

Ageing Mind Initiative

Issue 14, August 2012 Newsletter

www.uq.edu.au/ami

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This edition of the August newsletter is filled with exciting studies! With a total of FOURTEEN research projects currently being advertised, there should be something for everyone to get involved in.

From exercise studies, food tasting, perceptions of self and exploring motivation, we have it all.

Be sure to also look at the range of interesting research conferences for both academics and community members. Look them up on the AMI website at: www.uq.edu.au/ami/research-conferences-workshops-and-seminars

I hope you all enjoy the August issue of the AMI Newsletter. If you have any questions, you can always send them to ami@uq.edu.au



ISSUE QUOTE:

No matter how old you get, if you can keep the desire to be creative, you're keeping the man-child alive.

~John Cassavetes

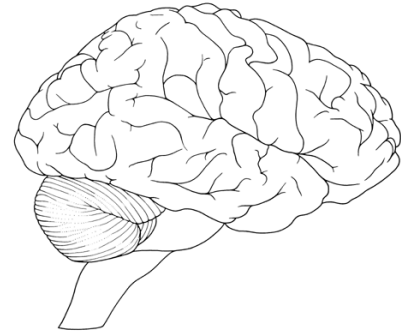
RESEARCH UPDATE

Memory and Communication

Training Studies

Chief Investigator: Professor Helen Chenery
(Faculty of Health Sciences)

Research team contact: Dr Erin Conway
e.conway@uq.edu.au



Background and Project Aims

We investigated whether training in memory and communication can help people with dementia to improve and retain their skills. As part of this we conducted a number of studies to test the effectiveness of techniques for aiding memory and learning. These studies involved people both with and without dementia.

Summaries of results of the studies

Which cues help to improve memory for future tasks?

Prospective memory is the ability to remember to perform an intended task in the future. This research used a computer based task to investigate prospective memory in healthy older adults. The study aimed to investigate how different types of cues would influence people's ability to remember to perform a specific task in the future. Twenty-three people participated in the study. Analysis of the results indicated that most participants performed the prospective memory task accurately regardless of the type of cues provided. This finding may prove useful for comparing the performance of other populations (e.g., people with dementia) to the performance of healthy older adults.

Which cues help to learn new words?

This study was interested in the way that people with and without dementia are able to learn new words. In particular we wanted to find out whether giving people different cues could help them to learn new words better. We asked people to learn new names for unknown objects (ancient Finnish farm tools), along with either the definition of what the object was used for (semantic information) or the name of a person it belonged to (non-semantic information). Sixty-four people participated in the study.

Overall, people without dementia were faster and more accurate at recalling the semantic information than the non-semantic information. The semantic information also appeared to help them learn the new names for the objects. People with dementia were able to learn the new information presented in this study, and this learning was also facilitated by the semantic information. The people with dementia performed better when asked to choose the new word or learnt information from a few given options, compared to being asked to recall the new word or other information off the top of their head.

RESEARCH UPDATE CONTINUED....

Memory and Communication Training Studies

Chief Investigator: Professor Helen Chenery
(Faculty of Health Sciences)

Research team contact: Dr Erin Conway
e.conway@uq.edu.au

Remembering old and new words

People with dementia were able to remember previously studied words at the same rate as healthy older adults. However, when the words were new, people with dementia were more likely to incorrectly identify them as being old (from the study list). When asked how confident they were on their response, people with dementia were most likely to identify the incorrect responses as a guess. Such patterns of recollection may indicate that the context for memories becomes less distinct for people with dementia, and suggest that it is easier for them to confuse from where they remember an event or item.



Conclusions

These studies assisted with understanding the way in which the memory works and options for training to improve memory performance. We sincerely thank all participants involved in the studies.

AMI RESEARCHER UPDATE

AMI Researcher Emma Poulsen has just been awarded a \$2000 student AIPPEN Scholarship. This scholarship follows the successful submission of her research to present at the All Together Better Health VI Conference in Kobe, Japan 5-8th October. <http://www.k-con.co.jp/atbh6.html>

Emma will be presenting her research on "Factors associated with subjective well-being in cancer workers in Queensland". The study focuses on factors associated with subjective well-being (SWB) in cancer workers in Queensland across administration; Allied Health (dietitians, pharmacists, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech pathologists); medical (radiation and medical oncologists, palliative care, haematologists); research; nursing; radiation therapy; and physics.

Congratulations Emma on this exciting opportunity.

Current Ageing Research

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

Effects of aerobic exercise on new word learning in healthy older adults

About the research

The purpose of this study is to understand how exercise affects language learning. Different diseases and conditions can have a negative impact on the way people use language to communicate. Understanding how exercise affects language learning in healthy adults may lead to development of new approaches to improving language re-learning in adults with brain damage (e.g., stroke, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease).

About participation

We are looking for healthy older adults (age 50-80 years) who are native English speakers with no history of bilingualism, neurologic disease, psychiatric illness, diabetes requiring insulin, any medical condition with exercise contraindications, who are not taking dopaminergic, anti-depressant or anti-psychotic drugs or hormone replacement therapy, who do not drink more than 6 cups of coffee/day or more than 2 standard alcoholic, and who do not smoke more than 10 cigarettes/day.

If you agree to participate in this study your participation will involve coming to the University of Queensland St. Lucia campus for 10 sessions that last about one hour each. In the first two sessions

you will undergo a physical function test and also perform some general thinking and language activities. During the next eight sessions you will be asked to do one or more of the following:

- ♦ Exercise on a bike for 30 minutes
- ♦ Stretch for up to 30 minutes
- ♦ Answer questions about your mood
- ♦ Look at objects and words on a computer screen
- ♦ Learn a new name for known or unknown objects
- ♦ Type the names you have learned for objects
- ♦ Decide whether object and names match
- ♦ Hit a button and say words out loud

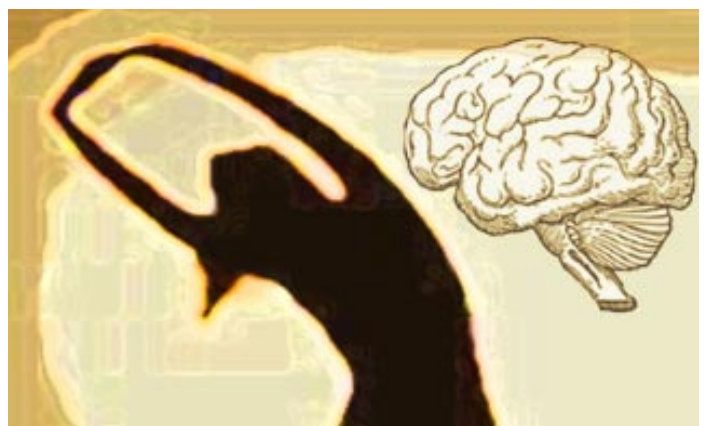
You will receive \$10 as a reimbursement for your time and travel for each session attended. You will also receive a \$25 bonus for completion of the study.

For more information please contact

Dr Amy Rodriguez

Phone: 07 3346 6110

Email: amy.rodriquez@uq.edu.au



Healthy Adults for Anxiety and Depression in Parkinson's Disease Study

We invite you to participate in our research and help us understand more about anxiety and depression in Parkinson's (PD). We seek for **right handed healthy adults over 55 years**, who are free of PD and have no history of depression, anxiety or related psychiatric manifestations, as a comparison group to participate in this PD research project.

Background and Aims of the Project

PD is a chronic and disabling brain disease affecting 80,000 Australians. Problems like anxiety and depression are common in PD patients. It is estimated that up to 90% of patients experience anxiety and depression and these problems significantly reduce their quality of life. Anxiety and depression in PD are poorly identified and therefore untreated.

This project aims to find better ways to identify anxiety and depression in PD. We will develop tests and techniques to assess these problems in PD. These novel assessment methods of anxiety and depression are expected to help diagnosis at early stages and potentially treat these problems helping PD patients to cope better with the disease.

What is required of you?

We will ask you to participate in a clinical interview which will be conducted at the University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research (UQCCR). The interview will take approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete. During this interview we will assess your cognitive function and will screen for anxiety and depression.

Recording brain waves & doing a language task

Within two weeks of completing the interview you will be invited to the UQCCR to record your brain waves while you perform a

language task. A netted cap which holds electrodes will be placed on your head to record brain waves. These electrodes only record electrical activity over the scalp and you will not feel any discomfort like electrical impulses. This technique is called electroencephalography or EEG.

The language task involves looking at words on a computer screen and making decisions about them. It will take approximately 2 hours to complete this part of the project. A research assistant will help with this part of the study. We will reimburse you with \$30 to cover some of your travel or parking costs involved with assisting us with this research project.

Are there any risks?

There are no major risks involved with completing this study. If you feel uncomfortable at any point you may choose to withdraw from the study. This will not affect your future care or relations with the staff at the University of Queensland or hospital you are attending.

Dr Nadeeka Dissanayaka

Level 3, University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research, Building 71/918, Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital, Herston QLD 4029

Telephone: (07) 33465577

Email: n.dissanayaka@uq.edu.au



SNAKES, SPIDERS, LIZARDS, MOTHS, DOGS, COCKRAOCHES

Are these things that make you anxious?

Is there something else that you are afraid of? You may have a phobia.

Do you want to overcome your fear?

A phobia is a marked and persistent fear of an object, situation or event, which is excessive and unreasonable, and which interferes with one's everyday life. Phobias are more common than is often thought, with phobias being one of the most common anxiety disorders experienced by older adults. But the good news is, phobias have been shown to be effectively treated with psychotherapy.

The University of Queensland is currently conducting a research study starting in 2012 investigating how adults and older adults with phobias respond to their feared stimulus before and after psychotherapy. The research team is currently recruiting men and women between the ages of 45 and 80 who may have a phobia.

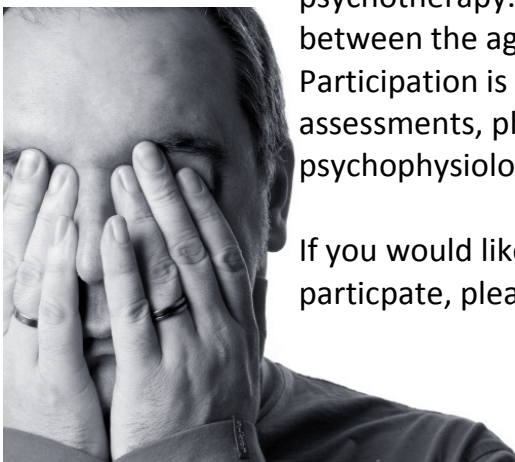
Participation is free, with minimal waiting time, and will involve pre-treatment assessments, phobia treatment using group cognitive behavioural therapy, psychophysiological measurements, and follow-up testing.

If you would like more information about this study, or would like to participate, please contact: **Madeline Farmer**

EMAIL: madeline.farmer@uqconnect.edu.au

PHONE: 0415 701 290

FAX: 3365-4466



the m.o.d.e.l. study

muscle mass, omega-3, diet, exercise and lifestyle

Participants will be randomly allocated into one of 3 groups. The study will involve 3 assessment periods over 6 months. 2 of the 3 groups will participate in a 12 week

We are seeking women who have successfully completed treatment for breast cancer (surgery, chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy) in the last 12 months, have no metastatic disease, do not have a history of cardiovascular disease or diabetes, and are currently not consuming a high dose of omega-3 supplements.

The aim of this research is to determine the effect of omega-3, exercise, or a combination of both, on muscle loss, body composition, markers of stress and quality of life after treatment for breast cancer.

healthy eating and exercise education program (9 sessions over 12 weeks) that is especially designed for breast cancer survivors.

The study is being conducted at the Wesley Research Institute, Auchenflower. If you live in Brisbane and would be interested in finding out more about the study (or know of anyone who may) please contact:

Cameron McDonald

0411380566 or

uqbreastcancerstudy@gmail.com



Perceptions of self?

A person's understanding of themselves is a complex interplay between many different factors. We are hoping to gain a better understanding of older adults' perceptions of themselves, including how these perceptions are affected by Alzheimer's Disease.

The University of Queensland is currently conducting research investigating the way that older adults with and without Alzheimer's Disease process self-relevant visual stimuli, including their own faces, faces of their loved ones, and their treasured possessions. The research team is currently recruiting men and women aged 65+, with or without a diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease.

Participation involves:

- Providing recent and past photos of yourself

and of your spouse/a loved one, as well as photos of two treasured possessions

- Completion of a very short questionnaire
- A 30-minute session with a researcher, during which you will be required to:
- Wear a bracelet that will monitor physiological response
- Answer simple yes/no questions ("is this you/yours?") about the photographs that you have provided, as well as some other photographs

If you are interested in participating in or finding out more information about this study investigating the nature of self-recognition in older adults, please contact:

Katie Havas

EMAIL: kathryn.havas@uqconnect.edu.au

PHONE: 0422 263 221

Interested in physical activity research? Want to find out how fit you are? Trying to lose weight?

We invite healthy women over 60 years of age to participate in a research study which aims to compare the information obtained from three different physical activity monitors when worn by older women living in the community.

These are small non-invasive electronic devices that can measure daily activity levels and estimate how much energy you exert each day.

The findings from this study will inform our future research studies as to which device(s) are the best for recording physical activity in older women. We are additionally looking at validating each of these devices against doubly labelled water (the best technique for the measurement of daily energy expenditure) as this has not yet been carried out with these monitors in this population.

Volunteers will be required to attend an initial assessment session at UQ, St Lucia lasting approximately one hour where they will undergo simple measures of weight, height and bioimpedance (body fat) and be fitted with the three monitors.

Participants are then required to wear these for 14-days whilst maintaining their normal day to day activities. Additionally participants ingest a special water mixture on commencement of the study and collect urine samples each day.

Printed and verbal feedback about exercise levels and daily energy/calorie expenditure will be provided on completion of the study.

For further details contact
Bridget Abell on 0430 336 244
or b.abell@uq.edu.au



Improving texture modified foods in aged care facilities

We invite you to participate in this research project, which looks at improving the texture modified foods available in aged care facilities. We seek your help to improve the taste, texture, and appearance of texture modified foods offered in aged care facilities.

Too often people who require texture modified foods face plates of white, green, orange and brown mounds of food covered in gravy. This project allows research scientists to work side-by-side with the staff of aged care facilities to improve texture modified foods in aged care facilities.

The scientists and researchers will be looking at food textures, flavours, and methods of storing and reheating texture modified foods. We need your assistance to provide us with feedback as to the appearance, smell, taste and mouth-feel of some foods currently served in aged care facilities and our 'new and improved foods'. With your help, we hope to work out which types of modified texture foods are most and least acceptable.

Your participation will involve:

- Inviting you to taste samples of foods currently served in aged care facilities and rate them on a form that we will provide. Some food samples may be excluded for your safety if you have food allergies or intolerances.
- Inviting you to taste samples of the new foods that we have been working on to improve the foods offered in aged care facilities and rate them on a form that we

will provide. Some food samples may be excluded for your safety if you have food allergies or intolerances.

- We anticipate that we will require about 30 minutes of your time, on a maximum of five occasions only. Our taste sessions will be held at the University of Queensland.

At the conclusion of the project we will write to you to let you know the general outcomes of this research.

If you have any questions at any stage, please ask. All of your information will be collected and stored so that your results are anonymous.

If you're interested in participating, please contact:

Dr Polly Burey

Phone: +61 7 3346 3188

Mob: 0433 787 546

Email: p.burey@uq.edu.au



What makes your life worthwhile?

Why do you feel content or fulfilled? What does a high-quality life mean to you? What things affect your wellness? Believe it or not, researchers have been concentrating so much on what makes you psychologically *un*-well, that they have (to an extent) overlooked a very important question – What actually makes you, well... *well*?

This year for her doctoral thesis, Sofia Robleda will be examining what *quality of life* and *well-being* means to Australian adults aged 50 and above, and also what variables influence these two concepts.

If you are 50 years and above, you are invited to participate in this study. You will be interviewed and given a range of questionnaires about your quality of life, well-being, perceptions of your own and other's aging, social support, life events, and optimism.

As a thank you for your participation, **you will also receive brief INDIVIDUALISED feedback on your results**, and empirically-validated tips on how to age positively! This means that you will get to know what you scored on the questionnaires you answered compared to others your age!

So, if you are interested in becoming involved, or just finding out more about the study, please contact:

Sofia Robleda on 0422686429 or
sofia.rg@me.com

You can also listen to an ABC radio interview of the study at: <http://blogs.abc.net.au/files/wellness-for-blog.mp3>



Memory for future intentions

People often think of the past when we talk about memory. Another component however, is memory for future intentions, such as remembering to attend an appointment or to take medication. We are interested in the processes that are involved in this type of memory.

Who can participate?

We are looking for healthy adults over 65 years of age. You must not have had a traumatic brain injury or be currently diagnosed with a psychiatric illness. If you are unsure if this includes you, please call Sebastian to discuss this further (0422 079 017).

What does participation involve?

The study will involve a brief assessment, computer-based task and paper-based

questionnaires, and takes 60 to 90 minutes to complete.

Where is this study held?

The study can be completed at the University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus and you will be reimbursed \$20 for travel expenses. The study may also be completed in the convenience of your home on the provision that you have a quiet room with minimal distractions. Testing at UQ, St Lucia campus is preferred. Please note, home assessments can only be offered to those living in the Brisbane metropolitan area.

Getting involved:

Please contact **Sebastian Joeffry**

Phone: 0422 079 017

Email: Sebastian.joeffry@uqconnect.edu.au

if you would like to learn more about the study.

Selection in sentence generation and propositional language

We are seeking healthy adults between the ages of 65 and 80

We are interested in discovering how different parts of the brain control a range of thinking skills. For example, this includes how the frontal areas of the brain are involved in generating a spoken response. This information is important for understanding how these parts of the brain are involved in specific types of thinking in general and for understanding the thinking problems of some patients whose illnesses affect the brain. We can obtain this information by studying the behaviour of people who have suffered an illness affecting their brain, and comparing their performance to people who have had no such illness.

Participants will be required to perform several simple tasks that look at your ability to think. This may involve responding verbally (i.e. speaking) or nonverbally (eg. pointing) to words and

pictures. The tasks are carried out with pen and paper or via computer. Each task will be explained to you beforehand with examples given. These tasks take around two hours to complete and can be done at a pace that is comfortable and convenient for you. No physical medical procedures are involved.

While it is preferable that the study be conducted in the research lab at the University of Queensland, the researchers are flexible in terms of discussing an alternative, more convenient location for testing should it be required.

If interested, please contact either Anna or Tom (contact details provided below) to arrange a session time.

Miss Anna Casey Email:

anna.casey@uqconnect.edu.au

Ph: 0423 779 217

Mr Tom Hollingsworth

Email: thomas.hollingsworth@uqconnect.edu.au

Ph: 0402 126 270

The effects of personal and organisational resources on caregiver strain

Research is being conducted by University of Queensland PhD Researchers into how caring for elders with physical (i.e. frailty) or mental disability impacts on carers ability to manage their job roles at work, home and the impact on their health and wellbeing.

Caregiving can have both negative and positive impacts on our lives but we need to know more in order to facilitate support initiatives that will affect you. By participating, you will help us gain a better understanding of the current situation of employed carers and the ways in which you receive or require support. This will be through strengthening individual and work-related resources.

This area of research is vital given demographic challenges for Australia and the implications this has for carers who need to balance multiple roles. We hope to determine what support resources

organisations need to embark upon to assist carers, thus implications are at the individual and organisational level. This first study will inform training for caregivers to better take care of themselves (personal resources/ emotional support) and their loved ones, and for employers to better assist caregivers.

Your participation is requested for **2 online questionnaires** (20 minutes each) to be completed over **6 months** (approximately June/July 2012 and again in November 2012-January 2013).

You are also requested (but not required) to provide an **email contact for a supervisor or colleague** who can provide information on your behaviour at work at both time points. This will take the form of a short (10 minute) online survey which will be both anonymous and confidential.

We hope to recruit 500 employed individuals who provide care to an elder across Australia. This care may take the form of support due to physical ailments (i.e. frailty or other diagnoses such as Parkinson's) or mental health issues (i.e.

Dementia/Depression), or emotional support from the caregiver (i.e. even phoning regularly to check in). We aim to contact carers who provide **any form** of support.

If you provide care to an elder who requires assistance with their daily living, please follow the link below to register your interest and to find out more information. In accordance with University and research policy, all participants will be ensured confidentiality at all stages of the study.

<https://experiment.psy.uq.edu.au/eldercare/>

Thank you very much for your assistance!
Claire Greaves, PhD Candidate.



Language Processing and the Brain

We are conducting a study to find out how Parkinson's disease can influence brain activity during language processing. In order to do this, we need to compare the brain activity associated with language processing in healthy adults to the brain activity of people with Parkinson's disease.

We are seeking healthy adults over 50 years of age who are right handed, have English as a primary language, with no history of neurological disease, mental illness or head trauma.

Participation in the research will involve a brainwave recording session (EEG) while you do some computer-based language tasks. For this EEG

recording, a netted cap is fitted on the head which records brain activity while you do the language tasks.

During another testing session you will also be asked to do some general thinking and language assessments whilst your brain activity is not being recorded. The testing will occur at the University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research, Herston.

You will receive \$30 as a reimbursement for the time and travel involved in participation. Overall, participation in this project is expected to take 1-2 sessions lasting approximately 3-4 hours.

If you live in Brisbane and are interested in knowing more about this study, please contact

Dr Anthony Angwin at email a.angwin@uq.edu.au, or phone (07) 3346 7460.

What motivates you to volunteer and participate in University Research?

If you have participated in an age related research project that required you to attend the St. Lucia Campus of the University of Queensland, we would love to hear from you. A study is currently underway examining the trend for older persons to engage in the activities of Australian Universities.

It aims to understand what is motivating this engagement and why older persons are taking advantage of the opportunity to enrol in classes, volunteer, help in the training of students and access a wide range of amenities and services available on campus.

The study also examines whether or not the built environment of a university campus, and the level

to which a campus is integrated with its surrounding urban context, assists or is hampering older persons in taking advantage of these opportunities. If you would like to share your experiences, we invite you participate in a short survey.

The survey is anonymous and can be completed on-line at: <http://www.surveys.unsw.edu.au/survey/156685/1624/>

We are also looking to interview volunteers who regularly visit the St. Lucia Campus.

If you would like to participate in this way, or would like any additional information about the study, please contact the lead researcher:

Tracie Harvison on 0417 243561 or email: tracie.harvison@bigpond.com

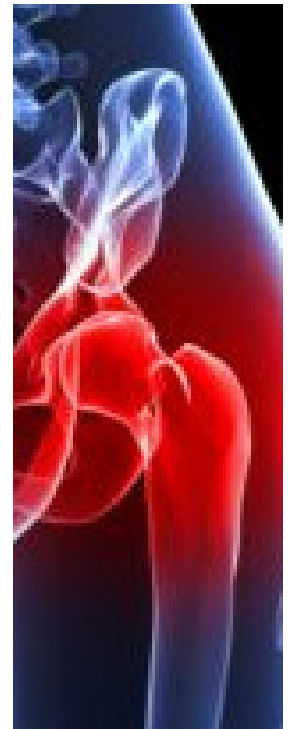
Hip Osteoarthritis study Healthy adults AND adults with ongoing Hip pain needed!

We need people over the age of 45 years with either:

1. Ongoing hip pain (greater than 3 months) and/or suspected or known diagnosis of **Hip Joint Osteoarthritis** (and no previous lower limb joint surgery, major trauma or knee arthritis) are required for a research study looking at the effects of hip osteoarthritis on joint cartilage, bone health, muscle function and walking features and their relationship to progression of the condition.
 2. No history of injuries, surgery or neurological conditions to their lower body are required
- Testing will take place at the Griffith University Biomechanics Laboratory, Gold Coast campus. Free X-rays will be taken at a local radiology clinic in Brisbane or Gold Coast. This project has ethical clearance from Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (PES/23/08/HREC).

What's involved:

- Tested twice, approximately 12 months apart and
- Have a free X-ray and MRI scan of their pelvis and hip joints
- Have free Bone Mineral Density (Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA)) scans of the hips and to measure the amounts of bone, muscle and fat in the body.
- Have a free scan to measure bone and muscle shape and quality in the thigh
- Complete questionnaires on health, pain, mobility and quality-of-life
- Have a free blood test to assess the relationships between the hormones, proteins and fats that circulate in the blood, and the characteristics of the bone, cartilage, muscle and fat.
- Have their lower body strength tested
- Have their walking pattern analysed
- Have their ability to walk, climb stairs and rise from a chair assessed
- Wear a 'pedometer' for 1 week



To volunteer or receive more information, please contact: **Maria Constantinou**

Mobile: 0412392062 Phone: (07) 5552 7716

Email: m.constantinou@griffith.edu.au

For additional information or to be added to the AMI mailing list and Listserve, please contact us via email at 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**