

APHCRI@work

NEWS FROM THE HUB

The New Year has already seen APHCRI host two international Visiting Fellows, our first RAB meeting of the year and a special Stream Four workshop on systematic reviews.

VISITING FELLOWS

Professor Nicholas Mays



Professor Nicholas Mays is Professor of Health Policy in the Health Services Research Unit at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and Editor of the Health Service Policy Journal, which formed the basis of the Stream Four research model. Professor Mays spent three days with APHCRI giving a seminar and leading the Stream Four special workshop on systematic review.

Professor Mays's seminar concentrated on scholarship around systematic review methods and how researchers can work to make them more useful to policymakers. He concluded that several factors need to be considered for systematic reviews to have an impact on policy. These include:

- Transparency.
- Reviews produced by groups with well-developed knowledge and judgement
- Involvement of users in the review process
- Reviewers understanding policy processes
- Reviews which give some indication of risks and uncertainty
- Reviews with narrative approaches are most likely to be used

Professor Chris Dowrick



Professor Chris Dowrick also spent a day in Canberra in February and gave a seminar on how Australia could implement the National Chronic Disease Strategy. The strategy was formally endorsed by the Health Minister's Meeting in November last year.

Professor Dowrick, Professor of Primary Medical Care, University of Liverpool, England and Editor of *Chronic Illness*, said the strategy 'has its heart in the right place', but will require more funding, increased workforce resources and further reform of the health system to deliver better care to patients suffering from diseases such as diabetes, asthma and cancer.

Professor Dowrick was also in Australia to participate in the launch of Re-Order a Stream Three project of which he is one of the international team members (see below).

Copies of both presentations can be found on our website: <http://www.anu.edu.au/aphcri/Presentations/presentations.php>

HUB RESEARCH

In 2005 Dr Chris Kelman and Nicola Inglis undertook a project of investigative research to discover all significant available Australian electronic data collections relevant to primary health care evaluation, including those held by the Commonwealth and State/Territory health departments and institutions.

A report, including a brief summary of the potential relevance of these data to primary care outcomes research and a 'how to' guide to assist researchers in locating and accessing data, will go to Government in 2006. A discussion of legal, ethical and legislative limitations will be included is due to be released on the APHCRI website for comment and feedback from research teams in April.

We invite and encourage feedback from our Spoke research teams, and the wider primary health care community on this issue.

USE OF THE ANU LOGO

Some research teams have raised concerns with us about having to use The Australian National University logo as the APHCRI logo when giving presentations of their work. In response to the issues raised by research teams we met with the Marketing and Communications Division at ANU to see if there was an alternative way of branding presentations. As an Institute of the ANU, University policy states that APHCRI must use only the ANU logo. There are guidelines in Spoke contracts and handbook about what acknowledgement is required. The contribution of the Department and APHCRI will be acknowledged in all correspondence, public announcements, advertising material and all other material.

Guidelines on the use of the ANU logo can be obtained by emailing: frith.rayner@anu.edu.au

RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD

The RAB has held it's first meeting for 2006 in Canberra. The meeting discussed future research directions for APHCRI and looked at future funding streams for the Institute. Decisions on future funding rounds will be discussed at the June RAB meeting.

CHANGES ON THE RAB

Mr Richard Eccles has joined the Research Advisory Board as the Department of Health and Ageing representative. Mr Eccles is the new First Assistant Secretary Primary Care Branch, taking over from Mr David Learmonth who has moved to another section of the Department. The RAB welcomes Mr Eccles to the Board and looks forward to his contribution to APHCRI's continued growth and development.

The RAB also farewelled Professor Justin Beilby who resigned his position on the RAB to commit more time to his research and responsibilities as Executive Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Adelaide. APHCRI would like to thank Professor Beilby for his input and commitment to the RAB and APHCRI's strategic direction.

RESEARCH TEAMS

The Australian Federal Government has committed \$1.8 billion to mental health care initiatives during the next five years. The extra funding aims to address the areas for which the Commonwealth is responsible, such as increasing access to primary health care, increasing the mental health workforce, more respite places and funding for people with mental health and drug or alcohol problems.

The Council of Australian Governments identified mental health as an area in need of reform at it's February meeting. In announcing the package, Prime Minister John Howard said he expected a similar level of investment from the States. Mental health reform is on the agenda for the June COAG meeting.

APHCRI has two funded projects on mental health and best service models for patients underway one in Stream Three and another in Stream Four.

WHAT WORKS FOR PRIMARY MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICE DELIVERY?

Recent dissatisfaction with the mental health services in Australia prompted this review, which aims to determine What Works for Primary Mental Health Care Service Delivery.

The project aim is to systematically identify, review and synthesise evidence about primary mental health care organisation, funding, delivery and performance and consider how this knowledge might be applied in the Australian context to improve mental health service delivery.

Progress on the project includes: the completion of systematic black and grey literature searches, the evaluation and quality assessment of the majority of relevant research articles, and the organisation of a national forum in June to present results and provide an opportunity to inform the direction of national mental health policy and investment.

This collaborative project brings together Professor Helen Christensen and Dr Kathy Griffiths (Centre for Mental Health Research), Leanne Wells (ADGP), and Professor James Butler (ACERH). Other researchers contributing to the project include Dr Johann Sheehan (ADGP), Dannielle Clack (CMHR), Amelia Gulliver (CMHR), Professor Marjan Kljakovic, Academic Unit of General Practice & Community Health, and Kerry Bidwell (Queensland DGP).

For more information on this project please contact Amelia.Gulliver@anu.edu.au or Dannielle.Clack@anu.edu.au

RE-ORDER



Re-Order was officially launched in February by APHCRI Director Professor Nicholas Glasgow and project Chief Investigator Associate Professor Jane Gunn.

The University of Melbourne-based team will examine re-organising care for depression and related disorders in the Australian primary health care setting. The project builds on existing research using a proactive evaluation framework to lead to innovation in the organisation and linkages within primary care, for the management of depression and related disorders.

Re-order is designed to inform a change in the way we think about, organise and deliver depression care in Australia and to be directly relevant to policy makers.

The project includes Australian and international researchers from a variety of disciplines with expertise in general practice, psychology, medical sociology, psychiatry, health economics and biostatistics.

For more information on re-order, visit www.reorder.unimelb.edu.au



Left:
The Re-Order team

Right:
Chief Re-Order Investigator,
Associate Professor Jane Gunn
addressing the group

Far Right:
Professor Nicholas Glasgow



events@APHCRI

APHCRI EVENTS IN 2006

Professor Larry Green

APHCRI is delighted to announce that it will bring Professor Larry Green to be a keynote speaker at the 2006 GP & PHC RED conference in Perth (5-7 July).

Professor Green is the Senior Scholar in Residence at the Robert Graham Center: Policy Studies in Family Medicine and Primary Care in Washington, DC.

<http://www.graham-center.org/x176.xml>

Stream Four Workshop

May 3, 10am - 3.30pm

The Australian National University
Canberra

SPOKE EVENTS IN 2006

National Forum: What works for primary mental health care service delivery?

Parliament House, Canberra

June 13, 2006, 10am to 4pm

Professor Helen Christensen's Stream Four research team will be presenting the findings from their systematic review in a national forum. The review is exploring research questions such as:

What are the systems that support best the delivery of evidence-based mental health care for anxiety and depression in primary care?

What treatments are used in primary care mental health models/systems?

What are the practical approaches that are currently working?

How equipped and supported are general practitioners, general practice teams, other selected health/community providers and consumers to deliver mental health care?

How can these models be best synthesised to determine 'best buys' from a primary care perspective? What conceptual models can help bridge the gap between research findings and policy needs?

Please send all information about your events, publications and presentations to the editor for inclusion in future newsletters.

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