1. UPDATE

It has been an interesting few months since our last newsletter—new, quite different projects starting; others coming to an end; invitations to present at conferences and meetings; new positions created; new collaborations; and getting out and about a bit too…..

- **Grants and funding**: Paula Kersten is leading a team which has been awarded a *Ministry of Health grant* to validate the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire used as part of the Before School Check in New Zealand (see Current Projects).

- **Outputs**: Kath McPherson, Paula Kersten and Nicola Kayes ran and presented at a symposium entitled ‘Goals related activity in neurorehabilitation: rethinking meaning, engagement and outcomes’ at the *7th World Congress of NeuroRehabilitation* in Melbourne, Australia in May this year. AUT St Paul Street Gallery recently held the launch of a collaborative cross-discipline publication by Joanna Fadyl with artist Simon Denny entitled ‘Envisaging Vocational Rehabilitation’. (Other recent publications and presentations are listed on page 4.)

- **Visitors**: We were delighted to welcome Dr Claire Donnellan visiting from Trinity College, Dublin in April.

- **Policy / advocacy**: Prof Kath McPherson has been appointed as a member of the Ministry of Social Development’s Work and Income Board.

2. UPCOMING EVENTS

**Conference News**
The *2013 New Zealand Rehabilitation Conference* is being held in Nelson, March 8-10, 2013. Visit [www.rehabconference2013.com](http://www.rehabconference2013.com) for further information. We hope to see you there……

[New Zealand Rehabilitation Conference 2013]

**Key Features**
- Renowned international and national keynote speakers
- Research findings in the area of rehabilitation following major disasters
- Plenary presentations, poster session and workshops

Please visit the conference website: [www.rehabconference2013.com](http://www.rehabconference2013.com)

Also coming up in Auckland, the *Aging & Diversity Conference 2012*, Thursday 13th—Saturday 15th of September. For more details see the conference website: [www.nzag2012.co.nz](http://www.nzag2012.co.nz)
### 3. CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

**Supporting our children through early assessment**  
**Applicants:** Paula Kersten (Principal Investigator) Kathryn McPherson, Hinemoa Elder, Dr Shibaya Nayar, Alain Vandal, Melody Oliver, Margaret Dudley,  
**Funding:** Ministry of Health  
**Research Assistant:** Heather Robertson  

This is a validation study of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire used as part of the Before School Check in New Zealand (B4SC). As part of the study we will be running group discussions with New Zealand European, Māori, Asian and Pacific parents/whānau as well as individual interviews with these groups and with new immigrants to New Zealand. We will also run group discussions with teachers/kaiako. The purpose of the discussions is to explore how family think about their children’s emotional and behavioural well-being and how this matches with the way in which our children/tamariki are screened in the Before School Check (B4SC). At the same time we will also be training nurses to assess the emotional and behavioural well-being of Māori children in the home setting. We will compare the nurses findings with those from a screening tool that is being used as part of the B4SC. **OPEN TO RECRUITMENT.**

**Reducing fatigue after a brain injury: a pilot study**  
**Applicants:** Alice Theadom, Suzanne Barker-Collo, Kathryn McPherson, Nicola Kayes, Suzie Mudge, Valery Feigin  
**Funding:** AUT Contestable Grant  
**Research Assistant:** Rohit Bhattcharjee  

Fatigue is a common problem following a brain injury. This study aims to explore two different types of interventions designed to improve persistent fatigue for people who have experienced a mild or moderate brain injury. One intervention will focus on an educational approach and the other will focus on increasing physical activity. The outcomes of these groups will be compared to a group receiving usual care. The study is being run in collaboration with ABI Rehabilitation and Integrated Partners in Health Services in the Auckland region. Thirty people will be recruited into the study to test the acceptability of the group based interventions and to identify any modifications needed. **OPEN TO RECRUITMENT.**

**Experiences of recovery and adaption after disabling traumatic brain injury**  
**Applicants:** Kathryn McPherson (Principal Investigator); Alice Theadom, William Levack, Joanna Fadyl, Matire Harwood, Nicola Kayes, Nicola Starkey, Grant Christy, Valery Feigin  
**Funding:** Health Research Council  
**Project Manager:** Alexis Channon  

This is a longitudinal qualitative study exploring the experiences of recovery and adaption after a traumatic brain injury for both the individual injured and their family/whānau. 50 people who have experienced a TBI and are experiencing persistent difficulties and their whanau/family will be interviewed for the study. The findings will be used to gain a better understanding of the impact of TBI. The interviews are currently underway. **OPEN TO RECRUITMENT.**

**Auckland Regional Community Stroke Study (ARCOS IV), measuring and reducing stroke burden in New Zealand:**  
**Part 3 qualitative study**  
**Applicants:** Professor Kathryn McPherson (principal investigator), Professor Valery Feigin, Dr. Alice Theadom, Ms Suzanne Barker-Collo, Ms Varsha Parag, Professor Max Abbott, Professor Alan Barber, Professor Ruth Bonita, Dr. Paul Brown, Associate Professor Bruce Arroll.  
**Funding:** HRC  
**Research Officer:** Sandy Rutherford  

Previous studies have provided information about the measurement of Stroke. Our new study (ARCOS: Part 3) also looks at the meaning for people and their family/whanau. We are planning to talk to a large number of people who have been affected by Stroke over a 3 year period. We would like to know: how Stroke affects people and how this may change over time; what is helpful or unhelpful in managing difficulties after Stroke; and how people and their family/whanau have adjusted to living with Stroke. We hope to use the findings to improve the health care and support that people receive after Stroke in the future. **OPEN TO RECRUITMENT.**

**Exploring engagement in rehabilitation in people with stroke**  
**Applicants:** Nicola Kayes, Felicity Bright, Kath McPherson, Linda Worrel  
**Funding:** AUT Contestable Grant  
**Research Assistant:** Christine Cummings  

Engagement in rehabilitation appears to be important for maximising outcomes. However, little is currently understood about what it means to be engaged (actively involved and participating) in rehabilitation from the perspective of people with stroke or rehabilitation providers. This study seeks to explore the meaning and process of engagement in detail, along with what helps or hinders it, by interviewing 18-24 people with stroke, their family/whānau and rehabilitation providers in interviews and focus groups. We hope that this study will help rehabilitation providers improve patient participation and involvement in services. **OPEN TO RECRUITMENT.**

**Goals and self regulation skills in brain injury rehabilitation: a RCT**  
**Applicants:** Kathryn McPherson, William Taylor, Philip Schluter, Nicola Kayes, William Levack, Suzanne Barker-Collo, Matire Harwood, Harry McNaughton, Valery Feigin, Mark Ylvisaker, Richard Siegert  
**Funding:** Health Research Council  
**Project Manager:** Nicola Kayes. Data Manager: Greta Riley  

This clinical trial explores two novel interventions around goal setting and self-regulation for stroke rehabilitation. Participants will be recruited into the study to test the acceptability of the group based interventions and to identify any modifications needed. **OPEN TO RECRUITMENT.**

**Bridging the intention-action gap in rehabilitation; a pilot study of an implementation intention intervention**  
**Applicants:** Paula Kersten (Principal Investigator), Nicola Kayes, Alice Theadom, Kathryn McPherson  
**Funding:** AUT Contestable Grant  

**The Breathe Easy Study**  
**Applicants:** Kathryn McPherson (Principal Investigator), Marion Gray, David Nicholls, Ahmed Al-Jumaily, Olaf Diegel, Anthony Leicht, Justin Travers  
**Funding:** Health Research Council  

**Experience of brain injury research participation.**  
**Applicants:** Kathryn McPherson, Alice Theadom, Allison Foster, Nicola Kayes  
**Funding:** AUT Summer Studentship; Summer Student: Tania Hollands
4. SUMMER STUDENT PROJECTS 2012

Exploring engagement in rehabilitation for people with stroke

Student: Grace MacDonald; Primary supervisor: Nicola Kayes
Co-supervisors: Felicity Bright and Kathryn McPherson
Funded by: FHES Summer Student Assistant Grant

Despite the growing evidence base and the increasing acknowledgment that engagement plays a significant role in rehabilitation outcomes, further research is needed to understand what constitutes engagement, influencing factors and how it is best applied in a clinical rehabilitation setting. A deeper understanding may inform the development of interventions to better equip rehabilitation providers with clinical skills to best facilitate engagement and effectively deliver rehabilitation modalities. As such, this project formed two components: a) a review drawing on systematic principles to identify existing literature regarding the process of engagement and disengagement in stroke rehabilitation; and b) a qualitative descriptive study using semi-structured interviews exploring engagement in rehabilitation from the perspectives of people with stroke.

Research Participation, Utilisation and use of Evidence-Based Practice by Allied Health Professionals: Barriers and facilitators to implementation in practice

Student: Adina Nachum; Primary supervisor: Paula Kersten
Co-supervisors: Felicity Bright and Kathryn McPherson
Funded by: Waitemata District Health Board

Engagement in Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) has been acknowledged as a fundamental requirement for health professionals in order to improve client outcomes, provide quality care to clients and to remain ahead in health care development. However, there remains a lack of attention to this topic for allied health professionals (AHPs). This project aimed to identify how AHPs are engaging with research, to identify barriers and facilitators to research participation, and to identify research priorities by means of a systematic review of the literature and a survey.

Key findings: Staff indicated that lack of time impacts on their ability to implement research effectively into practice or to engage in research projects. Organisational leadership and support for staff are required for staff to more actively engage in research. We recommend that in the first instance attention is paid to innovative strategies that will support staff in implementing research into practice.

Benefits, barriers and utilisation of outcome measures within clinical practice by Allied Health Professionals

Student: Danielle Morley-John; Primary supervisor: Peter Larmer
Co-supervisors: Paula Kersten and Kathryn McPherson
Funded by: Waitemata District Health Board

There is an increasing emphasis for health professionals to ensure the best quality care and to provide evidence of the effectiveness of their interventions. As a result, there is an increased requirement for Allied Health Professionals (AHP) to use outcome measures as a part of their assessment. However, there is little research about outcome measure implementation within clinical practice by AHPs. The aims of this study were 1) to investigate how outcome measures are utilised within clinical practice of AHPs; and 2) to establish the benefits and barriers with implementing outcome measures in practice within Waitemata DHB.

Conclusions from the survey were consistent with the findings of the literature review. Key barriers to engaging in the use of outcome measures were: time constraints, lack of knowledge, lack of appropriate measures and outcome measures being inappropriate for the patient population. As a result of these findings several recommendations have been made and training is offered to the DHB.

Exploring the benefits of hydrotherapy

Student: Jordy Dangen; Supervisors: Dr Peter Larmer, Associate Professor Paula Kersten
Funded by: Arthritis NZ

Exercise interventions have been recommended for suffers of osteo-arthritis (OA). Clinical experience suggests that hydrotherapy has a number of benefits when compared to land-based exercises. However, few studies have been able to demonstrate that water-based exercises are superior to other forms of exercise. This study aimed to explore the benefits of hydrotherapy as perceived by participants with osteoarthritis. Seven themes were identified: opportunity to exercise (pain relief, warmth and buoyancy), strength, mobility/flexibility, social, psychological (perspective and mood enhancement), instructor and maintenance. The findings will be used to develop a hydrotherapy outcome measure for people with OA.

5. STAFF NEWS

We are very pleased to welcome three new Research Assistants to the team: Heather Robertson (top left). Heather holds a first class Masters of Public Health and has a diverse background working within hospital and community settings, including working as an Occupational Therapist within the mental health field; Karol Czuba (right) holds a BHSc and his interests include rehabilitation and related socio- and psychological topics; and Kay Shannon who is a Registered Nurse, currently in the final stages of completing a Master of Nursing (Research), and will be joining us shortly. We are sure you will be hearing more from them very soon!

Three members of AUT staff have also recently started their PhDS with us: Sandy Rutherford for whom the ARCOS IV study forms a small part; Caroline Stretton who has been awarded the Laura Fergusson PhD Scholarship, looking at behaviour change techniques to improve physical activity after stroke; and Felicity Bright who, with the support of the Laura Fergusson Trust and the AUT Vice Chancellors Doctoral Scholarship Award, is exploring the concept of engagement in stroke rehabilitation for people with communication disorders from the perspectives of people with stroke, their family/whanau and rehabilitation providers.

And last but not least, we would like to congratulate Prof Kath McPherson who was recently made a Fellow of the Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine part of the Australasian Royal College of Physicians - the only non-medic in NZ (and only one other in Australia). Congratulations Kath, a rare honour indeed.
6. RECENT PUBLICATIONS SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

**PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS**


Levack, WMM., Siegert, RJ., Dean SG., McPherson, K., Hay-Smith, EJC., Weatherall, MM. Goal setting and activities to enhance goal pursuit for adults with acquired disabilities participating in rehabilitation (Protocol). The Cochrane Collaboration, The Cochrane Library 2012, Issue 4

**BOOKS, MEDIA AND BOOK CHAPITERS**


**REPORTS**


**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & POSTERS**


6. CONTACTS

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Person Centred Rehabilitation Centre (PCRC),
http://www.aut.ac.nz/pcrc
Research Cluster for Active Ageing

Origins
The research Cluster for Active Ageing was launched in 2009 by Drs Valerie Wright-St Clair and Justin Keogh, and incorporated under the Person Centred Research Centre (PCRC) umbrella a year later.

Purpose
PCRC’s purpose is to produce and promote high quality research enhancing knowledge in disability, rehabilitation and diversity. Within the Centre, the Cluster for Active Ageing has a major focus on research which promotes older peoples’ participation within communities, in everyday and physical activities.

The Cluster aims to:
- Engage with relevant organisations and the community to shape the research agenda on active ageing and participation
- Conduct quality research that promotes active ageing in relation to physical, recreational, mental, spiritual, social, political and everyday activities
- Examine the relationship between active ageing and participation, and ageing well
- Explore how the environment contributes to ageing well
- Develop and evaluate services aiming to promote active ageing and participation

Milestones
In September 2011 the research cluster was awarded membership of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG) Global Ageing Research Network (GARN).

Researchers & Scope
The cluster is multidisciplinary, including researchers in exercise science, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychology, physiology and nutrition, women’s health, social gerontology, anatomy and physiology, and massage therapy. The diagram illustrates the scope of topics that are the focus for current and future research topics.

Current Research Projects

*Exploring elder Chinese, Indian and Korean immigrants’ participation in and contribution to civic society.*
A collaborative research project with Dr Shoba Nayar, Centre for Migrant and Refugee Research.
The study aims to: establish what elder immigrants do in their community; explore the conditions which influence elder migrants’ participation; develop subjective understandings of relationship between community participation and health and wellbeing for elder migrants.

*Life and living in advanced age: a cohort study in New Zealand, Te Puawaiwai O Nga Tapuwea Kia ora Tonu: - LILACS NZ (LILACS Baseline)*
Valerie is a named investigator on this project led by Professor Ngaire Kerse, University of Auckland. Within the project team, the Cluster for Active Ageing contribution is exploring what older adults do, what activities are most important to them, and how important they think what they do contributes to their health and wellness.
Current Student projects

Adina Nachum, BHSc Hons. Topic: *Living well in advanced age*. This survey-based study explores older Māori and non-Māori subjective understandings of health and ageing well toward the end of their lives.

Nadine Mesnage, PhD. Topic: *What does ageing well mean for older New Zealanders?* This interpretive phenomenological study is being conducted with a sub-group of non-Māori participants of a large, prospective cohort study of life and living in advanced age.

Robyn Henderson, DHSc, Topic: *The Choices and Voices of Institutional Aged Care in New Zealand: A Critical Discourse Analysis*. This study thus closely examines those critical discourses and power relations that inform peoples’ decisions to move into aged care within New Zealand at this time.

Robyn Carruthers, MHSc. Topic: *Natural health practitioners’ interpretation of ‘being holistic in practice’: A hermeneutic phenomenological study*. The project explores what naturopaths and medical herbalists mean by the term ‘holistic’ and how that translates into their clinical practice.

Kylee Sterling, BHSc Honours. Topic: *The Yesterday Interview: A day in the life of elder Māori and non-Māori*. This interview-based study pilots the Yesterday Interview as a measure to describe what activities older people did in a 24-hour period, where they were, and who they were with.

Recent Conferences


For more information, please don’t hesitate to contact the cluster leader:

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Recent REFEREED CLUSTER PUBLICATIONS


Save the date....

www.nzag2012.co.nz