older adults. It was anticipated that self-categorising as older, in a test like situation, would lead older adults to underperform and that directly challenging the legitimacy of age stereotypes would help counter this performance decrement, especially in memory related tasks.

Using a 2 X 2 between subjects design, healthy older adults ($N = 60$), aged fifty-five and above, were primed to self-categorise as older or younger and then either challenge or not challenge the legitimacy of the age stereotype of declining memory. Cognitive performance was then measured

through a battery of standardised clinical tests assessing memory and language skills.

As predicted, participants who self-categorised as younger and challenged the legitimacy of the age stereotype performed better. Notably, resistance by challenging was perceived in the older- challenge group who performed at par with the "younger" groups, with those self -categorised themselves as older and not challenging, performing the worst. Differences in performance were noticeable in tests of memory but not language.

This empirical evidence of resisting underperformance in memory tests by challenging the stereotype has important clinical and social implications. For the applied field of diagnostic testing -as a potential intervention to avoid unnecessary costs resulting from misdiagnosis of medical conditions, like dementia.

Overall, as a strategy, this could assist older adults resist the negative implications of aging and help them lead happier, well-adjusted lives.



Current Ageing Research

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

How does age influence how we interact with objects in our environment?

What is the study about?

Researchers at the UQ perception and action lab are investigating how age influences how people interact with and cognitively value different types of objects in their environment.

What will you need to do?

You will play a computer-based object interaction game on your home computer. Followed by watching an interactive video clip. Finally, you will answer some questions based on individual assessment and your experience of the task. The study will take approximately 60 minutes to complete.

Eligibility criteria:

- 65 + years of age
- No history of neurological illness (e.g., Dementia or Alzheimer's)
- Have normal or corrected to normal vision (e.g., glasses if necessary)
- Access to a computer with internet connection

Compensation:

For voluntary participating in this study, you will receive a \$20 Coles/Myer gift card upon completion of the experiment. Delivery of the gift card will be organised by project staff.

Do you want to participate?

If you would like to participate, please [click here](#) to start the experiment.

More information?

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Harrison Paff at h.paff@uq.edu.au or on 0406 907 611. Email communication is preferred.



Seeking healthy middle-aged volunteers aged 40-65 for a study investigating concussion!

We are interested in how a history of concussion impacts cognitive performance in middle-aged adults, before any symptoms of cognitive aging might occur.



If you have a) never experienced a concussion
OR
b) have experienced a concussion more than 3 months ago, please consider participating in this one-hour, online study!

Payment will be a \$20 Coles/Myer gift card.

Participants must have normal or corrected to normal vision and hearing; no neurological, psychotic, or mood disorders; no alcohol or substance dependence; and not be taking any psychopharmacological medication.

JULY 2022 – DECEMBER 2022

Contact the lead researcher Amaya Fox for more information!

EMAIL: cognitionstudy@uq.edu.au

or Scan QR Code



RESEARCH PROJECTS

Gardening for Good

Do you know someone living with dementia in the north Brisbane / Albany Creek / Samford region?

University of the Sunshine Coast, The University of Queensland and The Mini Farm Project are looking for people living with dementia and a care partner to participate together in a research study.

The project involves helping grow food for families in need, to also see if this improves the wellbeing of people living with dementia and their care partners.

Gardening sessions of 90 minutes followed by morning tea will take place

twice a week for 7 weeks, starting in September.

Participants will need to be able to move about without a wheelchair or walker

If you are interested, please call Kris on 0434 706 063 or email ktulloch@usc.edu.au for more information.

UQ Affiliated researchers are Prof Nancy Pachana and Dr Theresa Scott.

University of the Sunshine Coast Human Research Ethics Committee approval number A221714. This research is funded by the Australian Association of Gerontology.



RESEARCH PROJECTS

Companion animal support during COVID

Participants needed

Spent extra time with your pets during the pandemic?

Decided to get a new pet?

Or you sadly had to say goodbye to a much-loved pet?

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in increased social isolation for many, and rescue organisations saw a massive increase in pet adoptions. Animal companionship can be an invaluable support during times of increased stress and uncertainty such as the pandemic. Animals help reduce stress and loneliness, improve mood, and encourage physical activity. However, animal ownership comes with increased responsibilities and the loss of one's pet can be incredibly distressing.



We are looking for: **adults 50+ years who owned a pet** for any period from 1st January 2020 to now, to have a chat about the benefits and disadvantages of animal companionship during the COVID-19 pandemic.

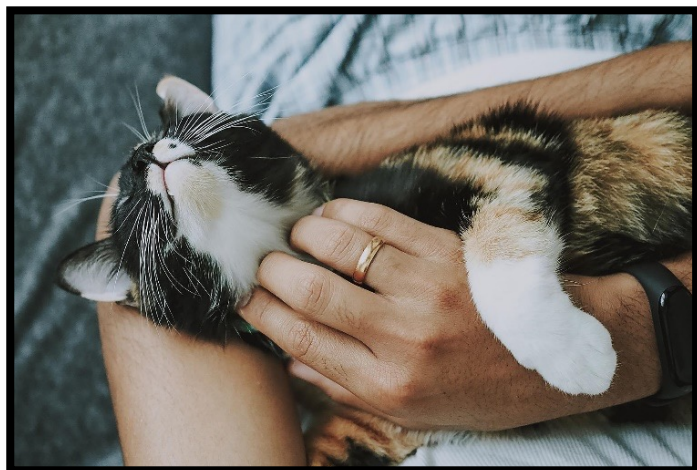
Discussions will occur **over Zoom** (or similar) at a time convenient to you and will go for **30 minutes**.

As a thank you for voluntarily participating, you can go into a draw to win one of four \$25 Coles vouchers.

Interested?

Contact Rebekah on email at:

rebekah.thomas@uqconnect.edu.au



RESEARCH PROJECTS

Would you like to help us trial the LIV app?

The Liv app aims to be an easy-to-use tool that may assist carers and people living with dementia to live independently in their own homes for longer.

We are looking for volunteers who would like to use the LIV app regularly for a period of three months.

Mobile devices (smart phones, tablets) and computer technologies can help to foster independent living and a sense of connectedness with others, from family and friends through to community services. Increasing connectedness improves mental and physical health, and provides opportunities to obtain assistance with everyday tasks of dementia care giving.

As well as assisting people live independently for longer, the LIV app aims to improve connection with others including community services, and help gain a better understanding of dementia. The Liv app will also provide a forum for interested people to share their experiences with dementia to provide further support and hopefully reduce the stigma of dementia. To participate, you will need to

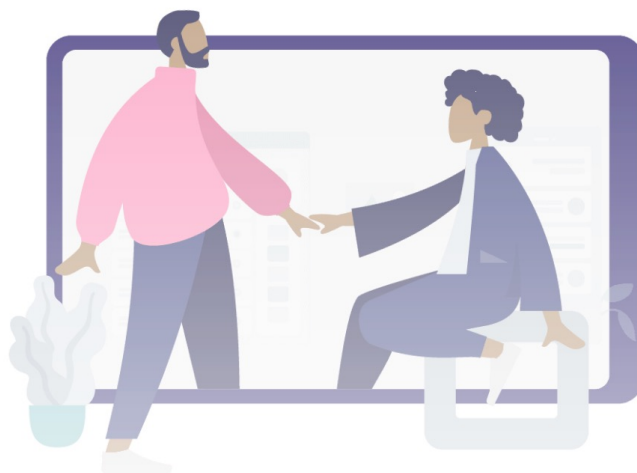
- have access to a mobile device
- be willing to attend an information session, use the app for a 3 month period, complete some brief surveys on your experiences of the app
- can understand English
- have unimpaired hearing and vision

You may also be invited to join a focus group. If you do not wish to attend the focus group, you can just complete the surveys.

You will receive a gift voucher of \$25.00 after completing the first survey. You will receive another gift voucher of \$50.00 on completing the final survey.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING, please call Dana Bradford on 07 3327 4404 or email Dana.Bradford@csiro.au

This study has been approved by the CSIRO Human Research Ethics Committee (2020_044_HREC). If you would like to speak with someone with respect to ethical matters or wish to register a formal complaint about the conduct of this research, please contact the Secretary of the Committee via email at chmhrec@csiro.au.



RESEARCH PROJECTS

Uncovering a novel therapeutic target to reduce dementia risk in Parkinson's disease (TRIP)

The TRIP study aims to:

1. use neuroimaging of the brain to develop a marker for future dementia risk in Parkinson's disease and
2. test whether a drug (levetiracetam) can improve memory problems and reduce dementia risk in people living with Parkinson's disease.

Potential impact

We hope to produce evidence for a new therapy to reduce dementia risk in Parkinson's disease. The TRIP study will help us understand more about cognitive impairment in Parkinson's disease. In particular, we will learn about the brain mechanisms behind the memory problems experienced by many people living with Parkinson's disease.

Eligibility Criteria

- People living with Parkinson's disease
- No Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS), pacemaker, or other metal in the body (if unsure, feel free to ask the study coordinator)
- Fluent in English

We are also recruiting older adults without Parkinson's disease or memory problems as a comparison group.

Study duration

All older adults without memory problems will be required to make three (3) study visits over two (2) weeks. People with memory problems will be required to make six (6) study visits over twelve (12) weeks.

Study procedures

People without memory problems will complete cognitive, which is located on the RBWH Campus' after UQCCR psychological, and motor symptom tests, and then complete a memory test during an MRI scan.

People living with Parkinson's disease and memory problems will complete cognitive, psychological and motor symptom tests, as well as a medical assessment and blood test. Once enrolled in the clinical trial, people with memory problems will have two rounds of treatment – one where they take the drug (levetiracetam) and one where they take a placebo (an inactive ingredient, like sugar). At the end of each treatment, they will complete a memory test during an MRI scan.

Participant resources

All study assessments are provided at no cost, and a \$50 travel reimbursement is available for each visit to UQCCR. Participants will also receive education and support from the study team throughout the study period.

Contact: Dana Pourzinal

E: pd.research@uq.edu.au

W: bit.ly/TRIPStudy

T: 07 3346 5028



RESEARCH PROJECTS

Psychotherapy via telehealth videoconferencing to ease anxiety

LAST CHANCE:

Recruitment will close at the end of June!

Introduction

Anxiety represents one of the most common mental health problems in the population and can be experienced by people of any age. Anxiety influences a person's overall wellbeing and quality of life.

Research objectives

Our study aims to test a new psychotherapeutic intervention delivered via videoconferencing to help combat anxiety in people living with cognitive impairment, irrespective of their location. Our 6-week program combines education about anxiety to help people understand their symptoms, relaxation techniques to help cope with anxiety.

Study design

The psychotherapy program will be tested in a randomised control trial. This means that if you are eligible to participate in the study, you will be randomly assigned to an intervention group or a control group. If you are selected to the intervention group, you will be asked to attend 6 weekly sessions of psychotherapy. If you are in the control group, you will continue your usual care as prior to entering the study.

How can I participate?

If you have been diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment or dementia and if you are currently experiencing any anxiety symptoms like what has been described above, we invite you to participate. We will do an initial screen to check your eligibility for our study. Participation in our study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any point.

What help is available if I have never used videoconferencing?

We will provide you with a manual with clear instructions, a video link with step-by-step instructions, and support over the phone to help you setup your equipment for videoconferencing.

What's required from participants?

- Filling out questionnaires before, and after the therapy.
- Participating in weekly therapy sessions for 6 weeks delivered via videoconferencing.
- Practise techniques learnt in therapy sessions.
- Give us feedback on the ease of use of technology as well as the content of the therapeutic sessions.

Your participation and feedback will help us improve this program

Participants to receive a gift voucher You will be given a \$50 electronic gift card at completion of baseline assessments and another \$50 electronic gift card at completion of the entirety of the trial, regardless of whether you have been allocated to the intervention group or control group.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information.

Important links:

[More information about the study](#)
[Expression of Interest to participate](#)

For more information contact:

T: 07 3346 5036 or 07 3346 5577

E: anxietyresearch@uq.edu.au

W: <https://clinical-research.centre.uq.edu.au/psychotherapy-telehealth-video-conferencing-treat-anxiety>

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 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.

[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.