

Ageing Mind Initiative

Issue 11, March 2012 Newsletter

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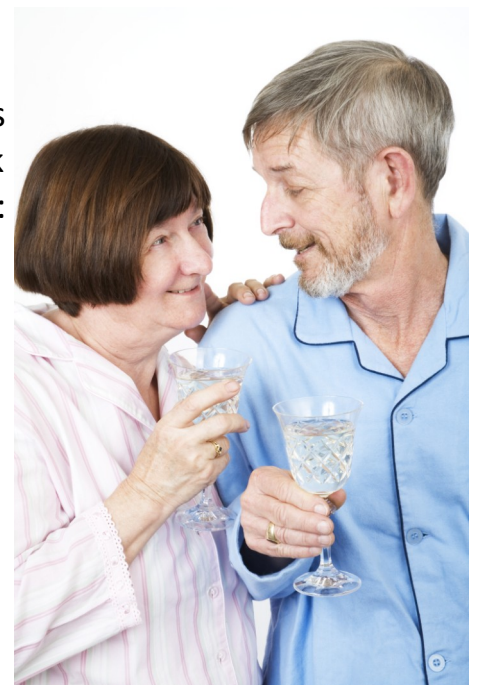
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Welcome to first edition of the AMI Newsletter for the year 2012. I hope you all had a wonderful Summer break and are energised and excited about the year to come.

This issue is filled with a new wave of research projects desperately seeking participants. The researchers behind this work are an intelligent mix of PhD students, research academics and honours students. If any of these projects interest you, please don't be shy about participating.

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 March issue of the AMI Newsletter. If you have any questions, you can always send them to ami@uq.edu.au



ISSUE QUOTE:

The other day a man asked me what I thought was the best time of life. 'Why,' I answered without a thought, 'Now'.

~ David Grayson



What is Psychological Wellness?

Being healthy is not just about being physically well. In fact, the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” So it is **not** enough to know about the range of physical and psychological problems that occur in people. It is just as important to find out what leads to an overall sense of wellbeing and high quality of life!

At present, there is a lot more research that has been conducted on psychological disease rather than psychological wellness in all age groups, but even less so in older adults. Thus, because the population of the world is aging, it is imperative that more research is conducted on aspects of positive psychological functioning and positive aging.

Understanding this can help us gain a better perspective on what older adults think a high quality of life (QOL) means, and what factors contribute to this occurring. It is important that older adults are given the opportunity to state their personal ideas on what constitutes QOL. Australian older adults have yet to be given this opportunity, as all studies focusing on QOL in Australian older adults have measured specific “expert”-determined domains such as geriatric morale, depression, social

networks, life events. Other studies have been aimed at specific sub-groups of the older population such as caregivers and retirees.

Although QOL and wellbeing are thought to be strongly related (and their terms are at times used interchangeably) they are in fact two different concepts. Studies conducted on wellbeing have identified it as a many-sided domain encompassing the dimensions of positive self-regard, mastery of the surrounding environment, quality relations with others, continued growth and development, purposeful living, and the capacity for self-determination.

Outlines on wellbeing have also shown diversity in age and gender. For example, environmental mastery and autonomy have been shown to increase with advancing age. Although Australian studies have looked at wellbeing in terms of life satisfaction there are currently no studies that have examined wellbeing per se in Australian older adults as defined by a validated theory of wellbeing. Thus, this study aims to expand our knowledge on the wellbeing and QOL of Australian older adults and the factors that influence them.

Help us understand what makes your life worthwhile.

Interviews will be run at the University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus from March until November (see page 7). If you are a member of the 50+ Registry, come and share your thoughts on what gives you a high quality of life and a sense of well-being to help us increase our knowledge.

For more information, please contact Researcher Sofia Robleda at: sofia.rg@me.com.



The Sandwich Generation

Changes in society have created new family structures, and with these structures come new issues. With advances in health care and medical science our lifespan has become longer and longer. Generations ago the diseases to look out for would shorten a person's life by 20 years, now the issues people face in older age are more slow and degenerative ailments. Many of these can hinder, slowing mobility or even affecting memories and capacity. As more people enter older age, the care that is required increases, many turning to their now adult children for support.

At the other end, our children are taking more time to become independent. Because of finances and more years spent in education children are remaining in the family household for longer. Even after finishing university or finding fulltime jobs it is common for children to remain in the family nest. Even after leaving the family household children still rely on their parents for emotional and financial support. This means that parents nowadays provide care to their children for longer than in previous generations as they take more time to become independent.

These two factors, the older generation requiring more care and the younger generation requiring more care, means that middle-aged people these days are caught between the needs of their aging parents and their growing children – this situation of being caught in the middle has earned them the title the “Sandwich Generation.”

The family structure of the Sandwich Generation brings new issues and benefits. Adult children who now give care to their parents represent a change in relationship, previously the parent has given care to the child but now the child is the caregiver – bringing up many issues. There are also many

other known issues that the Sandwich Generation faces; greater complexity in families can be difficult to navigate, disagreements in child rearing practices or financial matters between the parents and grandparents may arise. Benefits can include the sharing of responsibilities or support between family members.

This new family structure has been largely unstudied. Additionally almost no research has been conducted on ways to help people who are in this kind of situation. Little is known about the Sandwich Generation. What are all the issues they face? What are all the benefits? What would be helpful for people in the Sandwich Generation?

We at the University of Queensland are trying to understand the Sandwich Generation better, to develop an intervention to help and assist people in this circumstance. We want to know about the experiences of anyone who has a living parent and a living child and provides either physical, emotional, or financial support to both.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

We are conducting focus groups starting mid-March at the University of Queensland St Lucia Campus, and in the Toowong library in the Toowong Village shopping centre – morning, afternoon and evening meetings are available. Groups will consist of 7-8 people and will run for approximately an hour. Anonymous questionnaires looking at stress, parenting, and communication will be completed at the conclusion of the group. For more information please contact Research Officer Damon Hine at damon.hine@uqconnect.edu.au

Or if you are unable to attend a focus group you can complete our online Sandwich Generation Survey at the web address:

<http://exp.psy.uq.edu.au/sandwich>

Research Update: Why do Women use Alternative Medicine?

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) use has been researched widely; however, studies with older adults and Australian populations are limited. While currently there are a range of clinical trials testing the efficacy of different types of CAM, research into the social and cultural dimensions of its use is lacking. The profile of Australian CAM users has been explored by researchers, however; the motivations and predictors of CAM use has not. A study advertised in the September 2011 AMI Newsletter explored why women use CAM across two cohorts; mid-age (born between 1946-51) and older adult (born between 1921-1926).

The profile of Australian women CAM users was mapped using data from the Australian Longitudinal Study of Women's Health (ALSWH). High levels of stress and/or remote geographical location predicted women commencing CAM use, from a background of no CAM use. Medical history, common problem health symptoms, physical health and mental health were not able to predict CAM use. There were no significant predictors of CAM use found in the older adult cohort.

In response to these findings, six focus groups were conducted across two cohorts of women, including mid-age adults (60-65 years old) and older adult cohorts (over 80 years old). Consistent with previous studies it was evident that both mid-age and older adults CAM users consumed a varied and extensive range of CAM products ranging from fish oil through to acupuncture.

Older women were less inclined to identify as being CAM users than mid-age women despite using a range of CAM products. Older adults were also more likely to refer to the influence that historical events played in their current health practices. Mid-age adults cited experiencing stress

and guilt, the desire for control over their health, a holistic approach and preventative healthcare as the main reasons for commencing CAM use. Attitudes to CAM use varied across the two cohorts. Older adults described hope and optimism as being common in the mindset of a CAM user whereas mid-age adults used terms such as curious and assertive. Availability of services, promotion of CAM and a belief that it had lower risk than conventional medicine were also cited by both cohorts as being motivators to commence CAM use.

These findings have important implications for the phrasing of research questions with regard to women's CAM use. It is perhaps more important to discuss the use of individual CAM products than discuss CAM use in broad terms with older adult cohorts. The importance of direct communication about CAM, control in health decision making and having an open attitude for physicians is also crucial if CAM use is to be managed in conjunction with conventional medicine. Finally, tolerance and experimentation with CAM use is increasing, so guidelines of how to incorporate this into conventional practice should be developed.



Scozia Update: The AMI Mascott

Late in 2011, a group feline admirers from the School of Psychology and the Ageing Mind Initiative, informally known as the "Italian Cat Consortium" pooled their resources and adopted Scozia, a small female cat from the Torre Argentina Cat Sanctuary in Rome.

Here is what we wrote to the sanctuary:

The School of Psychology & the Ageing Mind Initiative unit of the University of Queensland in Australia wish to adopt Scozia for 13 months. Nancy Pachana visited your sanctuary a while ago, & told her work colleagues, so we banded together to adopt her.

The sanctuary replied as follows:

Dear Nancy and the School of Psychology and Ageing Mind Initiative

Thank you so much for having banded together for Scozia. I see Tim and Nancy also have Lautrec, who is doing just fine.

Scozia, as you may know, is semi feral, and is getting on in years. She is in fact Sky's mother, and though we don't know her age we know he is already about eight years old. Despite her age she is quite agile and hard to catch. One of our most determined volunteers did manage so that we could test her for FeLV and FIV, as we try to do after a while for all our cats (at least the ones we manage to catch). They turned out negative, thankfully.

Sky is a very friendly cat, and socializes.

Scozia does not seem to be his mother at all. I wouldn't say she hates people, she just doesn't want to be associated with them. Some volunteers have decided to reciprocate the feeling, but luckily for her, her looks have won over some hearts.

So for now we can say she is doing fine, she is ageing well. So, despite her personality, she probably is not a candidate as subject for your research. But then again ...

So, all in all, I thank you on behalf of Scozia who, grumpingly, probably approves, together with that other outlaw, Lautrec.

Thank you again, Andy



Current Ageing Research

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

Language Recovery After Stroke

We are seeking healthy participants over 65 years of age who are right handed, have English as a primary language, no history of neurological disease, mental illness, or head trauma and have no metals present in the body which are not safe in an MRI scanner.

The aim of this study is to investigate how acute stroke patients with communication impairment recover language function following a stroke. We want to determine how brain activity differs between healthy adults and stroke patients during a basic language task.

Participation in the research will involve two brain scanning (MRI) sessions, carried out six months apart at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Herston. An additional assessment session will be carried out at the University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research, Herston. Participants will be reimbursed \$30 for their time and effort.

If you live in Brisbane and would be interested in finding out more about the study (or know of anyone who may) please contact:

Tracy Roxbury on **33466110** or **0409652447** or t.roxbury@uq.edu.au

Financial Capacity Study

THANK YOU very much to everyone who has given their time to participate in the UQ financial capacity research study to date! This NH&MRC dementia grant funded research has the potential to help many older Australians in the future, and we are very appreciative of your support in achieving this goal.

We still require more participants for this research study in 2012 and need your help to do this! If you are **60 years or older and do not have a memory impairment**, then we would love to talk to you further.

Please contact our Project Coordinator, Dr Bronwyn Massavelli, by calling 3365 5050 or by email (b.massavelli@uq.edu.au).



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

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

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 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.

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 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

Unpacking the Sandwich Generation

Are you a parent (aged 30-70 years) who also provides some form of care for your own parent(s)? With people living longer and children taking longer to become independent, being sandwiched in-between two generations is becoming increasingly common. We at the University of Queensland want to know what this experience is like for you.

Focus groups will be run and will consist of 7-8 people. Groups will meet at the University of Queensland St Lucia Campus, and in the Toowong library in the Toowong Village shopping centre – morning, afternoon and evening meetings are available.

Groups will be run during March and will only require an hour of your time. Anonymous questionnaires looking at stress, parenting, and communication will be completed at the conclusion of the group.

The study is being conducted by Damon Hine under the supervision of Nancy Pachana. If you would like to participate or have any questions, please contact

Damon on 0424 349 511 or via email at:
damon.hine@uqconnect.edu.au



What makes your life worthwhile?

Why do you feel content or fulfilled? What does a high-quality life mean to you? 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.

As a member of the 50+ Registry, 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 and continuing support of the 50+ Registry, **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



In search of return migrants

Have you lived in different places in Australia over your life? Have you ever moved back to live in a former home place after living somewhere else for a while – could be back to the same locality or even the same house? If so, you may be eligible to participate in a study about return migration in Australia.

A researcher at the Queensland Centre for Population Research is currently undertaking an in-depth study of return migration in Australia. As part of this study she is interested to learn more about the underlying motivations and reasons that people have for returning to a former home place.

You might have moved interstate, or between two towns or cities in the same state, or even just to the other side of a large city. In this study we are not interested in people who have moved overseas and subsequently moved back home.

When and where:

Eligible volunteers will be asked to take part in an interview that will last 60 minutes in a location that is convenient to you.

If *you* are interested to find out more about the study or *know of anyone who may be* please contact Angelique Parr on 0403 392 510 or



Write a song about important moments in your life

The University of Queensland's Music Therapy Department is seeking retirees to take part in a study investigating the processes involved in collaborative songwriting. We are interested in participants' experiences of contributing to three different types of song creations in conjunction with a trained Music Therapist.

Sessions can occur at a location that is convenient for you, but participants must live in or around the Brisbane area. **No musical experience is needed.**

After an initial interview, a trained Music Therapist will collaborate with you to produce three different types of song creations. We are interested in your perceptions of these processes, so we will ask you

questions about your experiences. Six weeks later we will interview you again to find out how you feel about your song creations, and if you've done anything with them. At the conclusion of the follow up interview you will be given your choice of a \$50 Coles/Myer or iTunes voucher.

For an information sheet, please email Assoc Prof Felicity Baker:

f.baker1@uq.edu.au

or Research Assistant

Wendy Chatterton:

w.chatterton@uq.edu.au.

Or you can phone Wendy on Ph 0438 788 599.



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.

A Parenting Program for Grandparents

UQ researchers are on the lookout for grandparents who need assistance or would like to fine tune their parenting skills to take part in a new program.

Grandparent Triple P is a nine-week group program that runs at the University of Queensland's St Lucia campus. Early sessions will focus on refreshing parenting strategies with the emphasis placed on working with parents to form a positive parenting team. The latter part of the program will be conducted by telephone to help grandparents develop these techniques further.

To participate in Grandparent Triple P you need to provide at least 10 hours of care per week to a grandchild who is aged between two to nine years. There is no cost to take part. More information is available at

<https://exp.psy.uq.edu.au/grandparents/>.

For more information contact
Project Coordinator
James Kirby on
(07) 3365 6207 or
j.kirby@psy.uq.edu.au



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