



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

# Ageing Mind Initiative

Issue 25 August 2015 Newsletter  
[www.uq.edu.au/ami](http://www.uq.edu.au/ami)

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The AMI Team have had a very busy month. So busy that the August edition of the Newsletter is a bit delayed. We have made up for this by filling the pages with exciting new research opportunities that are sure to dazzle, inspire and impress!

The importance of physical activity on mood and health has been all through the media recently. Why not help contribute to this rapidly expanding body of knowledge by participating in our feature study (page 2) on physical activity. If exercise is not your thing, there are plenty of other options for you.

We have new research projects on hearing rehabilitation (page 11), thinking skills and virtual reality (page 8) or better understanding ankle pain (page 9). The topics span a broad range of professional fields from psychology to physiotherapy to neuroscience.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the AMI Newsletter. If you have any questions please email them through to:  
[ami@uq.edu.au](mailto:ami@uq.edu.au)



## ISSUE QUOTE:

Age is not important unless you're a cheese.  
~ Helen Hayes



## COVER STORY

### Physical Activity in the Everyday Life of Older Adults in Australia

#### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND AGEING

Research demonstrates that physical activity can protect against age-related illness and disease, maintain functional capacities of daily living, and lower the risk of death due to cardiovascular disease and other illness. Evidence also shows that physical activity acts preventively against dementia and has also positive effects on wellbeing and quality of life more broadly in older age.

#### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Acknowledging the importance of older adults staying active, *the Australian recommendations state that older adults should accumulate at least 30 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days*, to achieve health benefits. In line with these recommendations, physical activity programs and initiatives such as Go4Life have been implemented. However, in spite of the efforts to promote active ageing, the majority of older adults still do not engage in sufficient physical activity.

#### THIS RESEARCH

This study forms part of a larger PhD project, conducted at Griffith University in Brisbane, which aims to investigate the influences on everyday physical activity in older Australians. **To achieve this purpose, we would like to kindly ask for your help.**

#### YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THIS RESEARCH

Your participation will include completing a paper-based or on-line survey (15-20 min), about your habits and views of physical activity,

followed by two short phone-based surveys (10-15 min). To thank you for your participation, you will be offered an opportunity to enter a draw to win 1 of 5 prizes.

YOU ARE WARMLY WELCOMED TO PARTICIPATE IF YOU:

- Are aged 65 years and over;
- Live independently in the community (inc. retirement village setting) anywhere in Australia; and
- Do not have a medical reason that would prevent you from doing moderate-intensity activity (we will not ask you to do any activity for this research).

You can participate in the study now by clicking on the [link here](#), or contact the research team to receive a paper-based survey, along with reply-paid envelope:

Urska Arnautovska

Email: [urska.arnautovska@griffithuni.edu.au](mailto:urska.arnautovska@griffithuni.edu.au)

Phone: 07 3735 3313



## Research Update

### Can we use Skype to Monitor the Symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

A study was undertaken at the University of Queensland to explore whether everyday technology such as using Skype of our computers at home, could help to monitor the symptoms of people with Parkinson's disease. An enormous thank you to the 11 participants who volunteered to complete two assessments, the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MOCA) and the Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale (UPDRS), face-to-face and then a week later via Skype or Google Hangouts using their own camera phones, laptops and computers.

It is with great pleasure that we can now reveal the results of the study!

It was found that all MOCA items could be completed over videoconference, with only small differences between face-to-face and videoconference scores. Higher scores were not favored by either method. The results of the UPDRS told a different story, most likely due to the different method of assessment; the MOCA is based on verbal and written responses, the UPDRS is based on verbal responses and observation of the person's body. Whilst videoconferencing the UPDRS provided a convenient and efficient way to get a general overview of the participant's function and symptoms, some items could not be completed, leading to differences in scores between face-to-face and remote monitoring.

Feedback from participants and assessors provided a clear explanation as to why this was occurring; when sitting in front of a webcam, the natural frame of the videoconference typically just includes the top of the chest and face. Therefore items that required the assessor

to score the lower limbs were harder to observe if the participant could not move far away back from the webcam to be entirely seen (eg: if they were confined to a small office). Issues with technology were less commonly reported however pixilation did create a barrier when rhythm and fluency of movement was to be observed (eg: finger tapping).

All participants reported a positive overall experience with the videoconference assessment, with the majority of participants attributing this to the travel time savings and cost efficiency that it provided, as they did not have to leave their homes to get health professional attention. Another advantage of videoconferencing that was highlighted by a participant was that they could access a health professional more efficiently if they were displaying symptoms that were intermittent, that may be gone by the time the participant travels and gets to an appointment.

Future studies will consider a protocol for participant positioning, in an area with lots of space such as a living room, where the participant can move back from the webcam and have their whole body seen for the entirety of the assessment. As technology improves, it may provide a convenient way of monitoring the symptoms of health conditions without needing people to leave home and attend clinics.

Research completed by: Tereza Stillerova, Jacki Liddle, Louise Gustafsson, Robyn Lamont, Peter Silburn





## Research Update

### Supporting people with dementia and their families with the challenges of driving and stopping driving.

A number of studies have been conducted at the University of Queensland exploring the experiences of people living with dementia and their families related to driving and retiring from driving. Two papers and a number of conference presentations have followed. The findings have helped researchers to understand when the particular challenges occur during the process and what supports are needed. This has led to the adaptation of existing resources to help provide support during this time. UQDRIVE-dementia which is a support and education resource was adapted in key ways. This involved the inclusion of family members, more flexible delivery, making content easier, and expanding emotion-focussed coping techniques (such as including mindfulness techniques). Feedback from health professionals and family members supported the need to individualise the program

to meet the needs of each family. Initial pilot data indicated high satisfaction with the program, improvement in a range of family goals, and feeling more in control of life without driving for all participants. Longer term follow up and more research is needed. The UQDRIVE-dementia program may provide a means of supporting people with dementia and their family members with driving cessation. Further research is needed and will help to optimise ways of supporting people in this challenging time.

Research completed by: Jacki Liddle, Nancy Pachana, Sally Bennett, David Lie, Shelley Allen, Phyllis Liang, Amelia Tan, Raychelle Sidhu.



## Upcoming Events



**International Psychogeriatric Association**  
*Better mental health for older people*

The 2015 IPA International Congress – Balancing Cure with Care: Advances in Late Life Mental Health, taking place on 13–16 October 2015 in Berlin, Germany, will focus on balancing races for the cure against the undeniable obligation we have as mental health professionals to care for our patients and their families.

Increasingly care and cure are blended in our

professional lives such that the most effective interventions of today combine both approaches.

*Who should attend?* Professionals from the entire healthcare team –psychiatrists, neurologists, geriatricians, primary care physicians, nurses, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and more.

# Current Ageing Research

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

## Invitation to participate in a study on physical activity & older adults

You may have heard a number of things about the importance of physical activity for older adults' health and well-being. Urska Arnautovska, a PhD Candidate at Griffith University, is conducting a project to examine the factors that influence physical activity in older adults in Australian.

**To achieve this purpose, she would like to kindly ask for your help.** The participation involves completing [a survey](#) about habits and beliefs around physical activity, followed by two short phone-based surveys, one and two weeks later. To thank you for your participation, you will be offered an opportunity to enter a draw to win 1 of 5 prizes.

You are invited to participate if you:

- Are aged 65 years and over;
- Live independently in the community (including retirement village setting); and,
- Do not have a medical reason that would prevent you from doing moderate-intensity activity, that is the activity that causes your heart to beat faster and some shortness of breath, while you can still talk comfortably (you will not be asked to do any activity for this research).

You can participate in the study now by completing the survey online:

<https://prodsurvey.rcs.griffith.edu.au/prodls190/index.php?sid=33361&newtest=Y&lang=en>

(you can also access this via the AMI website) <http://www.uq.edu.au/ami/physical-activity-and-older-adults>

Or you can contact the research team (via email [urska.arnautovska@griffithuni.edu.au](mailto:urska.arnautovska@griffithuni.edu.au) or phone 07 3735 3313) to receive a personal paper-based survey, along with reply-paid envelope.

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## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### **Healthy Participants and Participants with Neck Pain needed for Balance Study.**

Healthy Participants and Participants with Neck Pain needed for Balance Study.  
A PhD project at the University of Queensland is seeking both healthy participants and individuals with neck pain above the age of 60. We are investigating how neck pain may influence balance.

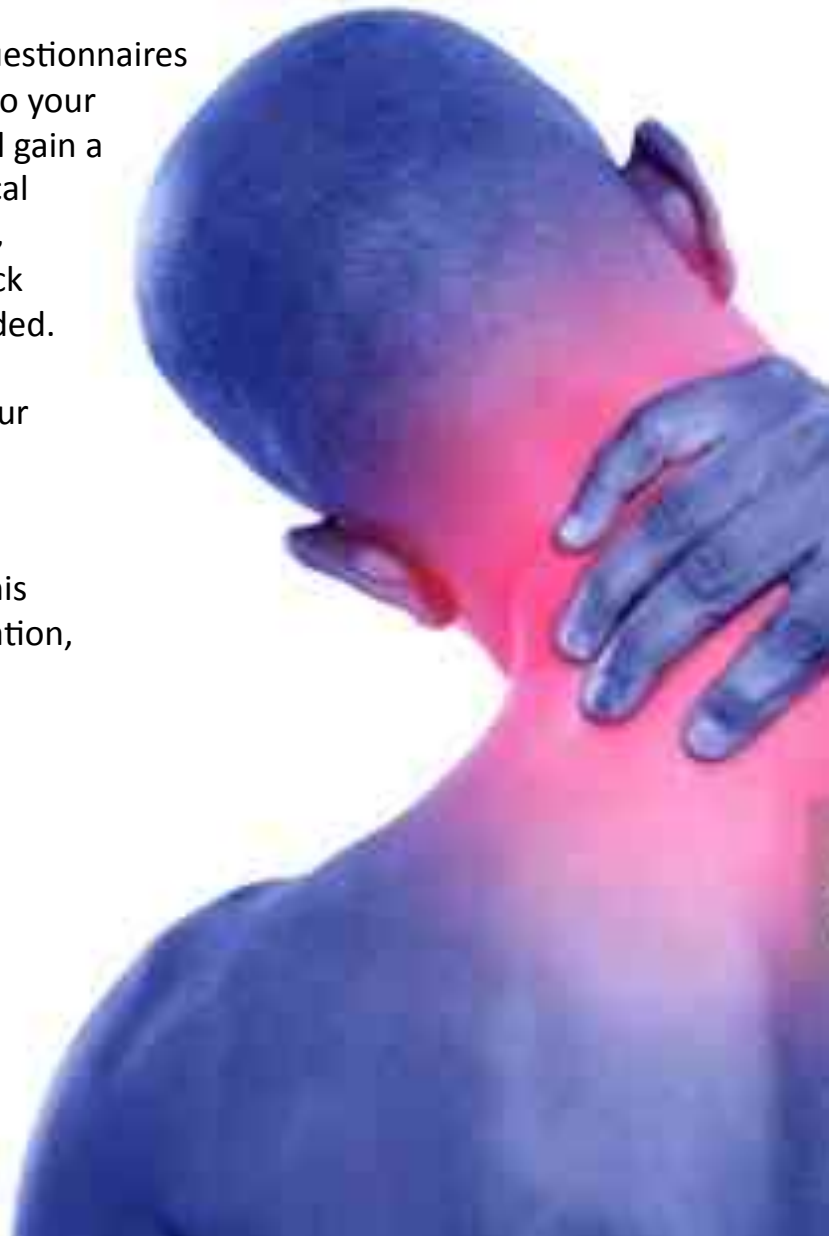
Participants will complete some questionnaires and perform various tests related to your neck function and balance. You will gain a greater appreciation of your physical Function such as posture, strength, sensation and balance and feedback on your performance will be provided. The entire experiment will take 2 hours and may be conducted at your home or at the University of Queensland, Brisbane.

If you would like to participate in this study or would like further information, Please contact:

June Quek

Email: [june.quek@uq.net.au](mailto:june.quek@uq.net.au)

Phone: 0431 005 641.



## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Imaging the Ageing Brain

Dementia refers to a group of age-related brain illnesses. People with these illnesses experience problems with memory, thinking and daily tasks. There might also be changes in their social interactions. It can be very difficult to diagnose these illnesses at the early stage. Sometimes they can be confused with other mental illnesses, especially in younger patients. These diagnostic difficulties bring frustration and confusion to the patients and families, and delay proper treatment.

This study will use advanced imaging techniques to examine how the brain changes in dementia and other age-related illnesses. We invite you to participate in our research study if you are between 45 to 65 years old, and 1) you are diagnosed with one of these illnesses: Alzheimer's disease, frontotemporal dementia, late-onset bipolar disorder, or 2) you are healthy without any neuropsychiatric disorders. You will answer some questions and undergo brain imaging scans. This information will help us understand the ageing brain and how it influences behaviour. We hope to find better way to identify these brain illnesses, so that proper care can be delivered.



**QIMR Berghofer**  
Medical Research Institute

### Together, we can make a difference

Are you between 45-70 years of age?

- Diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, frontotemporal dementia or late-onset bipolar disorder?

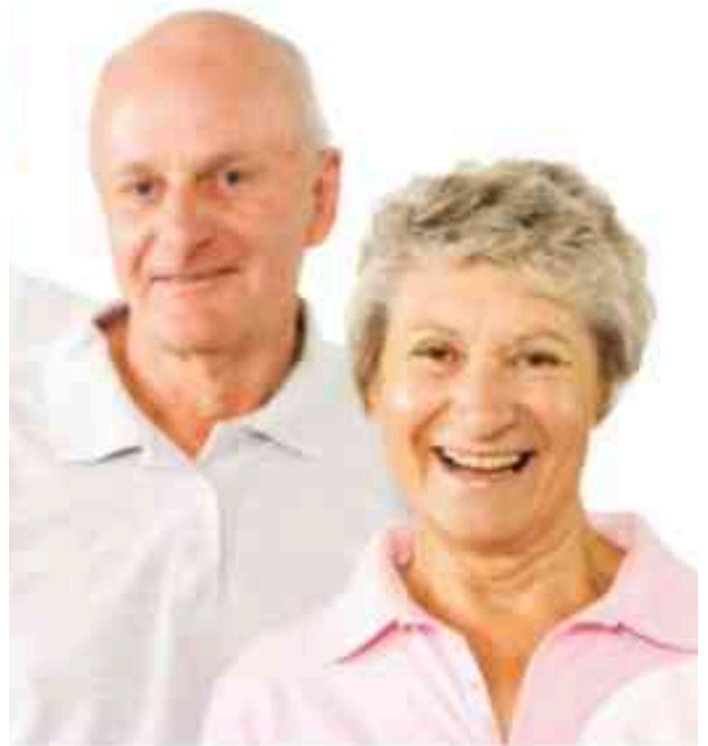
OR

- Healthy without any neuropsychiatric disorders?

If you'd like to participate, please contact

**Phone** 07 3845 3805

**Email** [brain.recruit@qimrberghofer.edu.au](mailto:brain.recruit@qimrberghofer.edu.au)





## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Assessing thinking skills using virtual reality technology

After stroke, people often have problems with their cognition (memory, problem solving, attention and language). Deficits in cognition can impact people's daily activities, quality of life, and their ability to return home. Thus, identifying these issues is important to maximise rehabilitation and improve the quality of life for stroke survivors.

We have developed a virtual reality cognitive test to find out whether this method of assessing cognition is better than the usual pen-and-paper tests. Part of this process involves determining the performance of **healthy adults** without a history of stroke, other neurological diseases, mental illness, alcohol abuse or head trauma.

Participation in the study will involve a 10 minute test, where memory, language, problems solving will be tested. Then, a more detailed assessment of thinking skills will be administered using the pen-and-paper methods (approximately 1 hour). A virtual reality cognitive test will be administered using an Android tablet (approximately 20 minutes). At the end of the session, you may be required to do a task in a kitchen setting (10 minutes). No prior computer skills are needed to participate.

You will only attend one session, but rest periods will be used during testing if needed. The research will take place at the University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research (UQCCR), which is at the Royal Brisbane &

Women's Hospital, Brisbane. You will be reimbursed for parking costs at The Wilson Car Park.

If you have any further questions about this study or would be interested in participation please contact:

Kylie Wall

Email: [k.wall1@uq.edu.au](mailto:k.wall1@uq.edu.au)

Mobile: 0433039866





## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Understanding Ankle Pain

Dr Michelle Smith, Professor Bill Vicenzino, Dr David MacDonald, Ms Munira Al Mahrouqi

**Have you had ankle pain that has been constant or coming and going for at least 3 months?**

We are looking for people with ankle pain to complete an online survey. It will collect information on previous ankle injuries you have experienced, your ankle pain, and how it affects you. This survey will help us to better understand and manage the problems experienced by people with ankle pain. It will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. There is no foreseeable risk associated with participation in this study. Participants have the opportunity to withdraw from these procedures at any time, without penalty.

**General information**

Any data collected pursuant to this survey will be handled in accordance with guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Publications resulting from this study will not allow identification of any individual. A summary of the overall outcomes will be available on completion of the project.

If you are interested in participating in understanding ankle pain survey please follow the link below: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Understanding-ankle-pain>



## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Healthy Adults for Quantitative Sensory Testing in Tendinopathy

We invite healthy adults with no history of knee or Achilles tendon pain to participate in a study investigating different types of sensation in people with tendinopathy. Participants in this healthy group will act as a comparison group for people with Achilles and patellar tendinopathy.

#### Background and Aims of the Project

Tendon pain and problems are very common, can be quite disabling, and are often difficult to treat. While there has been increasing knowledge of tendon problems, we still do not understand the underlying pain mechanisms. Preliminary research has indicated that there are changes in the central nervous system that might underpin the severity of tendon pain. This has been discovered by using some measures from a battery of tests called Quantitative Sensory Tests (QST). In this research project we are testing both those with and without tendon problems by using a comprehensive QST. The study primarily aims to answer the questions:

What is the difference in QST between those with tendon problems and those without?  
What is the relationship of any of these QST differences and the patient's ratings of their tendon pain and problems?

#### How much time is involved?

**Completing an online survey:** We would like you to answer some simple questions about your health and tendons to ascertain that you do not have any medical or health related

matters that exclude you from the study. This will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

**One session:** You will be required to attend a session at the University of Queensland School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at St Lucia where:

**A brief physical assessment** will be conducted to confirm that you do not have any tendon problems.

**A battery of non-invasive sensory measurements** will be conducted. Sensory measurements test either sensation (i.e. first perception of a stimulus, such as light pressure, stroking, pin prick) or pain thresholds (i.e., the first onset of pain with a stimulus, such as pressure, heat or cold).

This should take approximately 2 hours. You will be recompensed reasonable expenses.

**Questionnaires:** Prior to attending the session, we would like you to complete a series of questionnaires, which will be emailed/mailed out to you. This should take approximately 20 minutes.

**If willing to assist, please email [sirph@uq.edu.au](mailto:sirph@uq.edu.au) for more information.**



## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Improving Clinical Pathways for Hearing Rehabilitation

Even a mild hearing loss can create significant hearing and conversation difficulties in everyday life, both for individuals and their family members. Barbra Timmer, an audiologist and PhD student at the University of Queensland, and two Masters of Audiology students, are conducting a research project to deeply explore these hearing difficulties.

Therefore if you have normal hearing and share a household with someone who has a mild hearing loss, who currently does not use a hearing aid, and sometimes has hearing difficulty, you and your family member are invited to take part in the research project.

#### What is involved?

- Two appointments (in your home, or at the University) for a hearing test, questionnaires and training on how to use the equipment
- Over the space of two weeks, you and your family member will fill in daily quick 5-minute questionnaires
- You will receive a **\$50 Coles/Myer voucher** for participating

If you can help or would like more information please contact Barbra Timmer:

Mobile: 0415 902 258

Email: [b.timmer@uq.edu.au](mailto:b.timmer@uq.edu.au)





## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### What attitudes and key factors contribute to 'successful ageing'?

**Research participants needed:** Australian males and females aged 50 years and over.

The purpose of this project is to investigate the relationship between physical activity, perceived social connection and attitudes to ageing that promote successful ageing in Australian adults aged 50 years and older. Successful ageing is broadly defined as the physical, mental and social wellbeing in late adulthood. As much of world's population adapts to the living longer lives, gaining a greater understanding of what attitudes and key factors contribute to successful ageing is gathering increasing importance.

Participation in this research is voluntary and all information will remain securely anonymous. If you decide to take part you would be required to complete an online

survey that will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes of your time. A summary of the study outcomes will be available on request at the end of 2015.

The Principal Researchers for this study are Honours students at the University of Southern Queensland. The project has been approved by USQ's Human Ethics Committee: Code H15REA052

**If you are interested in participating in this study please follow the link and complete the survey.**

<https://psi.usq.edu.au/ols/?p=ATA15>

If you have any further queries please contact:  
Michelle Harris: [g1220582@uqmail.usq.edu.au](mailto:g1220582@uqmail.usq.edu.au)  
Debra Redley: [u1017274@uqmail.usq.edu.au](mailto:u1017274@uqmail.usq.edu.au)

**Thank you for your contribution.**



## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Carers of people with dementia and hearing loss

Many older adults experience dementia and hearing loss which can impact communication with family and friends. Hearing aids and communication training can help people hear and communicate. However, hearing aids are sometimes not worn and communication training is not always offered. For people with dementia, it is important that we manage hearing loss to optimise communication function.

The University of Queensland is developing a training program to support carers. This program will give you strategies for better communication with the person you care for. The program will be delivered by telehealth using an iPad, straight into your home. Telehealth is the delivery of health services over the Internet. You do NOT need any experience with telehealth or iPads to participate.

#### Can you help?

We are seeking volunteers who are caring for a family member with dementia and hearing loss, and who are living independently in the community. People of all ages are invited to participate.

#### What is involved?

The training program involves weekly sessions run over 4 weeks. Each week, participants will be asked to:

- 1) watch a short video (10-20 min) and complete a home activity, and
- 2) participate in a training session with a Speech Pathologist via telehealth.

We will provide everything you need to complete the training program in your own home. Before and after the training program, participants will be asked to complete some questionnaires about hearing aid use, memory, and communication.

People completing the study will be entered into a draw to win a \$100 Coles Myer or Woolworths gift voucher.

For more information on how you can be involved, please contact:

Eril McKinnon

Email: [e.mckinnon@uq.edu.au](mailto:e.mckinnon@uq.edu.au)

Ph: (07) 3346 7489



## RESEARCH PROJECTS



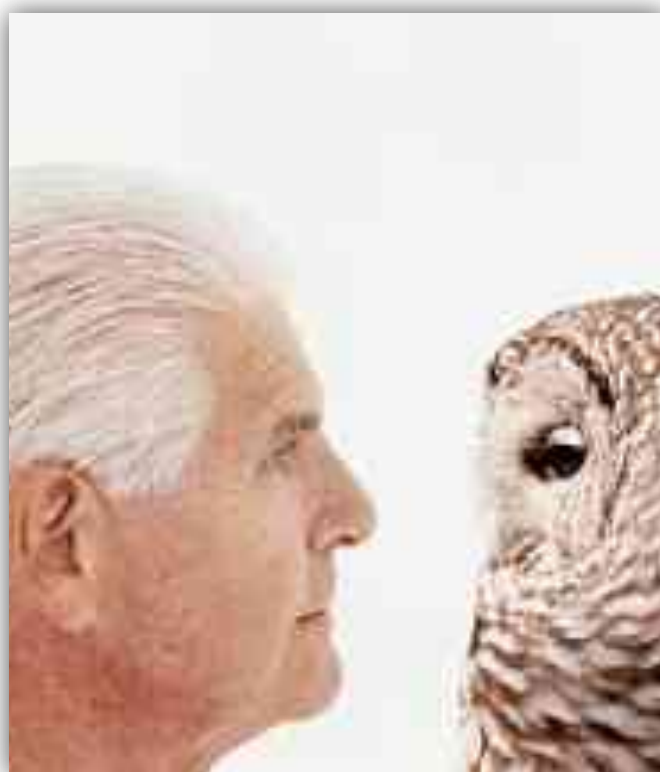
### **New Wisdom Project in 2015: The Getting of Wisdom**

Pots of gold at the end of the rainbow, the brass ring on the merry-go-round, the getting of wisdom... all of these things are considered elusive, difficult to grasp, nigh impossible! However, history and research tells us that the getting of wisdom is actually attainable, not necessarily all of the time by all of the people, but there are those among us who have been known to be wise.

PhD candidate, Leander Mitchell (University of Queensland), is therefore seeking your assistance. She and her supervisor, Professor Nancy Pachana, are looking to learn more about wisdom, in particular, the measurement of wisdom.

If you are interested in helping to discover more about the elusive concept of wisdom and how it might be best measured, please contact Leander Mitchell for more information.

Leander Mitchell  
The University of Queensland  
St Lucia, Brisbane  
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**For additional information or to be added to the AMI mailing list and Listserve, please contact us via email at [ami@uq.edu.au](mailto:ami@uq.edu.au).**

Alternatively you may contact Dr Nancy Pachana at  
School of Psychology, The University of Queensland  
ST LUCIA QLD 4072 or Tel. 07-3365-6832