

Ageing Mind Initiative Issue 29 October 2016 Newsletter WWW.uq.edu.au/ami

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Welcome back to all of our readers. We have two brand new research projects advertised in this edition of AMI. If you have ever wanted to try out an MRI machine, now is you chance. While lying there you can help answer the question of how we respond to logical statements across the lifespan (page 9). If that is not your cup of tea, you can also complete some tasks to explore how different thinking skills relate to language (page 11).

We are also very excited to be working on a brand new website. The new layout is aimed to increase accessibility of all website content. It is our hope that the new look will help us engage with all of our readers more and make information easier to find. We are hoping to have the New website completed with all updated content by

the end of October so keep an eye out.

We hope you enjoy this months edition of the AMI Newsletter. Thank you for your ongoing support of ageing-related research!



ISSUE QUOTE:

"Spring passes and one remembers one's innocence. Summer passes and one remembers one's exuberance. Autumn passes and one remembers one's reverence." Winter passes and one remembers one's perseverance." — Yoko Ono





Dementia dogs: Australian-first program set to expand after promising results

Article reproduced with permission by Social Affairs Correspondent Norman Hermant.

A program that places trained assistance dogs in the homes of people with dementia and their carers is set to expand after promising results in early trials.

Dogs 4 Dementia has had two trained dogs living in households since October. That is about to increase to 10 households by the end of the year.

The program, run by aged care provider HammondCare and Assistance Dogs Australia, is a first for Australia.

According to director of HammondCare's Dementia Centre Colm Cunningham, it is already starting to have an impact.

"[It's] early days. It could be that people live a lot happier at home, and for longer periods of time," Colm Cunningham said. "There's a lot of stress when somebody gets dementia.

"Simply that the person can recognise the dog, be involved in their care, [the family] start to remember the person with dementia is able to do things."

That has been the experience of Rolf Beilharz — who lives with dementia — and his wife Vyrna Beilharz.

Since October, two-year-old black Labrador Jiyu has been a companion in their Melbourne home.

"We've walked in the evening, taking the dog with us. It's so pleasant," Mr Beilharz said.

He has difficulty speaking now, but he talks about Jiyu with a broad smile on his face.

"The joy of having this lovely, friendly person with us, lifts everything," said Vyrna Beilharz.



PHOTO Black Labrador Jiyu is the companion of Rolf Beilharz, who lives with dementia, and his wife Vyrna.





Dementia dogs (continued)

She is her husband's primary carer and says things have changed dramatically for the better since Jiyu arrived.

"He's really become the centre of the family," Ms Beilharz said.

"He is the one that we concentrate on."

When their children and grandchildren visit, they connect to her husband through the dog.

That Jiyu behaves so well at home is no accident. His training with Assistance Dogs Australia (ADA) began at just eight weeks old.

For the first year of their lives, dogs like Jiyu live with volunteers who teach them basic skills.

When they are about one year old, they move to ADA's Training Centre in Waterfall, outside of Sydney.

The dogs are trained for six to 10 months to assist people with dementia and their carers.

"That can include a lot of emotional support that they offer them," assistance dog trainer Rose Lobos said.

"They also help them to maintain their basic routines that sometimes can be lost.

"The dogs can be taught to pick up a bottle after an alarm goes off to remind a person to have a drink.

"They can also close drawers and open doors as well. Sometimes a person might go into the kitchen and forget why they're there."

Right now, ADA cannot meet demand. It has a waiting list of more than 100 applications for assistance dogs.

Ultimately, ADA hopes it can expand to train up to 60 dogs at once — but only if it can raise the money.

Dogs 4 Dementia is modelled on a pioneering program in Scotland. The trial here has been funded through a \$1.5 million grant from the Federal Government.

It is estimated by 2020, more than 400,000 Australians will be living with dementia. Based on the positive early results of the Dogs4Dementia trial, it's a safe bet demand for "dementia dogs" will be high.

"It means that we're bringing things that are about normal day to day living back into the mix," said HammondCare's Colm Cunningham, as he patted Jiyu the Labrador on an afternoon walk. "This dog could be the way people (with dementia) actually live well at home."



Its training centre can host 15 dogs at a time.



Originally published in <u>the New Daily</u> 9:45pm, May 17, 2016 Anthony Colangelo Reporter

The University

OF OUEENSLAND



Raw eggs, fresh pasta, homemade brandy and living the single life are just some of the secrets that helped the world's oldest person reach a staggering 116 years of age.

Emma Martina Luigia Morano from Italy became the world's oldest living human after the previous Guiness World Record holder, Susannah Mushatt Jones (also 116), died in New York City last week.

As news of Ms Morano's record spread, so too did her tips for living the lengthy life that she has enjoyed.

Ms Morano, the only surviving person born in the 1800s (November 29, 1899), was told as a teenager that eating one raw egg and one cooked egg a day would ward off anaemia.

It's a ritual she steadfastly continued since she received the advice as a teenager when diagnosed with the illness.

In 2015 she revealed to *La Stampa* newspaper another of her secrets: homemade brandy. Ms Morano said she drank a glass of the spirit each day.

"For lunch I'll eat pasta and minced meat then for dinner, I'll have just a glass of milk," she said.

The "supercentenarian" also said sleep was vital to her good health. She gets into bed before 7pm every evening, and rises before 6am.

She said she occasionally enjoyed some chocolate, never took drugs and always tried to think positively about the future.



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Longevity Tips (continued)

Ms Morano's physician told Associated Press there had to be a genetic component to her 116-year life.

"Emma seems to go against everything that could be considered the guidelines for correct nutrition: she has always eaten what she wants, with a diet that is absolutely repetitive," De Carlo Bava said.

"For years, she has eaten the same thing every day, not much vegetables or fruit. But she's gotten this far.

"She can be considered a phenomenon." Ms Morano was raised in Vercelli and then moved to Verbania on the shores of Lake Maggiore. Both are in the northern Italian region of Piedmont, close to Switzerland.

She married in 1926 but split with her partner in 1938. Her only child died when he was six months old.

Ms Morano did not marry again, although she told Associated Press reporters in 2015 that "men on the road stopped to hear me singing. And then they had to run because they were late and should go to work!".

Until 1954 she worked in a factory making jute, a plant fibre that can be spun into threads.

She then had another job in the kitchen of a boarding school until she retired at the age of 75.



Photo: Getty

Ms Morano became the oldest living person in Italy and Europe in 2013. In November 2015, for her 116th birthday, she received congratulations from Pope Francis.

Ms Morano hung the signed congratulatory telegram from the Pope on her wall.

She is the second-oldest person in European history, behind Jeanne Calment of France, who died in August 1997 at age 122.

Her sister lived to the age of 102.

The oldest living man is **112-year-old Israeli Holocaust survivor Israel Kristal**, Guinness World Records reported.





Media Release: New Research Project on ageing well in a foreign land

18 May 2016: The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland's (ECCQ) community care division, Diversicare has partnered with academic researchers at the University of Queensland (UQ) to undertake a new research project.

The research project titled, 'Ageing well in a foreign land: Identity, social connectedness, well-being' aims to better understand how older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds experience ageing in Australia, by looking at the factors that contribute to social isolation and low wellbeing.

General Manager Vivienne McDonald said that the research will deepen Diversicare's knowledge of the basis of social isolation in clients and will inform the strategies they use to manage them.

"This research will maximise the effectiveness of our community care in assisting CALD older adults to age well by remaining socially connected and active.

"We hope to gain greater insight into what works, for whom and why," said Ms McDonald.

Diversicare's case workers will work closely with UQ researchers during data collection and analysis.

ECCQ Chairperson Serge Voloschenko said that research plays a critical role in determining how services are provided.

"We are very excited to be involved in this project and are grateful for the opportunity to learn more about how we can better support older CALD Australians.

"This research will shape the programs that Diversicare delivers, building our capacity to accommodate Australia's diverse ageing population," said Mr Voloschenko.

The research project will run for three years and will adopt a mixed methods approach.

This project has been funded under the Australian Research Council Linkage grants scheme, announced in Canberra on 9 May 2016.

Download as a pdf here.



Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland





Websites to Help Keep You Active!

Did you know that seniors are the fastestgrowing age group in Australia? Over 14 per cent of our population is aged 65 or older, and that rate is expected to continue to grow over the next several years.

Fortunately, there are a number of great tools and resources online that can help support older adults and make the ageing process a little easier. One of the ways to do this is to keep mentally, socially and physically active. Here are some useful websites that have a range of facts and support tools to help you do just that!

Be Active: A Physical Activity Guide for Older Australians

This booklet is designed to help older Australians achieve sufficient physical activity for good health as they age. It is mainly for people who are not currently building 30 minutes of physical activity into their daily lives, and are looking for ways they can do so. (Recent surveys show about half of all older Australians are not doing at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day).

University of the Third Age, Brisbane

Brisbane U3A is one of many similar U3A organisations in Australia. U3A Brisbane has been situated at 97 Creek Street since 2012 and now has in excess of 3,500 members offering over 240 courses. We also have alternate premises at 232 Adelaide Street in the Brisbane CBD, both locations are handy to train, bus and City Cat services.

Activities for Seniors: 10 Best Hobby Websites

This website has some fun and creative ideas that may inspire a new personal project or hobby.

<u>Connections Matter: Helping Older People Stay</u> <u>Socially Active</u>

Connections matter. Strong ties with family, friends and the community provide people with happiness, security, support and a sense of purpose. Research shows that being connected to others is important for mental wellbeing and can be a protective factor against anxiety and depression. Beyond Blue have created a free booklet to guide people in maintaining social connectedness.

Probus Association of Queensland

Probus aims to advance Probus as a worthwhile community organisation for retired and semi retired people by sharing ideas and information, coordinating multi club opportunities for friendship, fellowship and social interaction, and assisting with the formation of new clubs







Current Ageing Research

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

Help Train Your Short-Term Memory

Have you ever wondered what is really happening with your memory as you age? Or if your memory is actually failing you? Maybe you are forgetting more often where you parked your car or put your keys. If yes, then this study will be of interest to you.

I am studying the potential of a new short term memory training program in answering those questions, as well as teaching some basic memory skills that you can use in everyday life. The aim of this study is to help you feel more secure about your memory and to be able to use it better. This study runs over five Saturday mornings over a two-month period. We are currently looking for older adults aged 65+ who can commit the time to improve their memory. Having a smartphone is good but not essential.

At this point of time we are only looking for older adults that have not been diagnosed with neurological disorder such as Dementia and Alzheimer's. The training will be held at the University of Queensland and a certificate of completion will be provided once the training is completed.

Please contact me on 0415 522 151 or email Hannah at <u>h.jensenfielding@uq.edu.au</u> for more information.







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How we respond to logical statements across life span?

Sometimes, as people get older they report feeling challenged in remembering things, or in moving around; however, their ability to reason remains unscathed by age. Logical reasoning is a critical ability that influences a lot of social interaction and success. In my studies, I am interested in how logical reasoning processes change (or don't change!) as a function of age. Specifically, I examine how responses to logical statements change with age.

To help me examine these changes, I am seeking volunteers between the ages of 65-80 years, to participate in a 2.5-hour study. As a participant you will lay on your back in an MRI scanner for 1 hour. During this time, you will be responding to a task while we take pictures of your brain. In the remaining 1.5 hours you will get to complete a variety of easy games with pen/paper, spoken responses, and computer tasks.

The session will be held at the Centre for Advanced Imaging, at the UQ St Lucia campus. You will be helping science in the most fundamental way possible, and you will be helping me to complete my study as soon as possible! At the end of the session, you will receive \$60 reimbursement as a thankyou for your time and effort. We can also arrange for FREE parking for you. If you are interested please feel free to call Ashley on 0433763603 or email at <u>a.york@uq.edu.au</u>









RESEARCH PROJECTS

Seeking Volunteers with Tennis Elbow and Healthy Volunteers For Tendon Pain Research

We are seeking volunteers who have tennis elbow (pain over the outer side of the elbow), and volunteers aged 35-70 years who have not had any pain or injuries in the last 6 months to participate in a study investigating different types of sensation in people with tennis elbow.

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 way the central nervous system functions 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?
- 2. What is the relationship of any of these QST differences and the patient's ratings of their tendon pain and problems?
- 3. Will these measures predict long-term outcomes of patients with these tendon problems?

How much time is involved?

Completing an online survey: We would like you to answer some simple questions about your health and elbow pain 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 2 sessions 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 have tennis elbow. 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).

The first session will take approximately 2 hours and the second session will take approximately 1 hour. 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 <u>sirph@uq.edu.au</u> for more information.







RESEARCH PROJECTS

How do different thinking skills relate to language?

We are conducting a study to investigate different aspects of thinking and cognition, and language production.

We are seeking the help of:

<u>MALES aged 60-85 years</u> with English as first language and no neurological history (e.g., brain tumour or stroke).

Why this research?

We are looking at how different aspects of cognition are related to language, and how certain parts of the brain control a range of thinking skills. For example, we will be looking at how the brain pays attention to information seen in the environment, or how a spoken or nonverbal response is produced, or how a plan or strategy is made when problem solving. The overall findings will potentially benefit patients with illnesses or conditions that affect the brain through improved assessment, more specific rehabilitation and a clearer understanding of various cognitive deficits.

What will I be asked to do?

Participating involves completing a 3-4 hour one-on-one session with the experimenter, where you will be asked to do several simple tasks that look at your thinking skills. This may involve responding verbally (i.e. speaking) or nonverbally (e.g., pointing) to words, dots and pictures. The tasks are carried out with pen and paper or via computer. For example, you might be asked the name of an object, to talk about pictures, or respond to stimuli on computer screens by pressing a button. Each task will be explained to you beforehand with examples given. Testing sessions can be split across two days if needed.

There is no cost to participate and the study will take place at the St Lucia campus of The University of Queensland Brisbane (or at your home if suitable) at a time that is convenient for you.

If you would like to learn more or participate, please contact Megan Barker at <u>megan.barker@uqconnect.edu.au</u>, or on 0423 871 923.

I am happy to talk with you and answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

This study is being led by PhD candidate Megan Barker, in collaboration with Dr Gail Robinson, a Clinical Neuropsychologist/Psychologist, and Dr Nicole Nelson (University of Queensland, School of Psychology) and has been approved by the University of Queensland Human Ethics Committee [2015000853].







RESEARCH PROJECTS

Telephone-delivered support and advice for people with knee osteoarthritis (Telecare Study)

Knee osteoarthritis (OA) is a major problem in Australia, and helping people to self-manage the condition is an important aim of treatment. Unfortunately, not all Australians with knee osteoarthritis have easy access to health professionals who can advise them how to selfmanage their knee osteoarthritis. One way to potentially improve access to healthcare is to provide self-management advice by qualified health professionals, who are specially trained in the management of arthritis, over the telephone. At the moment, it is not clear what is the most effective self-management advice to provide over the telephone.

What will the study involve?

This project will compare two different forms of telephone-delivered support and advice for people aged over 45 with painful knee OA to find out which one works best for managing arthritis symptoms, and why. Participants will be allocated to one of two groups. Both groups will receive support and advice for the selfmanagement of their knee OA over the telephone for a period of six months. Advice will be delivered by qualified health professionals trained in best-practice management of arthritis.

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire at three different time-points throughout the study, at the very beginning, at the end of the intervention (6 months) and then again 12 months after you complete your baseline assessment. The data that we obtain from these questionnaires may also be used to answer other research questions relevant to the management of persistent knee pain and knee osteoarthritis.

Who can participate?

We are looking for participants who are aged over 45 years with knee pain on most days who are able to commit approximately 12 months to the study and have access to a telephone. You cannot participate in this study if you: have had a knee replacement in your most painful knee, have had any knee surgery within the last 3 months or are on the waiting list for surgery, or if you suffer from Rheumatoid Arthritis, neurological or cardiovascular conditions.

What are the benefits of participating?

By participating in the study you may find you gain some improvement in pain and in your ability to carry out normal physical activities. You may gain increased knowledge about osteoarthritis and learn useful strategies for self-managing the condition. Importantly, you will be helping us find out what to recommend to others with knee OA in the future.

To register your interest for this study, please <u>click here</u> to access the online survey.

OR email the trial coordinator **Penny Campbell**: <u>penelope.campbell@unimelb.edu.au</u>







RESEARCH PROJECTS

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Maintaining mental abilities as we age

If you're aged 55 and over, you may be eligible to participate in a University of Queensland brain science study. Researchers are trialling a unique, non-invasive brain stimulation technique to improve cognition in several areas, including how we perceive other people's perspectives and emotions, and attention and quick decision making.

Time:2 sessions of about 90min Location: UQ Centre for Clinical Research, Herston Reimbursement: \$50

For more information or to participate, email uq.brainstim2@gmail.com

UQCCR UQ Centre for Clinical Research



Enhancing community knowledge and engagement with law at the end of life

Are you an adult patient with terminal cancer who is involved in your own medical decision-making?

Are you an adult family member of an adult with terminal cancer who has witnessed or been involved in medical decision-making?

If **either** of these questions apply to you we are seeking your participation in a study aiming to improve understanding of medical decision-making by people with cancer and their decision makers, including what decision-making practices you use and what support would assist you to make decisions.

Participation involves taking part in a face to face, telephone or Skype interview (around an hour), at a time and location convenient for you.

Details: Jill Wilson (33651254 wilsonj@uq.edu.au) or Rachel Feeney (33652505 rachel.feeney@qut.edu.au).





RESEARCH PROJECTS

Stiff Ankle Pain? Have it investigated.

Researchers at The University of Queensland are studying stiff and painful ankles. Be part of a lab study to test posture, strength, joint mobility, sensation, balance and function.

You will receive a gift voucher and free x-ray to thank you for your participation in this study. If you are interested in testing of your ankle please email

<u>munira.almahrouqi@uq.net.au</u> or go to <u>https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EOI-Lab</u>





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