



Ageing Well

National Ageing Research Institute

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Revealing elder abuse

The hidden issue of elder abuse will gain exposure in a new NARI collaborative study.

"The frequency and impact of elder abuse are not sufficiently understood. With the growing population of older people, it is vital that the nature of this social problem and its prevention are studied in detail," says NARI Director, Professor David Ames.

The study, modelled on similar research at London University (United Kingdom), also involves St Vincent's Health, Melbourne Health and La Trobe University. It draws upon a range of participants including carers, older people, health professionals

- and health science students. They will read a fictional scenario of a caregiver and a care recipient, and complete a questionnaire, indicating which of 13 actions they believe to be appropriate responses and which they believe to be abusive.

- "Our project will help to provide a workable definition of elder abuse and neglect for research, training and policy purposes. The study comes at a time when the Victorian Government deems elder abuse as a priority for policy development," says Professor Ames.

- The NARI project team comprises Professor Ames, Dr Briony Dow (Director of Preventive and Public Health), Courtney Hempton and Will Fearnley-Sander.

Elder abuse is any behaviour within a relationship of trust that harms an older person. Abuse may be financial, psychological, physical, sexual, social and neglect.

Lots of interest in ICARUSS stroke prevention program

The ICARUSS program has captured the imagination of medical experts, nationally and internationally.

The Integrated Care to Reduce Secondary Stroke (ICARUSS) program has potential to significantly benefit stroke survivors in urban and rural areas, and be adapted to effectively manage other chronic health problems.

"The ICARUSS model dynamically links hospital specialists with primary care physicians (GPs) of stroke survivors, in a continuum of care facilitated by a coordinator," says Dr Jacques Joubert, a NARI researcher and consultant neurologist at Royal Melbourne Hospital. He leads the team that developed the concept.

"The project's value lies in the fact that it is a randomised control trial and has really shown significant results in managing vascular risk factors and reducing depression."

Recruitment has started for a multi-centre randomised control trial, funded by a \$1.38 million, three-year grant from HCF Health and Medical Research Foundation. The study is currently taking place in Melbourne Health, Western Health and Austin Health, and several interstate centres, including the Royal Perth Hospital and the John Hunter Hospital in NSW.



Members of ICARUSS Scientific Advisory Committee

(Back row from left) Debra O'Connor (NARI Executive Manager), Dr Tissa Wijeratne (Western Hospital), Dr John Barlow (Royal Melbourne Hospital), David Jackson (NARI), Professor Thierry Moulin (Besançon University Hospital – France) and Professor Lynette Joubert (The University of Melbourne).

(Front row from left) Carolyn Searle (North Western Division of General Practice), Robyn Smith (Northern Health), Dr Jacques Joubert (Royal Melbourne Hospital), Committee Chair Professor David Ames (NARI Director) and Amanda Thrift (until May 2008).

Other ICARUSS projects

- ICARUSS will be tested with centres in France after the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the University of Melbourne and the University of Franche-Comte.
- Strong interest in collaborative studies with Singapore and the concept is being explored in the Philippines, Thailand and India.
- Investigating the implementation of the ICARUSS model in Australian rural settings.
- Studying how the ICARUSS model can be used to reduce vascular dementia and post-stroke depression.

Also on the advisory committee....

Professor Stephen Davis
Royal Melbourne Hospital

Professor Helen Dewey
National Stroke Research Institute

Professor Geoffrey Donnan
National Stroke Research Institute

Dr Peter Hand
Royal Melbourne Hospital

Professor Graeme Hankey
Royal Perth Hospital

Dr Sue Hooley
Royal Melbourne Hospital

Professor Christine Kilpatrick
Royal Melbourne Hospital

Dr Erin Lalor
National Stroke Foundation

Associate Professor Chris Levi
Hunter New England Health Area Service

Professor Colin Masters
The University of Melbourne

Professor Chris Reid
Monash University Centre for Clinical Research Excellence

Ms Christine Walker
Chronic Illness Alliance

Professor Bob Williamson
The University of Melbourne

Professor Ingrid Winship
Royal Melbourne Hospital

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More funded projects

NARI is adding to its already impressive portfolio of research, with three new projects funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and one from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

Department of Human Services

WELL FOR LIFE

The Well for Life kit, based on nutrition and physical activity for people in residential aged care, is being updated. A segment on emotional health and wellbeing will be devised for this kit and also for the Well for Life community resource.

FALLS PREVENTION PROJECTS

A review of all falls prevention projects in community, hospital and residential care settings will be based on those funded by DHS since 2000. Projects involving Primary Care Partnerships are a key focus.

MEMORY LANE CAFÉS

These cafés, which are a meeting place for people with dementia and their carers, are being evaluated. They have been developed by Alzheimer's Australia.

Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing

CONSUMER INFORMATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Consumers throughout Australia will be consulted for their views about the information contained in four specific services – Community Aged Care Packages, Extended Aged Care in the Home, Extended Aged Care in the Home for People with Dementia and the National Respite for Carers Program.

On show

NARI showcased its research at the Melbourne Carex 2008 trade fair that attracted about 1700 visitors from the health care sector.

"Projects that created most interest included falls prevention, person-centred care and the *Dementia Resource Guide*," says researcher Leslie Dowson (pictured).



A research classic

A NARI research paper about falls among healthy, community-dwelling, older women has ranked sixth in the 10 citation classics from the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*.

A citation classic is a journal article that has a large number of citations, by being used as a reference in other research literature.

In another citation, NARI's tai chi study is ranked fifth on the *Australasian Journal on Ageing* website.

Stroke care in rural France

Professor Thierry Moulin's revolutionary stroke management strategy for patients living in a remote location in the French province of Comte was the theme of a NARI seminar in February. Professor Moulin heads the stroke unit at Besançon University Hospital.

Using the Internet, telephone and video conferencing, stroke experts in Besançon can instantly decide the treatment a patient requires and prescribe modern clot-busting therapies if necessary. Such strategies can dramatically reduce brain damage caused by the stroke and enhance a patient's recovery.

"With Professor Jacques Joubert's expertise in the ICARUSS stroke prevention program, it is hoped that NARI can assist in applying a similar model to rural and remote locations in Australia, where stroke rates are high and access to expertise may be limited by distance," says NARI Director, Professor David Ames.

\$500,000 icy fellowships

NARI Deputy Director, Professor Stephen Gibson, is mentoring two researchers who received a total of \$500,000 to investigate caloric stimulation – squirting ice-cold water into a person's ear – for managing pain.

Case studies have reported this technique's success in eradicating pain in people with nerve damage, such as post-stroke pain and spinal cord injury. Dr Trung Ngo received a four-year NHMR fellowship and Dr Steve Miller a two-year fellowship from the Victorian Neuroscience Initiative.

Volunteers needed

Women aged 65 – 85 years are needed for a balance and mobility assessment study. The time commitment is about two hours.

Please consider taking part if you fit into either category:

- You are well and have not had any falls in the past 12 months
- You have mild balance or have had one or more falls in the past 12 months

For details: Kade Paterson 9953 3552

*Kade Paterson is doing a PhD. His supervisor is Professor Keith Hill (NARI and La Trobe University).

Report to MPs on Alzheimer's study

The management team of the Australian Imaging Biomarkers and Lifestyle (AIBL) flagship study of ageing is presenting a progress report of its achievements to the bipartisan Parliamentary Friends of Dementia (PFOD) in Canberra this month.

The three-year, \$10 million collaborative study involves NARI and numerous partners, including the CSIRO, The Mental Health Research Institute of Victoria, Neurosciences Victoria, The Austin Repatriation Medical Centre, the University of Melbourne, Edith Cowan University in Perth, Cogstate and Pfizer.

The study has exceeded its target of recruiting, assessing and collecting blood from 1,000 participants, and performing a PiB PET brain scan on 250 to detect the presence or absence of the abnormal protein that causes the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

During the next 18 months, the study will reassess all participants to see if any memory problems have progressed or emerged. This should allow us to determine factors predictive of future memory deterioration that might assist in detecting Alzheimer's disease at a pre-symptomatic and potentially treatable stage.

Strengthening Huntington's research

A memorandum of understanding signed in April will further the existing collaboration between NARI and the University of Melbourne's Academic Unit for Psychiatry of Old Age (AUPOA) at St George's Hospital. The unit's incoming director, Professor Nicola Lautenschlager, and foundation director Professor Ed Chiu are members of NARI's Professoriate.

The Huntington's Research Group of Victoria (HRGV) and AUPAO have been at the forefront of international research on Huntington's disease for many years. Currently, AUPOA is the top recruiter in the world for a prospective international research study about emergent symptoms of this disease in those at risk.

Huntington's disease research has important implications for understanding other degenerative brain diseases associated with ageing, including Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease.



Collaborating on Huntington's Disease (from left) NARI Director, Professor David Ames, Professor Ed Chiu and Dr Olga Yastrubetskaya (Unit for Psychiatry of Old Age at the University of Melbourne).

AIBL-funded research by Associate Professor Chris Rowe and colleagues at the Austin Repatriation Medical Centre has shown that people with a pre-Alzheimer's disease form of mild memory impairment who show abnormal protein on PiB-PET almost always progress to show symptoms of dementia 21 months later.

Such findings mean that new anti-Alzheimer treatments (still being tested) could in future be offered to people, who have positive PiB scans and are at high risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, in the hope of preventing that outcome.

What is needed now is funding to extend the AIBL study beyond 2009. We hope the PFOD will be impressed by the work of the AIBL group and support attempts to fund its extension.

PROFESSOR DAVID AMES
NARI DIRECTOR

We wish to thank you

We would like to acknowledge NARI donors in future publications, such as the *Ageing Well* newsletter and/or *Annual Report*. Please advise us if you would prefer to remain anonymous. Complete the relevant section on the donation slip.

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-funding research institute and relies on donations and research grants to continue its work.

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NARI news



Delving into research at NARI.

(from left) Veelyn Tan, Xiaoping Lin, Emma Renehan and Janet Mackenzie

We are delighted to welcome....

On the research team

Xiaoping Lin

"I wanted to gain experience in research, and working within a team is a good way to develop a solid knowledge of research strategies."

Xiaoping has a Post Graduate Diploma in Psychology. She is involved in reviewing consumer information for older people in the community.

Janet Mackenzie

"With research, I like the potential of finding new themes and investigating what work has been done and updating the information."

Janet has a Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) majoring in psychology and sociology. She is working on the Well for Life project.

Emma Renehan

"The NARI research projects reflect my interests – they involve going out into the community and helping people be more physically active."

Emma has a Bachelor of Exercise and Sports Science (Honours). She is involved in three projects – Living Longer Living Stronger, the Westbay Physical Activity study and the Falls Review project.

Administrative roles

Jenny Walsh

"NARI has great people and interesting issues that I am learning about."

Jenny may have just returned to work after being at home with her family, but she draws upon her impressive experience, including a stint as executive projects officer with Museum Victoria.



Lachlan Shrives

"I like NARI's strong focus of working in the community."

Lachlan has deferred his university course for a year to spend time in the working world before heading off for a six-month overseas trip.

Veelyn Tan

"As a clinician, I was interested in discovering research. Having the opportunity to read and analyse articles is something a clinician would like to do but never has the time."

As an occupational therapist, Veelyn spends most of her working week at the Memory Clinic at the Royal Melbourne Hospital (Royal Park campus). She is involved in NARI's Well for Life project,

Will Fearnley-Sander



"I'm involved in several studies, which is challenging and interesting, and NARI's dynamic research environment is a learning experience in itself."

Will is completing his Master of Social Work at RMIT, and will be at NARI until July. His involvement with participants in the Westbay Physical Activity study has confirmed his interest in working with people.

An inspiring time at NARI



"I am lucky to have a sabbatical where I can do research, delve into topics of interest and be in an inspiring environment with like-minded people. I hope that my time at NARI will stimulate collaborative projects and new ideas," says Dr Carolyn Arnold.

"I work with Professor Stephen Gibson (NARI Deputy Director) in the multidisciplinary pain clinic at

Caulfield Hospital and he encouraged me to come to NARI for my six-month sabbatical. He has fostered many students and researchers career-wise."

As a rehabilitation physician, Dr Arnold works with patients who have disabling illnesses and manages a small pain unit. She is on the executive of the faculty of pain medicine for the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists, and is the immediate past president of the Australian Pain Society.

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Email your details (name, email address and postal address) to: info@nari.unimelb.edu.au *Thank you for caring for the environment.*