

Kids in Mind Research Newsletter



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This is the third newsletter from the Mater Centre for Service Research in Mental Health (KidsinMind Research). Since the last newsletter a number of significant changes have occurred within the Centre both in terms of policy direction and staff structure.

Staff Changes

Since the opening of the Research Centre late last year there had been a number of staff changes:

Ms Jean Dakin retired from the service in November 2003. The Centre is much in debt to Ms Dakin for putting in place a number of policy and procedural processes which helped put the Centre on a sound footing. As well Ms Dakin coordinated and co-authored a research project into the ascertainment of social-emotional disability in children from a private school system in Queensland

Dr Angela Dean began working with the Centre part time in March 2003 and moved in with the research team in January this year. Dr Dean was recently awarded her PhD from the Department of Psychiatry, UQ, in the field of opiate dependence and depression. Within CYMHS, her role is to conduct research examining safety and efficacy of psychotropic medications used to treat young people with mental health problems. This is a joint initiative with CYMHS and Mater Pharmacy Services to respond to the lack of research in child and adolescent psychopharmacology. This current research program includes clinical trials, pharmacokinetic studies, reviews of medication use and safety monitoring studies.

Dr Heather Mohay Adjunct Professor Queensland University of Technology, School of Psychology and Counselling, joined our team as a consultant for one session a week. Dr Mohay has extensive experience in research and has a special interest in mother-infant relationships especially with premature and low birth weight infants.



Back Row L to R—Dr Elspeth Macdonald, Ms Erica Lee, Ms Yvonne Connolly, Ms Joanna Vasilou & Dr Peter Gibbon
Front Row L to R—Dr William Bor, Dr Angela Dean & Assoc Prof Brett McDermott

Ms Joanna Vasilou joined the team on a part time basis to provide administration support and advice on financial management. Ms Vasilou has been with Mater CYMHS for 2 years and will provide business support to the Kids in Mind Research team by developing budgets for grant applications, coordinating financial activities and providing advice to the Director and other staff in relation to cost centre management including the areas of procurement and accommodation. Ms Vasilou's background is in Health Services Management and is currently studying for her Masters of Business Administration at QUT.

Dr James Scott will join our team for one session a week. Dr Scott is the Director of the Inpatient Unit of Mater Child and Youth Mental Health Service. Dr Scott has a special interest in perceptual and cognitive disturbances in young people with serious mental health problems and the relationship of this problem to future outcomes.

Inside this issue:

<i>Staff Changes</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Strategic Plan</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Research Centre Activity</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Research Meetings</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Publications</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Reports</i>	<i>3</i>

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan for the Centre was endorsed by the service at the end of 2003. This document describes the evolution of a research culture within the organization and the rationale behind the need for service related research. The document also outlines a broad plan covering the next five years. Incorporated into the Plan are the principles of consumer involvement the research culture of Mater CYMHS.

(Anyone wishing to obtain a copy of this document please contact wbor@mater.org.au)



Research Centre Activity

As a result of a series of meetings between the Executive and the Research team it was decided to develop a number of priorities over the later half of 2003 and for the first six months of 2004.

1. A series of grant applications were completed chiefly coordinated by Dr Elspeth McDonald with the assistance of the Research Team and staff of CYMHS. These include grants for Indigenous Mental Health, Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Use, Infant Mental Health, and Dual Diagnoses. Four grants are currently under review.

Success has been achieved by Dr MacDonald and Michelle Kerr (Team Leader of Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Service) with a grant on "Parents as motivators for change" with Q Health for \$100,064.

2. A series of meetings were held with most work units of Mater CYMHS. This activity involved a major commitment by the Research team to coalface research. As a result of these meetings a large list of research ideas has been generated.

Further meetings have been held with the relevant workplace units to refine and prioritise a series of research projects. This remains an ongoing process. As a result of these highly successful meetings well over 60 potential research projects have been identified. Below is a sample of some of the research ideas generated by the various work units in CYMHS.

- A Day Program (DP) Social Skills program evaluation. A University of Queensland student has trialled this program in a university setting, and is producing a treatment manual. It is hoped to trial the program with the DP clients, and write up the results, but also any modifications that were needed for that client group.
- Assessment of communication impairment in clinical populations such as children with obsessive compulsive disorder.
- The impact of consultation model on numbers of new patient appointments and the reduction of a waiting list
- Consumer satisfaction survey of parents and carers in all clinics and service units as well as young persons and siblings;
- Service utilization by morbid obese children presenting to Sleep Disorder clinic.
- Narrative research using stories of Elders' views on how they were brought up and how to bring up children. Aim to capture older generation knowledge; aim to have a resource to help young people bring up children.
- Evaluation of whether the CYMHS website is reducing stress/discomfort about accessing the service.
- Assessment of clinical acuity, burden of care and multiagency case work in a series of cases presenting to a community CYMHS service.

3. Research Meetings

The Research team has participated in a series of meetings with a large number of interested parties chaired by Professor Brett McDermott on the possibility of a cohort study examining the outcomes of children placed in care.

The Research team has assisted in the development, organization and presentation to the up-and-coming Mater CYMHS conference (see web site for details).

The Research team meets regularly (every fortnight) and has met with Ms Odette Peterson from the Mater Ethics Department and Professor Alan Chang from the Mater Research Support Centre. Both Departments will act as key reference points for the ongoing development of the Research Centre.

Consolidation of publications and reports

Beginning in late January 2004 the Research team committed itself to consolidating the various research projects and data collections within Mater CYMHS with the aim to submit a series of publications.

A number of publications have also been submitted by the Research team based on their ongoing involvement in a variety of research projects which predate the opening of the Research Centre.

A full list of publications will be placed on the CYMHS website. Below is a selected sample of the publications, in press or submitted. As well as external publications, a sample of internal reports is detailed.

Publications

Post traumatic stress disorder and general psychopathology in children and adolescents following a bushfire disaster. Brett McDermott, Erica Lee, Marianne Judd, Peter Gibbon (in press). *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*. This paper details proactive case identification in a Canberra school following the 2003 Canberra bushfire disaster.

Seclusion of children and adolescents: Psychopathological and family factors.

Karen Gullick, Brett McDermott, Prue Stone, Peter Gibbon (submitted). *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*. This paper examines the phenomena of seclusion of patients admitted to an inpatient child and adolescent mental health unit.

Infant school children and natural disasters: Results from the Early Childhood Trauma Self-Report. In: *Progress in post-traumatic stress syndrome research*. New York: Nova Science (submitted). Brett McDermott, Peter Gibbon, Erica Lee. This chapter describes the piloting of the Early Childhood Trauma Self-Report (ECTS-R), a new measure of post-disaster feelings and concerns among 450 children exposed to a bushfire disaster. The possible need for a different causal model for infant emotional trauma than that hypothesized for older children is discussed, as are service implications, in particular the utility of post-disaster screening for Infant School students and the relative worth of employing self-report and parent-report measures of symptoms with this age group.

Responding to complex serious youth mental health: The role of an interagency forum (in press) *Australasian Psychiatry*

Prevention and treatment of childhood and adolescent aggression and antisocial behaviour: A selective review. William Bor. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 2004;38:5 373-380. Aggression in children and youth is a serious, costly public health problem. There are many ways in which Child and Youth Mental Health Services can promote mental health, prevent aggression or treat children with aggressive behaviour problems.

A phenomenological study of young people's experiences of social relationships in early psychosis. Elspeth Macdonald, Kirsten Sauer, Jan Allen, Dianne Albiston. (submitted) This research was conducted with young people attending a Recovery Group Program (EPPIC) following the onset of a psychotic illness. Young people described their subjective experiences of social relationships. The findings highlight the importance of support from family members and young people who have also experienced psychosis.

Available information on social relationships of young people with early psychosis.

Elspeth Macdonald, A Carroll, D Albiston, I Epstein. *Journal of social Work Research and Evaluation: An International Publication* Editors, L Joubert, IE Epstein. (due June 2004)

Desire to drink in low- and high-risk social drinkers: An experimental analogue of impaired control. N Lee, J Greeley, T Oei, Angela Dean. *Addiction Research and Theory* 2004;12:2 115-124. This study used a cue exposure paradigm to investigate the differences between high- and low-risk drinkers in their desire to drink during a drinking session. High-risk drinkers showed increasing desire over the session, while low-risk drinkers' desire began to decrease after a short drinking period. This finding was not related to the perceived or actual effects of alcohol.

Reports

Dr Peter Gibbon has played a key role either as one of the main authors or in the organization, preparation and publication of a number of the below reports. It is anticipated all internal reports will be transformed into external publications over time.

- CYMHS Staff Email Survey Report;
- Website and Internet Youth, Parent and Guardian Surveys Report;
- Inpatient Unit Clinical Incidences July 01–February 04 Report;
- Violence and Aggression on Ward 7 West Report.

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