

# Ageing Mind Initiative

Issue 53, November 2022 Newsletter

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

Page

## FEATURE STORIES

Ageism as a Last Frontier	2
Healthy Ageing Forum	3
Research Updates	4-5

## CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

Does age influence how we interact with objects in our environment?	6
Study investigating concussion	7
Gardening for Good	8
Problem solving and memory across the adult life span	9
Would you like to use the Liv app?	10
TRIP Study	11
Psychotherapy via telehealth	12
Vibrant Trial	13

It is with mixed emotions that we announce that The Ageing Mind Initiative Newsletter is going to have an indefinite break in 2023. The AMI Newsletter has now run for 53 issues, across more than a decade in years!

We have loved helping provide this free service, connecting researchers and community participants with one another.

We have hosted Positive Ageing Events, interviewed our readers, shared recipes and book recommendations, hosted parties and collaborated on projects. The Newsletters have kept coming through floods, global pandemics, bush fires and more but the time has come for a pause. The Ageing Mind Initiative Website will remain up and

operational, but the quarterly Newsletters will cease for now. It is time for us to regroup and reflect on how to best promote and support Ageing Related research in the future.

On behalf of ourselves and co-founder Prof Gerard Byrne, we would like to say thank you to everyone who has been involved in the AMI Newsletter. It has been a delight to have met and worked with such a range of exciting, passionate in interesting people.

Please enjoy this (potentially) final edition of the Ageing Mind Initiative Newsletter. It has been a pleasure sharing this journey with you all.

~ Prof Nancy Pachana and Dr Emma Poulsen



## ISSUE QUOTE:

"You only grow by coming to the end of something and by beginning something else."

— John Irving

# Ageism as a Last (Regrettable) Frontier, and the Importance of Psychology as a Discipline for Positive Longevity

Longevity has set about many societal changes. One of the biggest is the shift from the traditional life-cycle model with three phases—education (when younger), career (in middle age) and retirement (later in life). Now we have instead the concept of a Multi-Stage Life: where people continually rotate through periods of education, work, and “retirement”. An opportunity to experience life as a series of seasons or intervals, with breaks and transitions to new opportunities.

This decoupling of age and stage mean that a person’s age will no longer signify what stage of life they are in (returning to school, taking leadership in a company, taking time off, taking a job in a lower position than your previous one because you decided to change careers, etc.). This affords all sorts of opportunities, but AGEISM stands in the way of fully realizing these benefits.

Ageism receives less attention, and tends to persist without action, more so than other “isms”. In a national poll over 50% of Australians believe their country to be an

ageist one. While research and community activism have shown us a way forward, more can be done. Despite a large percentage of the current younger generation living to 100, we as a society, and perhaps as individuals, are not well-prepared to either tackle ageism, or take advantage of this longevity dividend. INTERNALISED AGEISM costs individuals on average 7.5 years of life, because if you believe that ageing is only filled with declines, then you are less likely to take good care of yourself physically, and will be more inclined to be stressed and feeling less emotional wellbeing. And all of this takes a great toll on one’s health.

I highly recommend reading Becca Levy’s excellent book, [\*Breaking the Age Code\*](#). In it, she details the current research on the effects of ageism and how to combat it.

In this, the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, it is more important than ever to combat ageism.

~Prof Nancy Pachana



UN Decade of Healthy Ageing

2021-2030



# Healthy Ageing Forum 2022

## Rethinking Ageing – Moving and Grooving into Healthy Ageing



### Healthy Ageing Forum 2022 - Rethinking Ageing - Moving and Grooving into Healthy Ageing

Want to learn how to maximise your quality of life with energy and vitality, and maintain physical, mental and emotional health as you age?

The Healthy Ageing Forum 2022 gives you the opportunity to learn and engage with experts from UniSC, the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and other health practitioners who will showcase the latest research on healthy ageing.

**It's never too late to start living well!**

**Learn:** be informed and empowered to live a vibrant, healthy and balanced life - move well, eat well, sleep well, think well and relate well.

**Move:** join in the short activity breaks throughout the day, including 'Move it and Groove it' and introduction to yoga sessions.

**Connect:** chat with stallholders from local organisations such as Relationships Australia, Volunteering Sunshine Coast and ADA Australia (Aged and Disability Advocates).

**Laugh:** be entertained by MC, Lynda Prout, morning presenter at the Sunshine Coast's radio station, Sunshine FM 104.9.

**Date and time:** Sat., 26 November 2022, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm AEST

**Location:** UniSC: University of the Sunshine Coast 90 Sippy Downs Drive Sippy Downs, QLD 4556

**Cost:** \$15 (plus booking fee) includes morning tea and lunch

**Bookings:** Click [HERE](#) to book (bookings are essential as there are no tickets at the door)



## Research Project Update

Exploring the impact of coronavirus-related closures of social care services on the lives of older adults, people with dementia and family carers

Within our study, we were looking into how the early COVID-19 restrictions impacted older adults, people living with dementia and their informal carers in Australia.

We spoke with sixteen family members providing informal care to people with dementia and two people living with dementia in 2020. We asked questions about their experiences of the pandemic and the impact that the restrictions had on their lives and care.

We analysed those eighteen interviews and identified four themes describing (a) the pre-pandemic limitations of the aged care system in Australia, (b) the description of the aged care system's response to the COVID-19 restrictions, (c) changes affecting informal carers, and (d) the challenges faced by people living with dementia.

Our participants reported on the insufficient formal care availability within home and residential care settings and difficulties in accessing services and information about them before COVID-19. Those challenges were only strengthened in the early months of the pandemic with reduced formal care provided within the residential facilities and home services as a result of new restrictions. People with dementia and their families appreciated personnel help and timely access to information about restrictions and changes in service delivery. Residential facility staff members were also vital in supporting people with dementia communication via Skype, FaceTime and other

online tools with their families during visiting restrictions.

Those changes impacted the workload of family members who provided care at home. They often had more responsibilities given working from home or home-schooling their children at the same time. Being able to prioritise their self-care (i.e., healthy diet, exercise) and staying connected with friends and other family members helped them maintain emotional balance.

For people with dementia, the restrictions were difficult to understand, and they often struggled to follow the rules. Families reported that the reduced activities negatively impacted people with dementia's physical and mental health (both living at home and in the residential facilities). Some of them also noticed rapid changes in their cognitive functions like memory or language abilities.

For more details about the study outcomes, please contact Dr Kasia Lion ([k.lion@griffith.edu.au](mailto:k.lion@griffith.edu.au))

Lion KM, Moyle W, Cations M, et al. How Did the COVID-19 Restrictions Impact People Living With Dementia and Their Informal Carers Within Community and Residential Aged Care Settings in Australia? A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Family Nursing*. 2022;28(3):205-218. doi:[10.1177/10748407221101638](https://doi.org/10.1177/10748407221101638)

## Research Project Update

### Technological needs survey

As the Australian Aged Care Technology Collaborative, we wanted to assess the technological needs within the aged care sector.

We distributed a survey to older people, their family members and aged care providers to ask what their technology needs are. The survey was completed by 133 older adults, 27 family members of older adults and 148 clinicians, healthcare practitioners, and aged care providers.

From the responses, we identified seven themes reporting that technologies used in aged care do not appear to be meeting consumers' and providers' needs. Participants reported the increased use of technology during COVID-19, however, found that it should be simplified and easier to use. Participants noted that they need the awareness of available technologies and access to training should be improved. Some participants also noted the barriers to using technology such as being time-consuming, and costly. They also referred to the

safety of the technologies to protect their privacy. Participants had concerns about the My Aged Care website and the importance of Streamlining Aged Care Administration Systems.

Based on those results, we created several recommendations for how the technologies should be designed and implemented into practice to better support older people, their families and those working with the aged care sector.

For more details, please contact Prof. Wendy Moyle ([w.moyle@griffith.edu.au](mailto:w.moyle@griffith.edu.au))

Publication: Moyle, W., Pu, L., Murfield, J., Sung, B., Sriram, D., Liddle, J., Estai, M., & Lion, K. (2022). Consumer and Provider Perspectives on Technologies Used Within Aged Care: An Australian Qualitative Needs Assessment Survey. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/07334648221120082>



# 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](mailto: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](mailto:cognitionstudy@uq.edu.au)

or Scan QR Code



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE



## 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](mailto: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

### Problem Solving and Memory Study Across the Adult Life Span

Researchers from the University of Queensland are looking for individuals who are interested in taking part in a study examining problem solving and memory across the adult lifespan.

During the session you will be asked to complete paper based and computer-based measures of everyday problem solving and memory.

To participate you will need to:

- Have no history of neurological illness (e.g. Dementia or Alzheimer's) or major psychiatric illness
- Be a native English speaker
- Have no hearing or visual difficulties

This study will take approximately 2 hours. Upon completion you will receive a \$40 Coles/Myers retail gift card to thank you for your participation.

Please feel free to share with those who you think may also be interested in participating in this project. If you would like more information or would like to participate, please contact email Dr Fiona Maccallum [f.maccallum@uq.edu.au](mailto:f.maccallum@uq.edu.au)

This study has been approved by UQ Human Research Ethics HABS LNR committee [HE000638].



## 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

- be a carer, or a person living with dementia
- 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

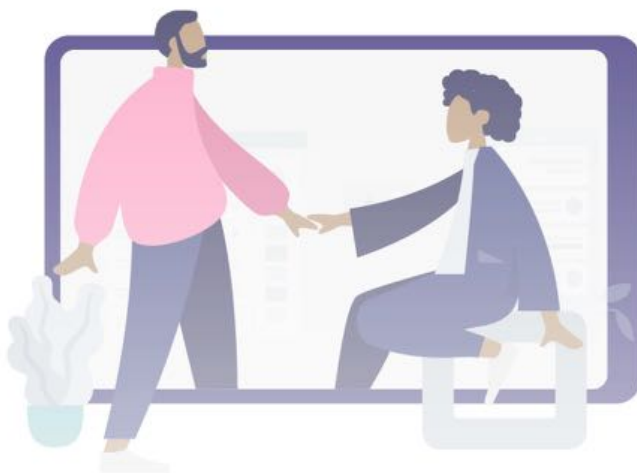
- have unimpaired hearing and vision

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:pd.research@uq.edu.au)

W: [bit.ly/TRIPStudy](https://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](mailto:anxietyresearch@uq.edu.au)

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

## RESEARCH PROJECTS

A University of Queensland study designed to improve balance in older adults with a hearing impairment has been made possible thanks to a generous donation from Sonova.

“Three in five adults aged over 60 have a hearing impairment and recent research shows that hearing impairment is a risk factor for falling, with every 10-dB increase in hearing loss putting an individual at greater risk of falling [1].

This study will test if a device that gives feedback on body position can improve and maintain balance and stability.

Participants will be required to wear a device which is battery powered and worn on a belt around the waist for 20-minute training sessions over 10 days.

The device records body sway, compares it to normative data and provides vibrotactile feedback to the wearer for retraining of balance.

The original version of the device has been used in research trials in Europe, Germany and Switzerland, however this will be the first time it will be used with older adults who have a hearing impairment.



The study is an international collaboration between Professor Sandy Brauer, Professor Louise Hickson, PhD students Jacinta Foster and Marina Mahafza from UQ's School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences; Department of Otolaryngology at Unfallkrankenhaus Berlin, Charite University Hospital Berlin; Center for Hearing and Balance, Department of Otolaryngology, Columbia University Medical Center and Sonova.

1. Lin, F.R. and L. Ferrucci, *Hearing Loss and Falls Among Older Adults in the United States*. Archives of Internal Medicine, 2012. **172**(4): p. 369-371.

### Volunteers needed for research

#### VIBRANT TRIAL

Three in five older adults aged over 60 have a hearing loss and the risk of falling for older adults is higher if they have a hearing loss. Researchers at The University of Queensland are conducting a study that will test if a device that gives feedback on body position can improve balance and stability.

- Are you over 60?
- Do you have mild to severe hearing loss?
- Do you have vertigo, feel dizzy, or unsteady?

If you would like more information or would like to volunteer please contact Katrina Kemp on 07 3365 4564 or [k.kemp@uq.edu.au](mailto:k.kemp@uq.edu.au)