



Ageing Well

NEWSLETTER



Bringing research to life

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NARI's 'New Look, New Directions'

NARI welcomed more than 100 guests to 'New Look, New Directions', for the launch of its new branding on Wednesday July 13, at the offices of Russell Kennedy Pty Ltd.

The Institute's new logo was displayed and a closer partnership with the University of Melbourne was announced.

"With the health and wellbeing of older people being firmly on the public agenda, it was time for NARI to rebrand with a stronger and bolder image that reflects our leading position in ageing research in Australia," said NARI Director, Professor David Ames.

"NARI has always prided itself on doing research to change people's lives and then disseminating research results to the wider community, so the tagline 'Bringing research to life' accompanies the new logo."

In launching NARI's logo, the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon David Davis, acknowledged NARI's contribution to state government programs and reiterated the Department of Health's commitment to supporting the Institute.

"We were delighted that Mr Davis stayed for the entire function. This was in addition to NARI senior staff and some Board members enjoying a most positive and productive discussion with him before the launch," said Professor Ames.

Professor James McCluskey, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the University of Melbourne, announced that NARI and the University would develop a formal partnership in the coming months, to augment a highly valued working relationship.

Professor Ames spoke about NARI's important role in training and educating the next generation of researchers, reiterating NARI's development as a centre of excellence.

The function also proved to be a special opportunity to forge new connections and rekindle past associations.

Among several distinguished guests, NARI was particularly delighted to see Professor David Penington AC, Professor Derek Prinsley (inaugural NARI director) and past NARI Board member Professor James Angus AO (Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at the University of Melbourne).

NARI Board member and principal of Russell Kennedy Pty Ltd, Michael Gorton, once again, demonstrated his ongoing support for NARI by generously providing the company's facilities and staff for the event. ●



NARI rebrands with a bolder image at 'New Look, New Directions'. Launching NARI's new logo is the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon David Davis.

Age prejudice video

How do older and younger people experience age prejudice and what are their perceptions of different generations?

These questions are being discussed during interviews for a video documentary that aims to enhance understanding of intergenerational relationships, for a study involving NARI, the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Youthworx. It is funded by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation. ●

Viewing the generations. From left, NARI social work student Melanie Joosten, Dr Briony Dow (NARI Director of Health Promotion) and David Wardell from Youthworx.



Award finalist

NARI was named one of four finalists in the Industry Supporter Award category from Aged and Community Care (Victoria) in the ACCV State Awards for Excellence 2011, in June.

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Letter from Italy...

“Working at NARI has been an important and absolutely amazing experience for me. It helped me find new incentives in future research projects and a more mature way of focusing research on older people.

People (at NARI) are really friendly, helpful and professional and I learned something from everyone. Professor David Ames is simply one of the most amazing people I've ever met: always helpful, with a wise thought for every situation, nice and sympathetic with every patient.

The experience at NARI assisted me from the human point of view and this is very important for being in the medical profession. For sure, every experience in a foreign country is seen with high recognition in Italy and I feel very lucky to have worked at NARI.”

DR ALESSANDRO SONA

Dr Alessandro Sona spent the last six months of his specialist training in geriatrics at NARI. In addition to observing many aspects of geriatric medicine, he was involved with the Australian Imaging, Biomarkers and Lifestyle (AIBL) study.

He assisted in analysing AIBL data collected from 211 participants with Alzheimer's disease, who had completed their 18-month review. The data revealed that the best predictor of rapid cognitive decline was the severity of functional impairment at the initial screening. This work resulted in two papers, one of which has been published in *International Psychogeriatrics*.

Since August, Dr Sona has been working in a hospital emergency department in Pinerolo, near Torino. ●

Two new grants

Older age mental health is the topic of a briefing paper that NARI is developing for the Benevolent Society, to assist its practitioners.

How common are sleep difficulties in older people, who have a history of falls and live at home? This issue is being investigated in a NARI study funded by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. ●

A crusade to ease pain

NARI Deputy Director, Professor Stephen Gibson, continues his crusade to improve the quality of life for all Australians living with pain, this time as a Board member of a newly-formed association - [painaustralia](http://painaustralia.com).

This not-for-profit organisation emerged during Professor Gibson's 27-month term as president of the Australian Pain Society (APS), enabling him to effectively campaign to include pain management for older people in residential aged care on painaustralia's agenda.



“I had mixed feelings after finishing the APS presidency in June. There is a lot of work - endless emails and late night teleconferences. However, I was fortunate in helping to initiate two exciting developments for the society - the formation of painaustralia and promoting a better understanding of pain in indigenous people,” he says.

“Now, painaustralia provides me with another opportunity to try and put pain care and management firmly on the political map. The best way to improve pain services for all Australians is to lobby and influence government policy for funding and services that meet best practice standards, and that is the key goal of painaustralia.”

Professor Gibson presented a key lecture on painaustralia and the National Pain Strategy at the APS 31st Annual Scientific Meeting in June.

***Painaustralia works with consumers, healthcare professionals and State and Federal Governments to implement the recommendations of the National Pain Strategy, the first policy of its type in the world to tackle the problem of chronic pain. ●**

Preventing another stroke

More than 200 stroke survivors are taking part in the ICARUSS study where they receive a special system of care for 12 months to reduce their risk of future strokes and also depression.

Headed by Dr Jacques Joubert (NARI senior research fellow), the study involves a joint management plan of nurses coordinating patient care with hospital specialists and general practitioners. Participants also receive telephone support and education from hospital-based health professionals.

Five major Australian hospitals are involved in the project that is funded by HCF Health and Medical Research Foundation. Recruitment for the study is continuing. ●

A special invitation

I was delighted to be invited to spend a week during June contributing to the education of psychiatry trainees in the Psychiatry Department of the University of New Mexico (UNM), in Albuquerque, USA.

The visit was organised by the university's outgoing head of psychiatry, Dr Sam Keith, who had spent 18 years developing one of the best psychiatry departments in America. A world-renowned researcher in schizophrenia, he now heads the excellent IDEAS program that encourages open and informed discussion so people affected by mental illness can seek effective help for themselves or their loved ones, and professionals have the knowledge to deliver the best possible care.

At the IDEAS 'We Need to Talk' public lecture series, attended by 400 people, I spoke about dementia (soon available for viewing at: <http://hsc.unm.edu/som/psychiatry/ideas>). I also presented four other lectures and talks to colleagues, chaired two case presentations, attended a ward round, five working breakfasts or lunches and met with several researchers individually. I was most impressed with the calibre and enthusiasm of the 38 psychiatry trainees in the UNM program and the collegiality of the psychiatry faculty.

The visit was valuable in raising NARI's profile in America and creating the potential for future research in several areas, including schizophrenia in older people. ●

Professor David Ames

NARI Director



At the IDEAS public lecture series. At left, NARI's Professor David Ames and his wife, Eleanor, with Professor Sam Keith (founder of the IDEAS program) and Susan Keith.

Award finalist

"Our success as a finalist in the ACCV Industry Supporter Award certainly endorses NARI's many achievements, and also our dedication to older people and the aged care sector," says research fellow Betty Haralambous. She enjoyed creating the overview of NARI's achievements for the ACCV State Awards for Excellence 2011.

"NARI is recognised nationally and internationally for its innovative research profile and strong track record in research into dementia, older age depression, falls prevention, pain management, positive ageing, health promotion and service evaluation. Aspects that make NARI unique include its emphasis on translating research findings into best practice and the extensive community involvement."

Winner of the Industry Supporter Award was Russell Kennedy Pty Ltd; company principal Michael Gorton is a NARI Board member. ●

We wish to thank the following NARI supporters for their recent generous donations...

Anonymous (8)
Nelva Griffiths

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Jean Ganther
Barbara Watson

A leader in ageing research

YOUR DONATION WILL HELP NARI ACHIEVE ITS VISION OF HEALTHY AGEING

Australia will have six million people over the age of 65 by the year 2050 and they will comprise 25 per cent of the population. The issues surrounding ageing are complex. At this time of life, the major health concerns include dementia, falls, stroke prevention and pain management. NARI is a self-funded research institute and relies on donations and research grants to continue its work.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Captivated by ageing research

Research officer Arti Appannah has been delving into an amazing cache of information on older women's health, since arriving at NARI in February.



She is involved in the Women's Healthy Ageing Project, initiated by Professor Lorraine Dennerstein, and comprising data collected from study participants for more than 20 years.

Arti is reconnecting with some of the women to explore heart health and cognitive decline for her PhD thesis. The new information will be compared with data from the CSIRO landmark study - the Australian Imaging, Biomarkers and Lifestyle project - that seeks to identify the biomarkers associated with Alzheimer's disease.

She brings to this role a background in organisational psychology, with experience in the private sector and as a research assistant at Deakin University. For her master's degree, her thesis was on keeping older people in the workforce, by targeting factors that affected their health and ability to work.

"By working with this rich database of material, I am gaining such valuable research experience," says Arti, who is working under the supervision of Associate Professor Cassandra Szoek.

"Research into ageing is so important - to find the answers to assist older people to lead healthier and fulfilling lives." ●

A touch of fiction



"Coming to NARI is like fiction in a way," says author Melanie Joosten, who is completing her Masters of Social Work.

During her NARI placement, she is assisting on an intergenerational video documentary (See: Age prejudice video, page 1) and doing a literature review on elder abuse.

"Part of the reason for doing social work was that I wanted to work with older people and part of that came from reading Doris Lessing's book, *Diary of a Good Neighbour*, about a woman who meets an older lady and befriends her.

"That book really spoke to me. I thought there is a whole world of people out there."

Melanie's debut literary novel, published in July this year, is the psychological thriller, *Berlin Syndrome* (Scribe Publications). Set in modern-day Berlin, the story centres on Clare, an Australian photographer, and Andi, a local school teacher, and a relationship that becomes complex and dangerous.

With an Honours degree in Creative Arts from the University of Melbourne, Melanie admits she could have continued with her writing career.

"However, it would just have been me at my desk and in my little world, whereas social work introduces me to a wider world and brings more balance to my life. And, I will probably draw upon my new experiences to do more literary work," she says. ●

Amy likes challenges



RMIT social work student Amy Jess is always ready for a challenge.

Amy has worked with young people but came to NARI because she wanted to broaden her outlook, and gain experience with older people and in a research environment. She is looking at the benefits of older people connecting socially, in a NARI project that involves Banyule Council.

As a 21-year-old, Amy accepted quite a challenge - being a lead tenant in a community house for two young people recovering from drug and alcohol use, for Melbourne's Youth Support and Advocacy Service.

"I thought it would be fantastic to provide support and be a good role model for young people. I stayed 10 months - it was challenging.

"However, I certainly learnt about the importance of boundaries and gained a good insight into crisis management skills," she says. ●